Witnesses for Jesus
(Sermon)
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Needless to say, we are the witnesses for Christ. He said this very clearly. The question is, what does this mean and what does He expect from us? Perhaps this is not the most difficult question of all. However, there are some pitfalls to be aware of here.

Everyone knows that a witness is a legal term that is usually used in court during a trial. It is also known that the role of a witness in court is very limited. First, he must tell the truth and nothing but the truth. Secondly, he must speak of what he saw and heard and nothing more. For example, no one is interested in the opinion of a witness. Judges or juries don’t take opinions into account. As Christ said: “But let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No.’ For whatever is more than these is from the evil one” (Matthew 5:37, NKJV).

We usually stop there when it comes to describing the role of a witness. However, there is another aspect that we cannot ignore. The fact is that the witness at the trial is allowed to speak only when he is called to testify. He cannot speak when he pleases, but only when he is given the floor. He can’t cry out to the court. He cannot object. He cannot protest. In fact, he can’t do anything. He has no rights. He only has duties. He must speak. He must tell the truth. He can only speak when asked.

Turning the conversation to our area of witnessing about Jesus, I want to say that as much as we would like to tell people about Christ, we cannot expect that we will come to them, and they will begin to listen with longing to any our words. Of course, in contrast to the trial, no one limits us in the Word. Nobody can stop us from speaking. As the book of Job says, “… but who can withhold himself from speaking?” (Job 4:2, KJV). We can speak anytime, anywhere. The point is to be heard. Only those who are interested will listen. If the person is not interested, then no matter how much we talk, it’s just words in the wind.
Whereas our Lord said: “Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine …” (Matthew 7:6, NKJV).

Therefore, as the witnesses, we should obtain ‘permission’ to speak. But how? Well, this must be the main element of our witnessing: to provoke people to give us the floor. The question inevitably arises: how to do it? Actually, it’s simple. Little is required of us—just (1) bring our lives in line with the word of God, (2) live by His Word, (3) love God and your neighbor as Jesus did, and (4) love one another by fulfilling His commandment. It’s elementary. This is precisely why the Apostolic Church achieved quantitative growth—with the quality of its faith. Therefore, throughout the book of Acts, we meet a firm formula for church growth—“… he and all his family were baptized” (Acts 16:33, NKJV).

For the apostles personally, this task was more difficult. They needed to achieve a result before people got acquainted with their godly life. So, the Holy Spirit came to their aid. It was the miracles of God that ‘provoked’ people to ask questions of the disciples, thus giving them the floor. There is no evidence in the book of Acts where the apostles witnessed if they were not allowed to speak. Let me give you just a few examples:

1. Pentecost: “And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and they were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, ‘Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born?’” (Acts 2:6-8, NKJV).
2. Miraculous healing of the lame man at the Temple by Peter and John (3:6-11; 4:1-10).
3. The apostles performed miracles, and more and more believers joined (5:12, 14).
4. Miracles were also the catalyst for the disciples to testify before the Sanhedrin (5:27-29).
5. Stephen performed miracles, which led to controversy with some Jews (6:8, 9).
6. Philip the evangelist preached in Samaria, performing miracles (8:5-7).
7. He preached to the eunuch because God commanded him to join eunuch’s chariot (8:26-40).
8. A large number of people believed in Christ because of the resurrection of Tabitha by Peter in Yafo (9:36-43), and so on.

These days we don’t see such miracles every day. But the need for true disciples of Christ, who by their lives would demonstrate the truth of the Word of God and its power, has not disappeared. Therefore, I believe that the unity of the church in growing in the Word, in love for God and neighbor, in preaching the peace of Christ to people, can become a very powerful tool for the church to attract people who will be ready to give us the floor so that we can speak.

Let us remember that we have a difficult task ahead of us. And we can’t solve it by ourselves. But we have the greatest Evangelist of all times and peoples—the Holy Spirit. He will convince people. From us, however, the smallest thing is required—to demonstrate to the people around us our piety so that they give us the right to speak. And if we abide in Him, and He abides in us, then our word will be true, our word will be about what we have seen and heard, that is, about Him. And, most importantly, they will listen to us, because our message will be interesting and important to the community. May the good Lord bless us to live righteously and holy, to love God, to love each other and our neighbors, so that our lives will be a constant reason for conversations with people for their salvation.

Amen.