

# Beginning Soul Winning 5 of 8

## *“Ye Shall be Witnesses”*

#0214

Study by W.D. Frazee - April 19, 1969

Let us turn this morning to Acts 1:8. Another wonderful text in this series of studies on “Beginning Soul Winning”:

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” Acts 1:8.

What were they to be in Jerusalem? Witnesses. What were they to be in Judea? Witnesses. What were they to be in Samaria? Witnesses. What were they to be in the uttermost part of the earth? Witnesses.

And as has often been said, a witness is one who tells what he knows. Now, this is the work that God gave the apostles and all the disciples. As Jesus left this world and went back to heaven, He said, “I want you men and women to be witnesses for Me. I want you to tell what you know. I want you to tell what you’ve seen Me do. And I want you to tell what I have done for you.” This was the job. And as you read the book of Acts, again and again you note that Peter and John and the others are saying, “We are witnesses, we are witnesses.”

You know, in a court of law, when there’s a trial, the testimony of the witnesses is very important. In fact, everything depends on that, doesn’t it? Here is a man that is on trial for his life. If the witnesses can prove that he was some other place when the murder took place, that helps him, doesn’t it? But if there are witnesses there that have to testify that they saw him use the pistol or the knife, then, of course, he’s convicted. And so in this work of soul winning, the testimony of witnesses is very important.

Now we have other illustrations of the power of witnessing. Take in the business world. For many years a certain firm had *this* motto: “A satisfied customer is our best advertisement.” Well that’s true, isn’t it? Products that are sold and their sales mount, often it’s due to the fact that people have tried that particular product and they like it, and they tell somebody else.

We are salesmen for Jesus. But if our job is to sell Ford cars, it would hardly do for us to go around riding in a Chrysler or Cadillac, would it? No. We want to be using the thing that we are selling. Or to state it the other way around, we want to be selling the thing that we are using.

We are witnesses concerning that which we know of the power and grace of God in our lives. Now we do not have the privilege that these early disciples had, of telling that we have seen Jesus do this and that, in the sense that we have seen Him with our own eyes; that we have seen Him in the flesh. He's gone back to heaven. But His relationship with each soul is as distinct and definite as though that one were the only one for whom He died.

And so each of us is to have a personal experience with God. And from that experience we're to tell others. Is this the way to win souls? Yes. This is not merely one way to win souls, it is *the* effective way. Unless we have something to tell as we meet people, unless we have something to relate of what Jesus has done for us personally, we had just as well wait and do just what Christ told these apostles to do when He left them. He said, "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high." And when the Spirit came upon them, they had something to tell all right.

If you read the whole book of Acts, they never ran out of words. Listen to Paul as he stands before Festus and before Agrippa, and before others. He's telling his experience again and again of what Jesus did for him.

And so back to our first lesson, we begin to pray. And if we don't have an experience, we need to pray for an experience. But if we have, then we want to pray that God will give us tongue and utterance that we may tell, not in eloquent phrases, but in the eloquence of simplicity, what Jesus has done for us; what He means to us.

Let's turn to Matthew 8:28-34. I want to call your attention to an interesting experience that took place in the life of Jesus, how He dealt with two men. This is the story of two men who were possessed with devils. They dwelt in the tombs. They cut themselves. They were a terror to the whole community. And when Jesus coming over the lake, met them on the beach, they raged and foamed.

But Jesus rebuked the evil spirits, and they came out of them. As the result of this, Jesus was asked to leave that country because He allowed the devils at their request, to go into a herd of swine. And as you read there, the people were anxious to get rid of Jesus. Think of it! Just because Jesus had allowed the devils that he dismissed from these poor men to go into the swine, the people wanted to get rid of Him.

There are people today who want to get rid of Jesus because He touches some of their idols. And whatever it is that Christ asks people to give up, many times the devil uses that to make them afraid of Christ.

But, here were these two men that had been delivered from the power of Satan. When we go to this story as it is written in the 8th chapter of Luke and in the 5th chapter of Mark, we find some additional details. Mark and Luke tell the story of just one of the two men, but there were two. And notice Mark 5:18-20, and Luke 8:38-40. Here we'll find some interesting details:

“... when he was come into the ship ...” Mark 5:18

Jesus, you see, was ready to go because the people had asked Him to go and He's very courteous. He comes where He is asked and He stays where people want Him. So He had to leave:

“And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him” Mark 5:18.

What did this man that had been delivered want to do? He wanted to go with Jesus on the trip:

“Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee” Mark 5:19.

Jesus told him that he wanted him to be what? A witness. That's it, a witness. Think of this man. Just a few hours ago he was possessed with a devil, a raging man. Now he's been delivered, and he wants to be with Jesus. Does he need training? Doubtless. Are there many things he doesn't know? Thousands of them. He doesn't know as much as those disciples that have been with Jesus every day. He wants to get some of that training. But in this particular case Jesus said to him, “I've something for you to do right now. Instead of coming with Me and listening further to My words, start sharing what I've already given to you. Start giving to others what I have given to you”:

“...Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee” Mark 5:19.

Did he do it? Yes. The next verse:

“...he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel” Mark 5:20.

I think they would. But notice, don't miss this point. Jesus sent him to talk to people who had just asked Christ to leave them. That wasn't a very promising field, was it? It didn't look like it. But friends, they didn't know Jesus, they knew that man. And they knew what a terror he had been to that neighborhood. As he came to their homes, and as he came to his own home, and told how great things God had done for him, notice, it reached those people in a way that the personal presence of Christ failed to reach them. This is wonderful, friends. Now, this is what Christ is looking for, His witnesses.

Turn now to Luke, and let's pick up a thought:

“Now the man out of whom the devils were departed besought him that he might be with him: but Jesus sent him away, saying, Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee” Luke 8:38-39.

He was not only to tell, he was to what? Show. In his life, there was a demonstration of the mighty power of God:

“And he went his way, and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him” Luke 8:39.

And as the result, a change took place in that whole area and later as Jesus came back, they received Him gladly.

Now, I want to read the comment on this in *Ministry of Healing*:

“The two restored demoniacs were the first missionaries whom Christ sent to teach the gospel in the region of Decapolis” *Ministry of Healing*, page 99.

These two men were what? The first missionaries that Jesus sent to Decapolis. That word Decapolis means ten cities. There were 10 cities in that area, Decapolis.

“For a short time only, these men had listened to His words. Not one sermon from His lips had ever fallen upon their ears” *Ibid*.

Tell me, as far as information, facts are concerned, do we know more or less than these two men? We know more, everyone of us knows more. Now watch:

“They could not instruct the people as the disciples who had been daily with Christ were able to do. But they could tell what they knew; what they themselves had seen and heard and felt of the Savior’s power. This is what everyone can do whose heart has been touched by the grace of God. This is the witness for which our Lord calls, and for want of which this world is perishing” *Ibid*.

This is the witness. Now, our opening text said we are to be what? Witnesses for Him. We are to tell what we know. And this says:

“This is what everyone can do whose heart has been touched by the grace of God” *Ibid*.

If our hearts have not been touched by the grace of God, then we can’t begin soul winning. We need to go and seek God for an experience of our own. But if God

has done something for us, if He has forgiven our sins, if He has given us victory over temptation, if He has put peace into our hearts, if He has given us something to live for, then haven't we something to tell?

Ah, this is what the world is crying for. If there are thirsty hearts out there and we have been to the spring and know where it is, haven't we something to tell? "Thirsty ones, thank God, I know where the water is. Come with me and I'll show you where to find the river of the water of life, where to find peace, where to find victory over sin, where to find satisfaction, where to find something to live for."

You know, friends, I'm so glad that Jesus has helped me to find something to live for, besides just living. I think of it as I view the people of this world. To think, it's largely a matter of working to earn some money to get something to eat so they can keep on working and keep on eating. But what a round of meaningless activities that can be, unless there is something to live for beside the mere living. Certainly, God has given to us in the gift of Jesus and in the gift of His Spirit, wonderful gifts. And as we experience fellowship with our Lord, we have something to tell.

Notice this:

"Tell those whom you visit that the end of all things is at hand. The Lord Jesus Christ will open the door of their hearts and will make upon their minds lasting impressions. "Strive to arouse men and women from their spiritual insensibility" *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 9, page 38.

Now listen carefully:

"Tell them how you found Jesus and how blessed you have been since you gained an experience in His service" *Ibid.*

Tell them what? How you found Jesus:

"Tell them what blessing comes to you as you sit at the feet of Jesus and learn precious lessons from His word. Tell them of the gladness and joy that there is in the Christian life" *Ibid.*

Now, here are a list of things that we are to tell: Tell how we found Jesus. Tell how blessed we've been since we gained an experience. Tell what blessing comes to us as we sit at the feet of Jesus and learn precious lessons from His Word. And tell of the gladness and joy that there is in the Christian life. Why, our very faces can witness for Jesus, can't they? Not long faces that tell of sorrow and grief and perplexity and disappointment and uncertainty, but radiant countenances that reflect the light of heaven:

"Tell ...of the gladness and joy. ... Your warm, fervent words will convince them that you have found the pearl of

great price. ... This is a genuine missionary work, and as it is done, many will awake as from a dream" *Ibid*.

Dear friends, this can be done by anyone for whom God has done something. This is to be done by all. All are called to this ministry, and this is the most effectual way. Remember in what we read about these two men, these two restored demoniacs. Nobody could know less as far as information is concerned. But, ah, they knew something! They knew one thing! They knew that Jesus had delivered them from the power of Satan, and put peace into their hearts. And if God has done that for us, we have something to tell.

"Thousands of hearts can be reached in the most simple, humble way" *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 6, page 115.

What is the name of this class? "Beginning Soul Winning." Were those men beginners? Oh, yes, nobody could start any lower on the ladder than they were. They'd seen Jesus only that one day and only a piece of the day, but He had done something for them. So today:

"Thousands of hearts can be reached in the most simple, humble way. The most intellectual, those who are looked upon and praised as the world's most gifted men and women, are often refreshed by the simple words that flow from the heart of one who loves God and who can speak of that love as naturally as the worldling speaks of the things which his mind contemplates and feeds upon. Often the words well prepared and studied have little influence. But the true, honest words of a son or daughter of God, spoken in natural simplicity, will open the door to hearts that have long been locked" *Ibid*.

So, you are what? Witnesses. Now, I want to read in *Ministry of Healing*, this further comment on this wonderful truth:

"'Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, That I am God.' Our confession of His faithfulness is Heaven's chosen agency for revealing Christ to the world. We are to acknowledge His grace as made known through the holy men of old; but that which will be most effectual is the testimony of our own experience" *Ministry of Healing*, page 100.

What does effectual mean? It works. That is it! It works. Now, what is the thing that is most effectual? The testimony of our own experience.

If you were the devil, what would you do about it? Wouldn't you try to get people to leave that tool alone, if this is the most effective tool in the whole tool chest? How does the devil do it? One way he does, is to suggest that we mustn't boast. "Don't talk about yourself."

My dear friends, we're not to talk about ourselves apart from Jesus. We're not to boast of what we've done in ourselves. That won't be witnessing for Jesus, will it? But, oh, if we're giving God the glory, we're boasting not of what we are, but of what He is. Do you see? So let us never listen to that suggestion of the devil that it's proud and boastful to tell of some experience that the Lord has given us.

Why, if we were in rags and tatters and somebody came and gave us a suit, to tell wouldn't be boasting, would it? Certainly it wouldn't be boasting about us. It would be boasting about the one who gave us the suit. And we were in rags and tatters, in filthy garments of sin and Jesus has come and taken those filthy garments away and clothed us with His Righteousness. Do we have something to thank Him for? Yes.

“...that which will be most effectual will be the testimony of our own experience. We are witnesses for God as we reveal in ourselves the working of a power that is divine. Every individual has a life distinct from all others, and an experience differing essentially from theirs” *Ibid.*

Here is another thing that the devil tries to take advantage of. He says, “Oh, well, you haven't had some marvelous experience like Saul did. You haven't been healed instantly so that where you were lame twenty years, now you can jump around. Wait until you have something like that to tell.” But listen. This says that:

“Every individual has a life distinct from all others, and an experience differing essentially from theirs. God desires that our praise shall ascend to Him, marked with our own individuality” *Ibid.*

The reason that your testimony is different is that your experience is different. If your experience was just like other people, then you could well be silent. You could be dismissed. Your witness wouldn't be needed. But it is because your experience is different from anybody else's that your witness is needed.

This is why Philip was called from Samaria clear down there to near Gaza to talk to that man from Ethiopia. There were other Christians who were closer in distance than Philip was, but the Holy Spirit knew there was something about Philip's witness that would meet that man's need.

And, you and I, thank God, can be guided, will be guided by the Holy Spirit to the people that we can help, as we sit at the table, as we meet them in the stores, as we visit them in their homes, and as we attend meetings. And can bear our witness there in public and in private before the meetings, after the meetings. We're to be watching for opportunities of testifying to the goodness, the love of God, and how He helps us:

“These precious acknowledgments to the praise of the glory of His grace, when supported by a Christlike life, have an

irresistible power, that works for the salvation of souls” *Ibid.*

What’s irresistible? Why, there’s nothing that can stand in it’s road. There was a wind the other day, down there near Denver, that actually blew some freight cars off the track. As far as those box-cars were concerned, that was an irresistible power, wasn’t it? Ah, friends, here is a power, not for destruction, but for construction, not to hurt anything, but to bless, a power that is irresistible. What is it? The power of telling our own experience:

“...ye shall be *witnesses* unto me...” Acts 1:8.

Will we do it? Will we do it, today?

Let us kneel and pray.

Our Father, we thank Thee with all our hearts that Thou hast commissioned us to do a very simple work, to just tell what Thou doest mean to us, and what Thou hast done for us. And by Thy grace we will do it. We thank Thee for Thy wonderful love. We thank Thee that we know that Jesus died for us, personally. We thank Thee that He has heard our prayers, forgiven our sins, written our names in the Book of Life, and that by His Spirit He is guiding us moment by moment. We have nothing to boast of in ourselves. But oh, we thank Thee that we have something to tell of how good Thou art, how wonderful, how forgiving, how loving, how faithful. And so today, keep us watching for souls. Keep us telling the wonderful story of Thy love for us, and inviting others to share the wondrous gift through Jesus our Lord. Amen.

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