

SERMON NOTES - My Testimony - 4 - Thankful Testimonies

These notes are designed to be read along with the associated audio / video message

A Testimony is Powerful...

1. Incontrovertible. No-one can argue with your testimony because it is YOUR story of what happened.
2. Illustrative. It reveals how God works and what He can do
3. It creates an expectation of God working again
4. It releases His power into situations and into the lives who hear it - The root meaning of Hebrew word testimony means "repeat, do it again." - E.g. the 2 men on the road to Emmaus testified, and Jesus entered the room: Luk 24:36 - "Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, "Peace to you.""

This week - The secret ingredient that makes a testimony powerful - Thankfulness:

As we give testimony thankfully acknowledging what God has done for us, it releases power, making our witnessing effective, and it helps us enjoy all of God's good benefits:

Psa 22:3 - "But You are holy, Enthroned in the praises of Israel."

Psa 100:4 - "Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, And into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name."

Psalms 107:1, 2, 8, 42-43 "Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever. 2 Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, Whom He has redeemed from the hand of the enemy, ... 8 Oh, that men would give thanks to the LORD for His goodness, And for His wonderful works to the children of men! ... 42 The righteous see it and rejoice, And all iniquity stops its mouth. 43 Whoever is wise will observe these things, And they will understand the lovingkindness of the LORD."

Philemon 1:6 (NKJV) that the sharing of your faith may become effective by the acknowledgment of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.

What can you be thankful for?

- Lam 3:21-23 - "This I recall to my mind, Therefore I have hope. 22 Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. 23 They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness."
- God's nature, and unchanging character - Good, Unchanging, Kind, Gracious, Powerful, Merciful - Heb 13:8 - "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever."
- Truths in His word - He is **for** us, He saves all who call on Him, He is working all things together for good - Rom 8:28
- Psa 91:11-12 - "For He shall give His angels charge over you, To keep you in all your ways. 12 In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone." Heb 1:14 - "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?"
- His power to serve Him and to do and to be all of His will - Phil 2:13
- You are raised with Him and seated in Heavenly places with Him - Eph 1:18-2:6
- Eph 1:3 - "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,"
- His abiding presence - He will never leave you - Heb 13:5
- Psa 32:8 - "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye." See also Is 30:21
- The many specific ways that He has helped you, answered prayers or changed your life

Philemon 1:6 (ESV) that the sharing of your faith may become effective for the full knowledge of every good thing that is in us for the sake of Christ.

The One who was Grateful

Luk 17:11-19 NKJV - "11 Now it happened as He went to Jerusalem that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. 12 Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. 13 And they lifted up their voices and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" 14 So when He saw them, He said to them, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed. (See also James 2:26)

15 And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, 16 and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan.

17 So Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? 18 "Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?"

19 And He said to him, "Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well. (See Lk 7:50 "*your faith has saved you*")"

The man

- Used a Loud voice - be willing to be heard and to be judged as a fool if necessary
- Was Thankful - giving God glory vs ourselves or others or sin
- He was saved - not just healed - as a result. It benefits us and more blessings come to us as a result of testifying. It benefits them but it also benefits US.

Being "Self deceived" - James 1:22,26; 1 John 1:8; 1 Corinthians 3:18; Galatians 6:3. It is always through pride, and the antidote is Thankfulness.

If we don't give thanks, we block what God is doing in our lives and we are affected:

Rom 1:21-32 NKJV - "21 because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, 23 and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man--and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. 24 Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonour their bodies among themselves, 25 who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. 26 For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. 27 Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due. 28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; 29 being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, 30 backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; 32 who, knowing the righteous judgement of God, that those who practise such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practise them."

We give thanks in and for ALL circumstances - 1Th 5:18 — "in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." Eph 5:20 — "giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,"

By so doing God's power is released into situations and we are changed.

Psalms 107:1, 2, 8, 42-43 "Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever. 2 Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, Whom He has redeemed from the hand of the enemy, ... 8 Oh, that men would give thanks to the LORD for His goodness, And for His wonderful works to the children of men! ... 42 The righteous see it and rejoice, And all iniquity stops its mouth. 43 Whoever is wise will observe these things, And they will understand the lovingkindness of the LORD."

Small group discussion guidelines

Remember that the aim of the small group is to foster discussion and community, rather than for the leader or one individual to preach to everyone.

1 - Often an **Icebreaker question** is a great way to start discussion. You could ask a question like:

- What were the highs or lows of your week?
- What is your earliest memory?
- If you had to describe yourself as one animal, what would it be and why?
- What is your favourite type of holiday destination?

2 - Next, **read the passage**. You can ask various people in the group to help by each reading a portion of the passage.

3 - These are the **main questions** to ask to understand the passage:

- What is the main message of this talk / passage?
Allow discussion and even diverging from the main topic if it is helpful.
- What did you find particularly helpful or challenging?
- What did you not fully understand?
- What can we do PRACTICALLY in response to this teaching?

4 - Close by offering **prayer** for each person.

- Ask, "how can we pray for you / each other now?"
- Ask each person to pray or you, as leader, pray for each person's need

The blessing and opportunity in Small Groups is the possibility for...

- Each person to contribute and/or ask questions,
- People to pray for each other and to ask for prayer,
- People to learn to use and grow in their gifts,
- Community, friendship and intimacy in relationships.

God Bless you in this very important ministry.