

SERMON NOTES - My Testimony 7 - God's Testimony - The Gospel

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

Intro: Psalm 107:2 - Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, Whom He has redeemed from the hand of the enemy

This week: 8 - God's Testimony - The Gospel

1Jo 5:9-12 - "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son. 10 He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son. **11 And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.** 12 He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life."

We must be able to include God's testimony in our testimony...His gospel

The elements of this "God Testimony" - His Gospel (from 1Jn 5:11) are ...

- 1. God** - It starts with Him and must include and involve Him if it is to be His Testimony.
1Pe 1:23 - "23 having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever,"
- 2. has** given us - it is DONE. It is the PAST. He did it. It is not something uncertain which we are trying to attain. It is a done deal that we must believe and receive.
- 3. has given** us - It is a GIFT. We could never earn it. GRACE is key and essential.
- 4. eternal** life - Heaven and eternity are important concepts. It is not just for the here and now, although heaven does invade earth when we believe in Him to an extent.
- 5. eternal life** - Life as opposed to death. God is the source of life. The devil wants to kill and destroy. Jesus wants to give us life to the full.
Jas 1:17 - "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning."
- 6. and this life is in His Son** - It's all about Jesus. He is the one who makes salvation possible. It's about knowing Him, Loving Him, believing in Him, understanding what He did on the cross for you, and receiving Him as Lord and Saviour. We must be "in Him", and He must be "in us".
Jhn 14:6 - "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.'
Jhn 3:36 - "'He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.'
Act 4:12 - "'Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.'
1Ti 2:5-6 - "For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time,"
Jhn 19:30 - "So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, 'It is finished!' And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit."

Another useful and important verse is Jhn 3:16 - "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

The elements of "God's Testimony" - His Gospel (from Jn 3:16) are ...

- 1. God** - It starts with Him and must include and involve Him if it is to be His Testimony.
Heb 11:6 - "6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."

2. **So loved** - His heart is love, grace, kindness and salvation. He only wants the best for us, to save us, and to give us a future with Him.
3. the **world**, (& "that **whoever** believes") - all are invited and included. No-one is left out. No one is excluded based on their achievements, actions, background etc.
4. that He **gave** - It is a GIFT. It's been given (in the past tense). We could never earn it. GRACE is key and essential.
5. His **only** begotten **Son** - Jesus is unique. It's all about Jesus. He is the one who makes salvation possible. It's about knowing Him, Loving Him and understanding what He did on the cross for you. Jhn 14:6 - "6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."
Act 4:12 - "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.""
6. that whoever **believes in Him** - Faith, belief is how we receive this. It is not by works. It is a gift.
7. **should not perish** - We have chosen separation from God and from His life. If we don't receive His gift, we perish
8. but have **everlasting life** - Heaven and **eternity** are important concepts. It is not just for the here and now, although heaven does invade earth when we believe in Him to an extent.
Life as opposed to death. God is the only source of life. The devil wants to kill and destroy. Jesus wants to give us life to the full.
Jhn 10:10 - "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly."
Rom 12:2 NIV - "2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will."

Another useful and important verse is Jhn 3:3,6 - "3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." 6 "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

The elements of "God's Testimony" - His Gospel (from Jn 3:3,6) are ...

1. **Born again** - a brand new start. The old is gone. It is something that happens TO you rather than something you achieve. You have a whole new nature. 2Co 5:17 - Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."
2. the **Kingdom of God** - Heaven. Where God rules as King and where His will is done. Jesus brought it and demonstrated it on earth by healing, loving and forgiving people and by setting them free from the devil. Act 10:38
3. **Born of the Spirit / born of the flesh** - We have a nature that we inherited here on earth, but God, by His spirit, gives us a new nature by His Spirit. We receive this by believing His word about Jesus, and what He did for us on the cross, and by receiving Him into our lives. Rom 10:13 - "For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved."

Repeating themes in these verses - the main points of the gospel -

- **Grace** - a Gift. Good things. A Good God. Love. Rom 3:23 - "23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,"
- Born again by His **Spirit** - a new creation. A new nature. A work He does, not us.

- **Faith** - believing His words, rather than our own feelings or good works.
- **Christ** - His substitutionary death (a finished event), and His Lordship over our lives once we have received His gift of forgiveness. Jhn 1:12 - "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:"

Wrong ideas that people often have -

- Works - "I can be "good" enough"
- Tradition - "My race / culture saves me"
- Religion - "I can be religious enough"
- All are saved - "None will be lost"
- Guilt & shame - "I am too bad"
- There is no objective truth - only "my" truth / the Bible is unreliable / many truths exist

OBJECTIONS PEOPLE MAY HAVE

- Suffering: answer = "God gave us free will" (Deut 30:19)
- Faith / believing what I can't see: answer = We believe many "unseen" things everyday

Illustrations / Picture lessons

- Jesus' cross as the bridge crossing the sin chasm between me and God
- The "4 Spiritual Laws" - www.4laws.com / the4points.com :
1. God Loves Me, 2. I have sinned, 3. Jesus died for me, 4. I must receive and live for Him
- "D-O" vs "D-O-N-E" - religion says "DO" to be saved, Jesus says it has already been "DONE"

Some other Gospel verses that are useful -

Rom 5:8 - "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

2Co 5:21 - "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

1Jo 4:10 - "10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

Gal 2:21 - "21 "I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain."

Gal 2:16 - "16 "knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified."

Heb 10:14 NIV "For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy."

Eph 2:8-9 - "8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast."

Jas 2:10, 19, 26 - "10 For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. 19 You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder. 26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."

Hab 1:13 NIV — "13 Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrongdoing. Why then do you tolerate the treacherous? Why are you silent while the wicked swallow up those more righteous than themselves?"

Rom 6:23 - "23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Rev 20:15 - "15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire."

Isa 53:5-6 - "But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

CONCLUSION:

1 Peter 3:15 - But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;

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.