

Sermon Study Guide: Devoted to a Faithful Witness

Main Text: 1 Peter 3:15–16 (ESV)

"...but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience..."

Key Themes:

- Christian witness begins at home and extends to the world.
- Stories carry more weight than arguments.
- We are called to share our hope with clarity, grace, and integrity.
- Fallacies and manipulative reasoning undermine our witness.

Opening Reflection Questions:

1. What is one story from your life that clearly shows God's faithfulness?
2. How do you pass on your faith to the next generation?
3. When was the last time someone asked about your hope in Christ?

Section 1: Witnessing at Home

Scripture: Psalm 78:4; 2 Timothy 1:5

Big Idea: The home is the first mission field. Tell the stories of God's faithfulness to your children.

Key Points:

- Faith is passed down through lived experience and storytelling.
- Sharing stories (like the Albanian legend of Constantine and Doruntina) helps children grasp values.
- Honesty and vulnerability foster trust and growth in family faith conversations.

Discussion Questions:

- What stories of faith do you remember from your parents or grandparents?
- How do you create space in your home for honest conversations about God?

Practice: Write down one story of how God has shown up in your life. Share it with your family this week.

Section 2: Witnessing in the World

Scripture: James 3:13; Matthew 5:16; Philippians 2:14-15

Big Idea: The world is watching our conduct. Live and speak as someone transformed by Christ.

Key Points:

- Invest in long, honest relationships rather than soundbite evangelism.
- Your transformed life is often more persuasive than your logic.
- Don't argue to win—speak truth in love.

Discussion Questions:

- How do people outside your faith community perceive your character?
- Have you ever seen someone moved more by a story than an argument?

Practice: Identify someone in your life who needs encouragement. Share with them how Christ has brought hope to your life.

Section 3: Fallacies to Avoid in Witness

Big Idea: Logical fallacies and emotional manipulation damage our Christian witness.

Common Fallacies to Avoid:

- **Ad Hominem:** "You're just a hypocrite, so your point doesn't matter."
- **Straw Man:** "Atheists just don't want to believe the truth."
- **Red Herring:** "Why talk about Jesus when there are starving children?"
- **False Dilemma:** "You either believe in science or in God."
- **Appeal to Emotion:** "If you don't believe this, you must be heartless."

Better Responses:

- Ask: "Can I ask what shaped your view of God?"
- Share: "What I found in Christ gives me peace through suffering."
- Affirm: "Many scientists see their work as uncovering how God made the world."

Practice: Review the fallacies. Think about a time you may have used or heard one. How could the conversation have gone differently?

Closing Encouragement

"Tell people the truth. Tell them what Jesus has done for you. Tell them with clarity. Tell them with grace. Speak truth in love. Guard your witness. And give them Jesus."

Reflection Questions:

1. Are you living in a way that reflects the hope you proclaim?
2. Is your speech marked by grace, gentleness, and truth?
3. Do people see consistency between your words and your life?

Prayer Focus:

- Ask the Holy Spirit to help you be a faithful witness in word and deed.
- Pray for opportunities to share your hope this week.
- Ask for a tender conscience and a heart that honors Christ as holy.