

Greetings! The following are some thoughts on the role of The Local Church as a witness unto the Lord Jesus (I will in the near future, Lord willing, send some answers concerning a profile).

When we consider the Lord Jesus' teachings concerning about why the church (believers) have been left here on planet earth, there are a number of possibilities which may be raised. Some might say it is to glorify God, others to learn some lessons, yet others might say to do good works. Whilst each of these, and perhaps others are important, it seems to me that the main reason and perhaps the only one which could not be accomplished if we were taken straight to heaven when we are saved, is that the church, you and I as believers, may be a witness unto the Lord Jesus. Paul put it this way in Rom 10:14 "How then shall they call on Him whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?"

The Lord Jesus gave the commandment to the church immediately before He ascended into heaven ".....and ye shall be witnesses unto ME.." Acts 1:8.

When people are first saved they are excited and want to tell others about the Lord and what He has done for them. Indeed that is one of the main indicators that someone has been saved. Generally what happens though is that within the first few months of being saved most believers have witnessed to their friends and family and that is about where their witnessing stops.

I want to suggest some reasons why many believers are not the witnesses that they ought to be.

1. One of the reasons is the problem of fear; the fear of man! Proverbs 29:25 tells us that this fear brings a snare. It at times almost paralyses us and stops us from witnessing. Throughout the scriptures it is obvious that fear is a problem for God's people, God often saying, " Be not afraid ! "

Peter had problems with it and denied the Lord. The parents of the man born blind feared, John 9:22. The apostle Paul had a struggle with fear, 1Cor 2:3, but he did not allow fear to defeat him. Paul gave his antidote to fear in 1Tim 1:7. We need to ask God to make that verse a reality in our lives too. We must say with David "What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee" Ps 56:3

2. Sometimes we feel that we don't know enough to be a witness; like the Pastor or the youth leader! We do not need to be able to give a 5 page thesis on the trinity or the deity of Christ or why we believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God. Now we do need to know what we believe about these and other biblical truths, however, we need to remember what a witness is expected to do. A witness is to tell what he knows, has seen, has heard eg in a court of law. Not what someone else knows etc. Remember the maniac in the country of the Gadarenes , Mark 5:19; the woman at the well John 4:29. The apostle Paul often gave his testimony ie he was a witness unto the Lord Jesus. We can ALL do that if we are saved!

3. Unconfessed sin will stop us from being a witness. When we ask God to help us be a witness while we have unconfessed sin He will not hear us Ps 66:18. We will have no joy which is such a powerful part of our witnessing. David found out that unconfessed sin meant no joy and therefore no witnessing; " Restore unto me the joy.....Then will I teach.." Ps 51:13,14.

When we have unconfessed sin then we grieve/quench the Holy Spirit and therefore have no power to be a witness, Acts 1:8

4. Pride is another reason why we are not the witness we ought to be. We think " I can be a witness! ", pride! OR " I can not be a witness", also pride (inverted) ! I am not good enough etc! God's Word is clear, He resists the proud, but gives grace (to be a witness) to the humble. The middle letter of pride is ' I ' . Witnessing is not about 'I' but it is all about 'HIM' !

5. Some times the excuse is that we are too busy. The Lord Jesus referred to people with this type of excuse; Luke 9:59-62.

What are our priorities? Try some cross bearing, Luke 9:23. Try praying " Nevertheless not my will but Thy will be done". God has given us all enough hours in the day that we might be a witness unto the Lord Jesus!

If any of these are what is hindering us from being the witness we ought to be, then we need to confess them as sin and obey our Lord's command. Get involved in your church's outreach ministries; doorknocking etc. If your church does not have any then let the Lord use you to start one.

We CAN all be a witness if we are saved; we have a testimony to give. We all MUST be a witness because we are commanded too.