

Witnessing

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“Witnessing” is word religious people use in the place of teaching or preaching the gospel. “Witnessing” is telling someone what the Lord has done for you. “Witnessing” is one of those terms religious people have invented which is kindred to a biblical concept but has been redefined and reshaped for purposes far removed from what the Bible teaches. The pastors who teach their congregants to “witness” do so to keep them from learning and advancing the fundamentals of the gospel. The Great Commission Jesus gave does not include the common practice of “witnessing.” Rather, the Great Commission is specific and includes the message to be taught or preached. Notice what the Great Commission actually says in Luke 24:44-49.

And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

The message to be taught or preached is contained in the Scriptures, not in the experiences and observations of men (vv.44-45). The message to be taught or preached includes the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (v. 46). The message to be taught or preached includes repentance and remission of sins (v. 47). What you do not find in the Great Commission is approval from Christ to go out and tell someone what the Lord has done for you in the way of personal blessings and favors and being a witness to those experiences contend that you have satisfied the requirements of the Great Commission. The gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation, not the experiences of men (Romans 1:16).

Please, note in the Great Commission the actual witnesses are referenced. By doing this we will clear up any misunderstanding or misapplication of the Bible regarding the subject of “witnessing.” The witnesses had seen the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus (v. 48). The witnesses had received a special promise from the Father (v. 49a). The witnesses were instructed to tarry in Jerusalem (v. 49b). The witnesses would receive the special promise from the Father by being endued with power from on high (v. 49c). If we can learn who these witnesses were that uniquely could receive the fulfillment of these promises, we can learn whether or not we have any witnesses today who are authorized to go about “witnessing.” All we have to do is turn in our Bibles to the first chapter in Acts and read,

The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen:

To whom also he showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. (Acts 1:1-5).

We have now identified the witnesses of the gospel message of Jesus Christ; they are the apostles. They uniquely were endued with power from on high when they were baptized in the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4), and that in fulfillment of the promise of the Father Jesus related to them back in John 16:7-13. Later on in the book of Acts we have convincing proof that not everyone who received the Lord's blessings was designated to be a witness. At Cornelius' house in Caesarea, the apostle Peter affirmed, "And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and showed him openly; Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead" (Acts 10:39-42). We do not "witness" today; we simply teach and preach the message the witnesses chosen before of God, the apostles, by the inspiration of God gave to us (2 Timothy 4:2).