

Lesson # 10 -- The Promise Regarding the Believer's Service.

Introduction

- A. One of the greatest privileges that has been given to all believers is that of being a witness. While the word "prophet" is not specifically applied to Christians in the New Testament that is how we are described. We are God's witness in this world.
- B. It is a rare believer who is satisfied with this area of life. Almost all of us give evidence of inadequacies with our attempts to live and speak for the Lord.
- C. In this lesson I want to emphasize some of the great promises that have been given to each of us -- regarding witnessing.

I. The Biblical Theme.

A. The Great Commission.

*And Jesus came and spake unto them saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen. Matthew 28:18-20*

Comment: The commission described in these verses has been pronounced over every member of the Church. While it is the work of the entire body to carry out this work it can only be done as each of us do our part. Essentially we are responsible for all of the commission even though we fulfill our obligation by participating in and supporting the Church.

B. The promise of the Holy Spirit.

*But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me. . . . Acts 1:8*

Comment: After the Resurrection the Lord Jesus gave this promise to His people. The fulfillment came on the Day of Pentecost. When an individual becomes a Christian today -- all the power of Pentecost becomes his possession. Each of us has been anointed to be a witness for the Lord Jesus.

C. The illustration.

*But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, whereunto he called you by our gospel. . . . II Thessalonians 2:13,14*

Comment: These verses graphically describe the way the believer's witness fits into God's eternal and sovereign plan. The words "He called you by our gospel" answers the "why" of so many of our questions. Not the least of these has to do with pointing out to each of us the meaningful of our daily life and witness.

Summary: These three passages remind us that the Christian is to be a witness. Every one of us has been given the privilege and the responsibility of both living and speaking so the truth of the gospel will be understood.

## II. The Biblical Explanation.

### A. The Instruction Regarding Our Service.

*But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear. I Peter 3:15*

Comment: The word "answer" in this verse was used among the Greeks to indicate the argument given in the law court by the person accused -- to vindicate himself. It has come to mean "witness" and "testimony." We are here told to be always ready to give our "answer." In order to prepare ourselves we must give God His rightful place in our life.

### B. The Means Provided For Our Service.

*For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth, it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. Isaiah 55:10,11*

*That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life . . . .  
Philippians. 2:15,16*

Comment: The salvation of each Christian is a testimony to the power of the Word of God. We are reminded in Hebrews that it is living and powerful. God will use the Word that He enables us to live and explain so that the Gospel will be understood by those about us. We must always remember the close connection between the Bible, the power of God, and the plan of God. This should be a great encouragement to us.

C. The Promise Regarding our Service.

*And Jesus came and spake unto them saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and earth. Go ye therefore, and teach (disciple) all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

Comment: The Great Commission does not begin with a command to "go" but with the promise that Jesus Christ has all power and will be with us as we go to do His will. Our life of service will be much easier and more fruitful if we can live and serve with this Biblical perspective.

**It is not our work but His.**

D. The Ability Provided for Our Service.

*But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Ephesians 4:7*

*As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. I Peter 4:10*

*Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. II Corinthians 5:20*

Comment: As every believer has been given the privilege and the responsibility to serve God -- each of us has been given the necessary ability. The gifts we have received are not all the same. The illustration used in the Scripture to exemplify this principle is the physical body with its many members and functions and yet one body.

Peter reminds us that we are "stewards" of the grace of God. The instruction in this truth has to do with the ability each of us has received so we can "give out" what has been given to us -- the grace of God.

Paul describes our ability by use of the title "ambassador." We are the representatives of heaven upon earth. We must accept our position and take it seriously. Now that we understand more clearly the promise of divine enablement for service, and what God desires us to do for Him -- we must hold up our daily life alongside the model we have studied. All of us come far short. We recognize we lack motivation, faith, and even dedication. We must acknowledge this before the Lord and ask Him to direct us.

E. The Description of our Service.

*We then as workers together with him . . . . II Corinthians 6:1*

*From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. Eph. 4:16*

Comment: The work of God has been designed to be carried out by every believer doing his part. The work of the leaders in the church is to teach, motivate, and serve as overseers (Eph. 4:11-15), as every believer makes his spiritual contribution. The illustration of the human body is used in Ephesians passage to exemplify the principle.

F. The Warning Regarding our Service.

*Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels. Mark 8:38*

*And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. Luke 12:47*

Comment: These serious verses emphasize the necessity of giving heed to the will of God. We may not turn away from the privilege of carrying out the Great Commission because of a sense of unworthiness or a feeling of inability.

The emphasis in this lesson is not to promote a call to the formal ministry. The thought has to do with the place every believer has been given so that the Lord Jesus will be honored and glorified. If we have to change our priorities and daily life radically -- then that is what we must do.

III. The Biblical Application.

A. We Must Accept Our Privilege and Responsibility.

*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. Romans 12:1,2.*

Comment: The way to respond to God Biblically is to give ourselves to Him as a living sacrifice. When we do this then the rest of the verse can be fulfilled. Too often we try to find the will of God and be a transformed person -- but without a whole-hearted surrender.

B. We Must Support One Another in Prayer.

*Ye also helping together by prayer for us . . . . II Cor. 1:11*

Comment: The clearest expression of our faith before God and our recognition of the principle of this lesson is to be found in prayer. Paul, in writing to the church at Corinth, expressed his gratitude for how they had helped him in his ministry by prayer.

We have seen how God has called every believer to serve Him in carrying out the Great Commission. When we accept our place in His will and recognize those who serve with us -- then it will be easier to pray. When these truths are not accepted and implemented the result is often not prayer but criticism.

C. We Must Find Our Place of Service.

*From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth . . . . Ephesians 4:16*

Comment: According to this verse every believer has been given the ability and place to serve God. We must do more than think of the usual avenues of ministry. Let me list a few.

Praying and planning as to how to be a better witness on the job. Perhaps try to get a weekly Bible class

Serve in the bus or visitation ministry of the church.

Serve in the building and maintenance of some local youth camp, or perhaps with their kitchen help.

Volunteer to be a helper at the local Christian school.

Volunteer to be a baby-sitter for the members of your church so they can have time to serve.

Volunteer to help with the local jail, hospital, or mission ministry.

Conclusion: *Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant. Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. Hebrews 13:20,21*