

# Witness Protection

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[ 0 : 00 ] All right, let's get to the assignment. So we're going to start in John. John chapter 11. John chapter 11. We're going to read some some verses there.

Got quite a good bit of reading to do because I need to set the context of where we're going to go today. Okay, very familiar and you I know a lot of us know the story, but we're going to pull some things out of this.

John 11. We'll go one through 11 verses 38 to 44 and then 45 to 48. And then we'll go over to John 12 just for a couple of scriptures. And we're going to we're going to start there. John 11. Very familiar.

I know I say that, but very familiar. The story of Lazarus. But we're going to start there. Start the verse one. It says now a certain man was sick. Lazarus of Bethany. The town of Mary and her sister Martha.

It was that Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped his feet with her hair. Whose brother Lazarus was sick. Therefore the sister sent to him saying, Lord, behold.

[ 1 : 13 ] Him whom you love is sick. When Jesus heard that, he said this sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God.

That the son of God may be glorified through it. Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So when he heard that he was sick, he stayed two more days in the place where he was.

Wait a minute. He said he loved them. But when he got word he was sick, he waited two more days. Can I tell you just because you wait and don't mean he don't love you?

That your weight is. So he loved them. But he waited. He stayed two more days in the place where he was.

Then after this, he said to the disciples, let us go to Judea again. The disciples said to him, Rabbi, lately the Jews sought to stone you. And you are going there again?

[ 2 : 17 ] Jesus answered, are there not 12 hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble. Because he sees the light of this world. But if one walks in the night, he stumbles.

Because the light is not in him. These things he said. And after that, he said to them, our friend Lazarus sleeps. But I go that I might wake him up.

John 11, going down to verse 38. It says, then Jesus again groaning in himself, came to the tombs. It was a cave. And a stone lay against it. Jesus said, take away the stone.

Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to him, Lord, by this time, he got to be stinking. There's a stench, for he has been dead four days.

Jesus said to her, did I not say to you that if you would believe, you will see the glory of God? Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying.

[ 3 : 19 ] And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, Father, I thank you because you have heard me. And I know that you always hear me. But because of the people who are standing by, I said this, that they may believe that you sent me.

Now, when he has said these things, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he who had died came out bound, hand and foot with grave clothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth.

Jesus said to them, loose him and let him go. Verse 45. Then many of the Jews who came, who come to Mary, had seen the things Jesus did, believed in him.

But some of them went away to the Pharisees and told them the things Jesus did. Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, what shall we do? For this man works many signs.

If we let him alone like this, everyone will believe in him. And the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation. Let's go over to chapter 12.

[ 4 : 29 ] Just two verses there. I don't know if you may have seen this before, but I want to show you this. Now, a great many of the Jews knew, verse 9, that he was there. And they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead.

But the chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also. They wanted to kill Lazarus. Because of account of him, many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, I thank you for this time. God, you have given me this word. God, I decrease or you may increase. God, have your way in this place. It's in Jesus' name I pray.

Amen. The title of today's message is Witness Protection. Witness Protection. In 1970, there was a program that was started.

And it was meant to combat organized crime. To go against gangs and big corporations and things that were happening. And it was put in place to protect those who may have seen something and could offer something to say when they were in trial.

[ 5 : 46 ] Because the companies or the gangs would try to get to anyone who may have something to say to try to silence them.

Because it could seal the deal on what they were doing. It could put them in prison or get them in trouble. And so they would find anyone that could possibly be a witness.

And because of this, the government started something called the Witness Protection Program. And what the Witness Protection Program was to do was to find these people who could witness or who was a witness who was willing to say something and protect them.

And the way that they were protecting them would give them guards or they would give them new identities. They would do things to try to keep them away from those who wanted to harm them.

It was the Witness Protection Program. And the thing is that the thing that got the people the protection was if they had a testimony.

[ 6 : 57 ] See, what's the use of being a witness if you don't have a testimony? The thing that makes you a witness is your testimony.

And many of us refuse to share the thing that God has done for us. And we have really called ourselves not witnesses because we refuse to open up and say the things that God has done in our lives.

We want to be witnesses without a testimony. See, Jesus in Acts 1 and 8 gave his disciples a command.

He said, he said before he left, he said that when I leave, you're going to receive power. After the Holy Spirit comes upon you.

And he said, you will be my witnesses. In Jerusalem. In Judea. In Samaria.

- [ 8 : 07 ] In the uttermost parts of the world. He said when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And so it got me to thinking that the Holy Spirit is not just for you to speak in tongues.
- Although it's good. It's a gift. It's not just for your fruit. Which is good. You got to bear fruit. But the Holy Spirit was given to you for power to be a witness.
- That he empowered you. To tell people about what the Lord has done in your life. The power.
- The power in this scripture in Greek is dunamis. And what dunamis means is the ability. The wonder work and miracle dynamite type of power.
- That you need to tell someone about Christ. That God said I gave you this power to do something with it. To be witnesses. Now what is a witness?
- [ 9 : 15 ] If you look at witness in the Greek. It is martus. It is someone who is willing to give up their life for what they believe.
- Martus. It's where we get the word martyr. So Jesus said that I gave you power. To give up your life.
- For the thing you believe in. Come on. That I should be able to look at your life as we said before. And tell what you believe in. By what you exemplify through your life.
- By what you're willing to give. Martus. A witness. And so as I was thinking about this. And God gave me witness protection.
- I was talking to Pastor Landon one day. And this came up. We was like wow. Because in the definition of witness protection. It says that it protects a person before a trial. During a trial.
- [ 10 : 14 ] And after the trial. That's good. So you think I'm saying trial as far as in the justice system. But I'm talking about trials that happen in life.
- That when you have made up your mind. You're going to be a witness. It will protect you. Before the trial. During the trial. And after the trial.
- When you have decided to be a witness. So the Lord said I gave you power. I did some studying on witnesses. And I found out that.
- There are like. There's many different types. But there's four types of witnesses. That are there. And God showed me. That this is like the different stages.
- Of a Christian's life. That we should be. All of these witnesses. At some point when we mature. The first witness. Is an eyewitness.
- [ 11 : 14 ] An eyewitness is. Someone who's seen something. It may not have happened to them personally. But they witnessed it. They're an eyewitness.
- It didn't happen to me. But I seen. It happened. There should be a testimony in your life. That you've seen God move for somebody else. He's an eyewitness.
- That's the first one. The second witness. Is what's called a fact witness. A fact witness. Is the one that the thing happened to.
- So when I become a fact witness. I don't just say what I've seen in somebody else's life. I testify what happened to. Me. I'm a fact witness.
- I got the facts. It happened to me. I seen it. That's the second stage. That you should start out being an eyewitness. And you should graduate to the point. That you are a fact witness.
- [ 12 : 19 ] That you can testify to a fact. That I know what God can do. Because he did it for me. I'm a fact witness. The third level.
- Is what's called a character witness. A character witness is a witness they bring to the stand to testify to someone's character. They didn't see what happened.

But the character of that person. They should speak to the character. When we get to this stage. Our character should be a witness. That someone should see your character.

And say they know God. They are a character witness. That the way they conduct themselves.

The way that they move. The way I can tell by their character. See the disciples who were not learned. They said hold up.

[ 13 : 19 ] We know that these are unlearned fishermen. But we know. They've been with Jesus. It's something about them. I can tell. It's not their education.

It's that they've been in the presence. The disciples were character witnesses. That should be the next level. The last level.

Is what's called an expert witness. In trial. What an expert witness would do. They'll call in. They may specialize in ballistics. Or in different things.

And so aerodynamics. And they would come just to testify. Of the facts. And the things that they know. They're expert witnesses. At some point in our lives. That we should be expert witnesses.

That we should be able to take the word. In our lives. And bring them together. And be an expert. That I can't just show you my life.

[ 14 : 15 ] I can take you in scripture and show you. I'm an expert witness. Witness. And so there are different levels in our lives. As witnesses we should be.

Now here's the thing. God has a duty to protect you. As a witness. You have a duty to protect your witness. Let me explain.

As a witness. God will protect you. I just read it in Isaiah 43. He said when you go through all these things. Through these trials. Through the water. I'm with you. I'm going to protect you. It's part of the witness protection program.

I got you. But then it's up to you. To protect your witness. Hmm. What do I mean by that? The Bible says. Don't let your good.

Be evil. Spoken of. That you have a responsibility. In yourself. To protect your witness. And some of us get in trouble.

[ 15 : 15 ] With our tongue. And our thumbs. Your tongue. And your thumbs. Have gotten you in trouble. Because especially in this political season.

That a lot of us. Rather win an election. Than to win souls. Your tongue.

And your thumbs. That we're pointing people. To a political candidate. And when was the last time. You pointed someone to Jesus. If you posted.

As much as you do politics. About your Christ. We're going through an area. A time. And an era. Where we're getting de-churched.

There are people. Leaving the church. And not because of Jesus. They're leaving because of us. Amen. We have failed.

[ 16 : 13 ] In the area. Of being effective witnesses. Right now. And you may say. That's not our intent. I get it. But intent versus impact. Is different.

Because though you didn't intend it. You are still impacting. And you better be careful. With what you're doing. With your witness.

You can't do that. Any kind of way. With your witness. That's right. That's right. Amen. When I left. Columbia. When we moved up here. About. Over two years ago.

The place where I worked. We got transferred. I was walking around. I was telling everyone goodbye. And I was saying my. My final. Farewells. Before I left. There was. A young man that called me.

To his work post. He said. Man. You got to come see me. Before you leave. And I went back there. To see him. And when I got to his work post. He told me. Thank you. He said.

[ 17 : 13 ] I thank you. Because. Because what you say. And what you do. Since you've been here. Has matched up. He said. I thank you. For being an example. He said.

Because many people. In your position. Don't do what you do. And he said. Man. And I thank you. And he said. I've been watching you. For all of these years. And I've asked people.

The same thing. And they all. Say the same thing. Consistently. And I just want to thank you. For representing. What you say. No. No. And that's not for me.

What it let me know. Is that people. Will read you. Before they read the Bible. And that there are. Five gospels. Really. There's the math.

The gospel. According to Matthew. And the gospel. According to Mark. Luke and John. But then there's also. The gospel. According to you. That you.

[ 18 : 09 ] See Paul put it this way. In second Corinthians. He said. You are walking. Epistles. That's right. Not written with ink. But you're written. With the Holy Spirit.

With the spirit. It's writing. Not on tablets. But on hearts. That's right. That you should walk. In a way. That people will read you. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. And I wonder what they're fighting in the scriptures according to you. Okay, let me read it.

Paul talking to the Corinthians. Second Corinthians 3 verses 2 through 3.

He says this. He said, you are epistles, are epistles written in our hearts, known and read by all men.

[ 19 : 04 ] Clearly, you are an epistle of Christ. A letter. Ministered by us, written not with ink, but by the spirit of the living God.

Not on tablets of stone, but on tablets of flesh. That is of the heart. Paul is telling the Corinthians, be careful. You are an epistle. An epistle is a letter.

All of these books that Paul wrote are considered epistles. They really describe Christian conduct. So if Paul says you are an epistle, then what should people see when they read you?

Christian conduct. If you are an epistle, oh God. Paul said you are an epistle. Here is the thing, because what people learn about God, they are going to learn through you.

See, in Matthew 16, Jesus was talking to his disciples. He asked them, he says, who do men say that I am? Who do they say that I am?

[ 20 : 14 ] In the circles you run with, in the people you are around, who do people say that I am? Some say John the Baptist. Some say Isaiah. Some say, and then he stopped.

He said, who do you say that I am? Here's the thing. People will speak about Jesus according to what you say. He said, what, if they are around them, that means they are the closest to Jesus.

What they say is going to be dependent on what they told them. See, a lot of people don't know who your spouse is. But they know your spouse according to what you say.

My spouse is terrible. They treat me bad. They only think about themselves. So then that's why your girlfriend said, oh, you should leave him. You don't have to put up with them. They know about your spouse according to you.

They hadn't witnessed it. It's according to what your spouse said. So when Jesus was asking them, who do men say that I am? It was an indictment against them.

[ 21 : 20 ] What are you saying? Do you even know who you following? And they were guessing. And then finally Peter spoke and said, thou art Christ.

The son of God. He said, flesh and blood didn't reveal that to you. And he said, upon this rock, I will build my church. And the gates of hell should not prevail against it.

That on that testimony of Jesus, that when you walk with that testimony, the gates of hell cannot prevail. It's your witness protection.

He said, who do men say that I am? According to you. If people were to look at you, who would they say Christ is? According to you.

According by what you say. According by what you do. In Acts 1, Jesus said, I gave you the power to be witnesses.

[ 22 : 27 ] But he told them four places to be a witness. And I want to give you two examples. One is who you should witness to.

And the other is what you should witness through. Who you should witness to. What you should witness through.

The first place he told them was Jerusalem. Jerusalem, too, is your family. Jerusalem is home. That's home base.

If you should know who you should witness to, you're Jerusalem. What do your family say about you? I can find out about her husband by what his wife said.

Not even by what she said, by her mannerisms. She'll say it all over her face. When his name come up. Does she light up or does she? Yeah, he ushers at church, but at home.

[ 23 : 34 ] Yeah, he can say hello to you, but he don't even speak to his children when he. Your first place of witness is your Jerusalem.

It's home. The second place is Judea. That's your neighborhood. That's the region. That your neighborhood should know who you serve.

That you have to be a witness in Judea. That's the people. That's work. That's all. That's your neighborhood. The third place is Samaria.

That's the people you don't like. Samaria was a place that the Jews avoided.

They would take extra time to go around Samaria to get to Jerusalem because they didn't like the people who lived in Samaria. The Samaritans. Samaritans.

[ 24 : 33 ] And the Lord says a part of your witness should be to the people you don't like. That just because you don't like them don't mean you can withhold your witness.

Or your help. I mean real help. I mean help without looking down on them help. See help looking down on someone is not help.

You serving yourself when you do that. But when you serve them. That's being able to go to people you don't like.

That's Samaria. That's why Jesus said I must need to go through Samaria. Samaria. Pastor Kitts.

Because there's a woman there who was one of the greatest witnesses. Hold up. How did the disciples just come from the town and all they had was food and when she went back to the town she came back with a harvest.

[ 25 : 37 ] The disciples didn't produce what she produced. No no hold up. The disciples was just in the same place.

While Jesus was talking to her at the well. They came back to the well with nothing but food wondering why Jesus was talking to her. She left the well and went back to the city and got the whole city to come back to see a man.

That you told me everything I ever done. She was a witness. She received the water and then she went and gave the water.

Oh God. She was a witness. In Samaria. The people that didn't even like. And she was double dislike because she was a Samaritan and a woman.

Samaria. The uttermost parts of the world. Which means the people you don't know. Othermost parts of the world.

[ 26 : 46 ] It's going to people you don't even know where they at. We do pretty good. We Dominican Republic man we rock it. I'm just saying it's people you don't know. So those are the people you should witness to. Your family.

Your neighborhood. The people you don't like. And the people you don't know. That's who you witness to. What you have to witness through. Jerusalem.

Depicted disappointment. That savior was just crucified there. Jesus said go back to the place of disappointment. To be a witness.

There's some places you have avoided. Because it's a place of disappointment. And God said you can't avoid it no more. You got to go back to the place of disappointment.

To be a witness. You ran. See that's the reason why God made me write the book I wrote. Deformed with purpose. Because I would try to hide my deformity.

[ 27 : 46 ] I can't turn my hands over. This is how far they go. I was born like that. And I would ball my fist up. And do certain things so people didn't know.

And I would try my best not for people to know. Because I didn't want anyone to feel sorry for me. And so that's why I went on and played basketball. Played football on the college level. Because I was determined you not to know my deformity.

But God said I'm not getting glory out of that. I can't get glory out of you trying to hide the stuff I delivered you from.

And so you write the book. So they know that your limitations is only the ones you put on you. That was the reason.

Go back to the place of disappointment. Judea. Is the place of conflict. We just read in John 11.

[ 28 : 49 ] When Jesus said I got to go to Judea. They said didn't they just try to stone you there? Why are you going back? That's the place of contention. It's a place of conflict. You got to witness through conflict.

I don't know why I'm feeling marriages today. Even if you and your spouse is not getting along. You got to witness through. The conflict. Because you can get your wife back.

You can get your husband. Somebody needed that today. Yeah. Yeah. Somebody struggling in your marriage. And you make it look good when you come in here. But God said you're going to witness through your conflict and get your marriage back.

You got to witness through conflict. Samaria. You got to witness through your prejudice. Yeah. Come on. Yeah.

I'm dealing with it. You have to witness through prejudice. Do people who don't look like you. Talk like you. Do what you do.

[ 30 : 01 ] May not have the same lifestyle as you. You don't determine who deserves the gospel. You have to witness through your prejudice.

And then uttermost parts of the world you got to witness through uncertainty. See the uttermost parts of the world you don't know what's out there.

It's unknown. But it's uncertainty. And you still got to witness. Some of you don't know what might happen tomorrow. But you still got to be a witness. You still got to witness through your uncertainty.

Who you witness to. And who you witness through. See Lazarus. Let me go to the text. Lazarus. When Jesus got there.

And this is the indictment that I felt the Lord put on me. Because we put so much emphasis on deliverance. And no emphasis on discipleship. We love to lay people out.

[ 31 : 11 ] But we don't show them how to walk it out when they get up. That when they get delivered. They're still damaged from what the demon did to them.

That's why Jesus. He could have talked to the stone. And told it to roll away. He told them to move the stone. He did his part. He called Lazarus to come forth.

And then he told them to take the grave clothes off of him. Show them how to walk unbound. You show them.

It's discipleship. He did the deliverance. He got them up from the dead. But what happens after they get up? What do we do with the baby on the delivery table?

You can't leave them there. You got to show them how to walk this thing out. It's discipleship. And we don't talk about it a lot.

[ 32 : 14 ] We love deliverance services. But we need some discipleship time. God said you go make disciples. You teach them to observe all the things that I have commanded you.

Which means it got to work in you before it works in them. Then when we make disciples. Let the word work in you. So that they can see an example and it can work in them.

Jesus went back to Bethany. And in our Christian maturity. Bethany represents our life as a Christian.

The people in Bethany. It means the house of affliction. But even through affliction. There's three things that we should be exemplifying. And it's represented in the people of Bethany.

The first one is Martha. Because we give Martha a hard time. But in your Christian life you need to learn how to serve. See that's what Martha did.

[ 33 : 21 ] She was busy serving. But that's what you're supposed to do. Martha represents serving. Mary. Who was at the feet of Jesus. Who wiped his feet with her hair.

She represents your worship. Martha your service. Mary your worship. And Lazarus your walk.

The three W's of your witness as you mature as a Christian is right there in Bethany. It's Martha. Your work. Your service. Mary your worship.

And Lazarus your walk. If you look at John 12. It said that Lazarus was at the feast with Jesus. He was sitting having dinner with Jesus. And they said they didn't come just to see Jesus.

They came to see Lazarus. You think everybody that come here come to see Jesus? They come to see what we do. The ones who represent Jesus.

[ 34 : 26 ] They said they wanted to put him to death. Because of him people came to know Christ. He was a walking witness. And today.

God wants to create in you a witness. Because all you see is your weakness. And God said I'm about to turn your weakness into a witness.

That's right. Yeah. That's right. So God has broken somebody. He's pricking somebody's heart. Even in this stillness.



I know he's working on someone. And God woke me up even this morning. And he said someone wasn't going to come today. You wasn't coming. You were wrestling with it.

And finally you made the decision to come. And God said that was me. Because you needed to hear this word. Because today you become a witness.

[ 35 : 26 ] On your feet. It's altar call time. My first appeal. Is for those who have been tricked in your heart. Today you become a witness. Like Landon said.

I seen too much. I know too much. I'm a witness. Put me on the stand. When Paul went to go see King Agrippa.

In Acts 26. He walked it down. He told King Agrippa. In face of those in authority. He said. This is who I used to be. I used to persecute the Christians.

And I was one of the best Pharisees. I studied. I know. But I was going against Christ. But he said. One day. Christ's light shined on me.

And knocked me off my beast. It was the day of my conversion. And he said. After that day. Man I've been going with Christ. And then after that.

[ 36 : 24 ] He gave him the gospel. He said. The hope. The expectation. This is the Christ. This is he. Who was born.

He lived. He was died and buried. But he rose again. And King Agrippa said. Paul. You almost. Boy. You almost convinced me to be a Christian.

Because of his witness. And I'm just saying today. We got plenty of people to witness to. But it's going to start with you. Who's willing to be a witness.

And step out and say. I need Christ. I tell you. It was the best decision. I ever made. If you knew me. Before I knew Christ. When I married my wife.

She had my picture on her desk. And she worked with a lot of people. That went to school with me. She said. That's your husband? That's him? She said.

[ 37 : 26 ] Listen. He already told me everything. I'm not worried. Yes. That's my husband. She was a witness. Of what God did in my life.

And God wants to do the same in yours today. The altar is open. If you've been poked. And you know. I need to be a witness. Don't worry about who's around you. If you are the one. Who got.

You almost didn't come. You made up in your mind. If you are that one. Come to this altar. Family is open. Don't worry about who's around you. She's■■■.

That's good. Don't worry about who's around you. Bye.

Paul.