

# John 5:30-47 “Bearing Witness”

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 05 November 2023

Preacher: Derrick Harris

[ 0 : 0 0 ] You are listening to a message from Southwood Presbyterian Church in Huntsville, Alabama. Our passion is to experience and express grace. Join us.

Amen. Good morning, everybody. For those of you who may not remember, our senior pastor, Will, is in India, and he is doing very well in India.

He actually is preaching this morning, and tomorrow he starts teaching in one of the conference-type seminary places that we partner with, and then Wednesday he will be a youth retreat speaker.

That should be interesting. And he said he appreciates your prayers, and he's very thankful for this place, so I was texting with him a little bit.

So just an update there. He is there safely and doing really well. And I'm privileged to get to lead us this morning. I'm also privileged to have Skeets lead with me this morning. Thank you, Skeets. I love having our elders be a part of leading up here.

[ 1 : 0 0 ] It's not easy to do, and I'm just really thankful to have y'all's voices in our lives, and so we'll get to do that again next week as well. But let me pray for us this morning before we jump into looking at God's Word together.

Father in heaven, thank you for this time. Thank you for these wonderful people. Every face in here is a life and a soul. And this morning they're going through something, and you've brought them here for something.

May that be your spirit that ministers to me and to us together as we look at your Word and consider the things that you say. Thank you, Father. It's in Jesus' name that I pray these things.

Amen. Amen. So, some of y'all know this. I play music, and I used to play a lot more than I do now. And, like, there's this particular place in Birmingham called Work Play Theater, and there was this guy there who ran the sound.

And his name is Davey, okay? And Davey is one of the men who you meet and you are like, am I a man? Okay?

[ 2 : 1 0 ] Because he is so very manly man. And when he talks, he talks like this! And Davey is one of the scariest men that I ran into for quite some time.

And so I would show up to play these concerts, and I got to know Davey, and I would get sometimes a little intimidated by him, but I kept, he was on my heart, like I wanted to talk to Davey. I wanted to interact with Davey. But he was cold. He didn't really want to talk to me. And most of the time he could be misinterpreted as kind of mean. So it became the backdrop to every concert there that I would play at Work Play.

How am I going to talk to Davey? And so I found myself, though, praying for Davey a lot. I found myself wanting to encourage him and to listen to his story.

But I didn't really know what to do to get over that hump. But what I found was I was longing for this doorway to bear witness.

[ 3 : 1 2 ] I think that's what was really going on inside my heart. If you think about that word witness. Witness is a person who sees an event and they give evidence or proof of that event or that person or that thing.

Bearing witness, then, would be showing that something exists or is true. It's giving a truthful testimony about what you've seen.

It's speaking honestly about something that is important to you for the purpose of showing that it does exist or that thing is true. Now, there's a very popular TV show on right now that's about to enter into its fifth season.

And it follows the life of a lucrative estate businessman. And he's purchased a large ranch in Utah. It's a 500-acre site previously owned by the government and the site of purported paranormal and UFO-related activities.

Now, the series follows a team of scientists, investigators, and skeptics who have been brought to the ranch to investigate the reports by testing them scientifically.

[ 4 : 25 ] And the latest investigation led them to a location on the ranch where they've witnessed time being manipulated and gravity not operating normally.

And they speculate that it could be a naturally occurring wormhole. Okay? They speculate. But as they witness and they film these amazing phenomenon, they bear witness about them, providing evidence in an attempt to show that these things indeed exist and are true.

Now, I recently met some friends who worship at a different church in a completely different denomination than we are in. And when we had them over for dinner, it was fun to hear how they were talking about what their church services are like.

And one of the really wonderful things that they mentioned that they do in each service is that they have a time where people are given opportunities to stand up and bear witness about what God has done and is doing in their lives.

Kind of what we do at the Thanksgiving service that Kelly mentioned. And at our meal, when they were over at our house, they were doing that very thing as they told us about how God had delivered them from some really, really tough circumstances in their lives and how he's still at work in their family.

[ 5 : 49 ] They were giving truthful testimony about what they've seen and experienced. And so, as I was walking and praying about these scriptures today and thinking through this and praying through it, I started to notice these things around me that I had never noticed when I was walking before.

In a different way. It's just interesting as I was praying about it. So, at first, I looked up and I was like, wow, that's really heavenly. That's really, really beautiful. And these things, to me, as I looked, I started to notice them crying out, God, God, God.

There was this little anthill that was made from all of the leftovers from the, all these leftovers from the clippings from the grass that was cut.

And these little creatures that God created, they make a home. Then I looked out and I saw this. I didn't know what that was. I got closer and it was that. And if you get closer, it's that.

It's amazing. And I'm like, God did that. God created the thing that created that thing. And it bears witness to God. And then there was this beautiful bird.

[ 7 : 05 ] I mean, that looks like something out of Jurassic Park. But it's amazing. And it was just this blue that even, that doesn't even capture it. It's like a beautiful piece of art that I was looking at.

And then there's ducks. Have you just thought about ducks? They're like paddle boat animals. Like if a paddle boat could have fur on, that's all they do. And they sit there and they talk to each other. But if you know what's going on underneath the surface there, it's amazing what ducks are. And if you look today in our passage that we're going to look at briefly together, what we're really learning about is bearing witness.

Okay? A witness that proclaims that Christ really is God. Okay? They're providing evidence, this passage today, to show that God exists and that God is true.

And so Jesus is going to tell us what he thinks about all that. And in the verses just before these verses, we learn, remember last week, why the Jews are seeking to kill Jesus.

[ 8 : 13 ] Because not only had he just healed a man at the pool at Bethesda on the Sabbath, which they said was sin, because it was work. But he was also now calling God his own father.

And he was making himself equal with God. And he was pointing to the authority that he himself has to give eternal life. And then he also had just spoken about right before these verses, the day of judgment.

Okay? Where all those who have died, everyone who died, he says, will be raised. Okay? But not all will be raised to eternal life. There'll be a resurrection to death and eternal judgment.

And there'll be a resurrection to life. So all of these precede this verse here. So now he's going to continue and he's going to shift the focus to witness. So let's start just by looking at the first five verses.

I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge. And my judgment is just. Because I seek not my own will, but the will of him who sent me.

[ 9 : 17 ] If I alone bear witness about myself, my testimony is not true. There is another who bears witness about me. And I know that the testimony that he bears about me is true.

You sent to John and he is born witness to the truth. Not that the testimony that I receive is from man, but I say these things so that you may be saved. He was a burning and shining lamp and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light.

The first thing that Jesus does here, notice, is he refers to the Jewish law. Okay. Not only in the Hebrew culture, but in most every ancient culture, for something to be verified as true in court, there has to be more than one testament.

Okay. Today you're going to see it in the court system. What do we have in courts? Witnesses, right? Well, in the Jewish courts, if you claim that something was true and you don't have evidence to support it outside of your own testimony or other eyewitnesses, then it fails.

You had to have at least two eyewitnesses. Okay. So Jesus knew this and he's speaking their language to them. Okay. About himself though. And he's using the standard of their law.

[ 10 : 36 ] And he's saying, God has given you evidence, all the evidence that you need to back up the claim that I am God. That I am who I say that I am.

That I am equal with God, the Father. And what's the first evidence that he mentions in here? Who's the first witness that he calls to the stand?

It's John the Baptist. So witness number one there is John the Baptist. And he tells us this, that John is a lamp. So Jesus here is talking about himself.

If you're wondering who Jesus says he is, he's going to tell us in these next verses here. He describes John first as a burning and a shining lamp. And he even points to the fact that they believed the things that John said.

And they rejoiced in them for a while. So Jesus is saying, hey, John was a lamp. And that's the witness of John. He was a human who devoted his life to shining a light.

[ 11 : 39 ] Saying, repent and prepare the way for who? Jesus. Now, the handheld lamps of this time, they would have been an oil lamp.

And they only produced a very small amount of light. Usually about as much as a candle or a big candle. And though he was a lamp, he's saying he was not the light. So think about that.

John is a lamp. He's providing a small amount of light. Jesus is going to come in and just, right? Blow the whole thing up.

Turn all the lights on. So though he was a lamp, he was not the light. So Jesus then moves on to call another witness to the stand. And do you know who he calls to the stand next?

It's in your bulletin. God. His works, miracles first. And God the Father. He's going to put these two together here, okay? So saying this, and let's read these verses together.

[ 12 : 41 ] The testimony that I have is greater than that of John. For the works that the Father has given me to accomplish, the very works that I am doing, bear witness about me, Jesus, that the Father has sent me.

And the Father who sent me has himself borne witness about me. His voice you've never heard. His form you've never seen. And you do not have his word abiding in you.

For you do not believe the one whom he has sent. Okay. If John is a lamp, which he just told us, then Jesus now is the light, the real light.

And God is here. And so Jesus here is pointing to his miracles first. Okay. If you need proof, look at what I'm doing. And he's been performing them saying they give proof to the realities of the things that he's seen and who he says he is.

They witness. And the fact that he and the Father are one. Remember right before this, the Jews tried to kill him. And that's because he's bearing witness to these things. And some people will say to you today, it does not say in the Bible anywhere that Jesus is God.

[ 13 : 50 ] That is not true. Okay. That Jesus never claimed to be God. That is not true. You're seeing it right here. But there's lots of accounts elsewhere where it's right in your face.

But how is Jesus the light? There's two verses here to look at. It's really a lot of verses in two slides. Again, Jesus spoke to them saying, I am the light of the world.

Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. So the Pharisees said to him, You are bearing witness about yourself. Your testimony is not true.

Now remember, this is the same thing Jesus has just been doing. He knows the whole system there. And Jesus answered, Even if I do bear witness about myself, my testimony is true.

For I know where I came from and where I'm going. But you do not know where I come from or where I'm going. You judge according to the flesh.

[14:51] I judge no one. Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is true. For it's not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me. In your law, it's written that the testimony of two people is true.

I am the one who bears witness about myself. And the Father who sent me bears witness about me. Okay, this would have blown their minds, right? He right now is saying, you do not get it.

I am God. Okay, he's pointing to Yahweh as bearing witness about him as God. This would be an astounding claim. So the Father, you know, in the Trinity, the Father God sends the Son.

The Son will accomplish the work of salvation, who then goes back to heaven and sends us who? God the Holy Spirit. This is the Trinity. They are all co-equal in power and glory, though.

Okay, we don't understand this great mystery, but you see community from the very beginning of existence in the Godhead. And if you ever long for community, that's why. God made you that way.

[16:00] Community is a good thing, but because of sin, it's also a very broken thing. So it's hard. It's not easy. But that's why the church is so important. That's why the church is so worthwhile. And I don't just mean these walls.

I mean the people of God. We're supposed to be restoring that brokenness in the world and those relationships. One single smile and hug and conversation at a time. So he's going to send us, though.

He's going to talk about later in John sending us the Holy Spirit. But we'll probably get to that in the year 3000 at the rate we're going. So hang on. So he tells us that nobody has ever heard the Father's voice.

No one has seen his form. Okay? Except for who? What's assumed there? Jesus. Right? He was there in the beginning when the earth had not been fully formed and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

This is also what I saw when I was walking. That just, right? Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And he says that they've never seen the Father except in Jesus.

[17:16] Now, why not? He says it's because they don't have his word abiding in them. Skeets mentioned that earlier. What does it mean to have the word abiding in us? And Jesus is saying, if you don't believe me, you don't believe the one who God has sent.

Then you don't know God. I am God. Okay? Okay, John told you to look out for me. And here I am doing the miracles, teaching you the truth, about to die for you, and you don't believe me.

What does that mean to abide in Jesus? Because we don't want to make that mistake. I had this friend in high school, and I couldn't drive, but he would always drive us around.

His name was John Mark Adrian. And he always had the phrase, abide or don't ride. And if you did anything outside of his rules in the car, he would kick you out.

He was known to just drop you off on the side of the road and make you walk. And most of it had to do with passing gas. You could not do that in his car. Okay? And he would look at people, he would go, abide or don't ride.

[18:21] And he was serious. Well, to abide in Jesus is to believe and to do exactly what he says, and then to bear witness about that, to shine light, just like John did, with our lives, to show him to be true, to provide evidences to those around us in the relationships, to bear witness about what he's doing in our lives, to show God to be true.

John is a lamp. Jesus is a light. And as we learned earlier in the book, the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. And now, as Jesus is continuing, he's going to call another witness to the stand.

And this is a big one. Scripture. You search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life. And it's they that bear witness about me.

Yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life. I do not receive glory from people, but I know that you do not have the love of God within you.

I've come in my Father's name, and you don't receive me. If another comes in his own name, you will receive him. How can you believe when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?

[19:40] Okay, again, equating himself with God. Don't miss that. But this is really important.

Okay, and here's why. Because Jesus is telling us that scripture is so very, very important to bear witness about him that he's calling it to the witness stand.

Now, why is that different than the other two witnesses? They're both meaningful and huge, right? God himself, miracles, John the Baptist. But we hold what he's talking about now.

You can look at it. I can't look at John the Baptist right now. I can't necessarily see all of Jesus' miracles that he talked about, but I can read the word, and you can read the word. That's something that's still with us right here and right now that he's talking about right then and there.

It means that in this world of chaos, okay, confusion, fake news, whatever you want to call it, you have truth to guide you.

The things that it bears witness about and hear are true. The life, the death, the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and not only that, the fact that Jesus is coming back, it's all real.

[ 20 : 49 ] And Jesus is saying all of this to the most educated Bible scholars of the day. It would be the smartest people that you could talk to about scriptures out of that time.

And I want you to think about this. If the most educated Bible scholars of the day could spend so much time studying and teaching the scriptures that talk about Jesus, yet completely miss the point and the purpose, what does that say for us today?

We can make the same mistake, okay? It's very possible for you to worship Christianity and miss Jesus, to worship the Bible and miss God himself.

I don't want you or me to make that mistake. And we have an opportunity to look at our hearts today. Here God himself is looking in the face of his creation, and he's saying, you care more about the glory of man than you do about me.

You use the scriptures that testify about me to your advantage. You use God as a means to your end. You twist them to make them say what you want, and all the while, it's killing you.

[ 22 : 09 ] Life is standing in front of your face, and you want to kill it. Scripture is more than just information, okay? Scripture is about transformation.

It's how we hear the voice of God. And if it doesn't transform you, you should probably stop and ask yourself, why? Why does it not transform you?

There's something behind that. There's something underneath it. And it might be different for each of you. Because it's God's inspired word. It's the sword of the spirit. And it's the only weapon that Jesus ever used, if you think about it.

Remember when he was tempted by Satan? What did Satan use to try to tempt Jesus? He used the word of God, didn't he? Mm-hmm. And what did Jesus do?

He slayed him like a Jedi, right? He just vanquished him with this. Well, yeah, you're right. Scripture says that. But here's what else it says. Slam, drop the mic. Satan runs away, right?

[ 23 : 14 ] The word made flesh wields those scriptures. And as we learn in Ephesians, it's the sword of the spirit. So don't make the mistake of just getting so busy that this is another thing you got to do, that this is just information.

Satan knows this information better than you and I. Okay? But we've got to let these scriptures transform us. This is back to what it means to abide in Jesus.

Right? It means to abide in his word. Abide or don't ride. If we're not in the word and we're wondering why God isn't at work in our lives or we don't experience him, that's where it starts, right there.

Okay? Start there. Are you abiding in his word? It means that in everything, everything we do, everything we think about, every problem we have, we go back and we search the scriptures. And then we let the scriptures search us. And then we let the scriptures lead us. And in faith, we take steps to do the things that it says in every facet of our lives.

[ 24 : 23 ] And when we're done doing that, then we do it again. And the more we do that, the more we start to conform to Christ and his word and his principles and the things that he commands us to do.

And we grow and we become transformed. And that's all the work of the spirit inside us. But apart from his word, what are we listening to for his voice?

Okay? And I just want to encourage you in that. If you don't know where to start, we've got a two-year Bible plan where you can just read on an app every day. But I'm going to tell you, it's easy to get legalists about it and still see it as information and forget God.

But it's scripture transforming you. Okay? Disciples sit under the authority of their teacher. In verse 44, Jesus points out that they cared more about each other than they did about God.

And when we care more about each other and our lives and our busyness and everything, the same thing happens to us. Okay? We miss Jesus. So disciples sit under the authority of their teacher.

[ 25 : 27 ] And we know our teacher's voice through this book of his special revelation. You ever thought about whether or not you sit under the authority of scripture? At least this morning you can. You know who else sits under the authority of scripture?

Angels. Okay? Okay? Consider this verse from Galatians. I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel.

Not that there's another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed.

As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed. For am I now seeking the approval of man or of God?

Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ. Angels sit in submission to scripture.

[ 26 : 35 ] Can you think of any religion that bases its context and its principles upon what an angel said? Anybody think of one?

Mormonism. I think Jehovah's Witnesses, can we throw that in there? It's been a while. And it preaches something contrary to what the scriptures say. This stuff is very real.

And then there's other things. It could be, you can worship TikTok. Okay? You can worship anything. You can put anything in the central core and receive that information as the guiding principles of your life more so than Christ.

But what sits in authority over you? What is your foundation? I just want you to consider that. May our religious lives not blind us from the God that is in front of us every day and the opportunities that he gives us to bear witness.

So we can listen to voices each day as we read his word, his voice, and then ask, would you search me? Would you lead me? Will you show me where I'm off?

[ 27 : 42 ] Will you restore me? So John is a lamp. Jesus is the light. Scripture teaches that Jesus is God. And now Jesus calls his last witness to the stand, Moses.

Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you, Moses, on whom you set your hope.

Again, man. For if you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?

Moses. So, he's telling us here that Moses is a messenger. Jesus ends this passage by appealing to those words that someone, that the Jews claim to believe.

So he's using something that they understand. But again, he's pointing out the blindness. He says, even Moses was writing about me. And if you say you believe him and you don't believe me, you even really don't believe Moses.

[ 28 : 42 ] You don't understand what he was doing. And he's pointing then later to the day of judgment where Moses' words will be the ones that condemn them. Now, what does that mean? It means that because they believe Moses' words, yet they chose to not believe that they were about Jesus, that that will be the very thing that condemns them.

And it's the law, remember, that shows us our sin. Okay? But only through Jesus can we be forgiven of that sin. So they're missing that whole piece.

And this echoes earlier verse in John 1. John 1.17 says, the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

So both are necessary, but one is pointing necessarily to the other. So what is grace there? What is grace? What does it mean? Think about this. To be a people of grace who experience sin express it, which you hear a lot here.

I think it means this in a nutshell, in a very small secular version of saying this, I guess I should say, not a lot of God language in this.

[ 29 : 57 ] I can make mistakes in front of you, and you can make mistakes in front of me, and it's okay. Why? We'll get to the God language now.

Because while we are sinners, Christ died for us. He doesn't hold our sin against us. So why would I hold any of your mistakes against you? That doesn't mean we ignore them or that we say that

they're healthy, but if you've experienced the grace of God in your life and you've really been forgiven, and you're holding someone else under your thumb of condemnation, you're not getting it. You're missing the gospel, and I'm missing the gospel. Because we're supposed to be people of no condemnation. To live a no condemnation life means that that worst conversation you're in right now, even if it's an unhealthy relationship, you don't have the right to condemn them.

Because you don't have the right to be uncondemned by God except by His grace. And we are to share that grace with the world. That doesn't mean don't set boundaries.

I'm not saying that every relationship that you're in that's toxic is a good one, but if you can't forgive, then we're missing something. Because we're supposed to be able to get to a place where we can forgive.

[ 31 : 16 ] Okay? And we need help to do it sometimes. Perhaps what you're missing is the help to get there and the work and the heart work. But we're supposed to live no condemnation lives, and God's sending us now on this redemption mission in this great story of grace.

So to experience it means we go live it. Okay? But the best part of the story is what's ahead. Do you know where you fit in that story? Because you today, if you're here, you're a part of God's story of grace that He's still writing.

And it doesn't have to be flashy and big. You don't have to write the books. You don't have to have the big accolades. God will use you in the grocery store if you let Him. God will use you at your house or with your neighbor.

How is He calling you to express grace where you are in the ordinary things of life? Because that's where He calls the most of us. So John is a lamp.

Jesus is the light. Scripture teaches us that Jesus is God, and Moses is a messenger of that truth, and we're supposed to be messengers of it too. Now here's why it all matters. Worship without witness is not worship.

[ 32 : 32 ] Worship, when I say worship, I don't mean singing praise songs. Okay? I mean Romans 12.1. Offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God.

This is your spiritual act of worship. Have you done that? Many of you have, I'm sure. Have you asked Him to save you? Have you asked Him to forgive you of your sins that He offered on the cross when His blood was given as a propitiation for you?

Have you accepted that gift? If you have, then you say, I have been crucified with Christ, and it's no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. Holy Spirit, through me, going into this world and bearing witness now.

And you are set apart as holy if you are saved. You're looking to His provision instead of yours.

Okay? His life instead of yours. No condemnation in that sense when you face judgment one day.

Eternal judgment will not fall upon you, but eternal life. Well, then you're called to go talk about the witnesses and help other people meet the King, meet the great mediator.

[ 33 : 42 ] Okay? This is where we will find life. And I'm not meaning that all of you have to become street evangelists, but do you stop and look at people? Do you listen? Listen, it's never too late to turn your life around from what you're worshipping.

A lot of times as Christians, y'all, we worship God in our words and we miss all of the people walking around us every day who are these opportunities to just love.

You can bear witness about God by saying, how was your day? And listening to Him. Watch where that leads. Okay? Is bearing witness about Jesus a part of your life.

Worshipping God without witness equals consumer Christianity. Okay? If you are only coming and consuming of God's word every single week and doing nothing with it, it's going to make you miserable.

It's going to make you irritable and you're going to wonder where God is. I don't want you to be there because we're designed to be these lamps shining in the darkness transformed by the word of God.

[ 34 : 51 ] Remember Jesus said, you are salt and light. You put a lamp on a stand. We're like cities on a hill. But if the salt has lost its taste, what's it good for?

Nothing. Except to be trampled underfoot and thrown out. So every day God has a purpose for you and you're going to find it. I'm going to just encourage you. When you start to bear witness, provide evidence of the things that he's done in your life to others, you will see a new side of God and you will see a new depth in your soul that makes church itself even different.

Let me ask you this. Consider this. How many sermons have you heard in your life if you totaled it up in hours? What are you doing with that information?

Because you're supposed to be doing something with it. We get a lot of great food at the church every week.

Are you going and sharing it with anybody? Because when you do, you will find something happens. God becomes bigger. But it starts where you are.

[ 36 : 06 ] Okay? And what are we bearing witness about? that Jesus is who he says he is. That he offers the true meaning of life and existence that we're searching for and so many other things and that he is the God that we're all seeking.

The God who created the universe. We disobeyed him and then brokenness of sin and death and condemnation entered the world and that's the reason why things are so messed up today.

And death holds us in fear. And that's the reason why we are so scared to talk. And we become worshipers of self and life and pleasure but God sent his son to undo the mess and set things straight to fix it all.

And Jesus being crucified for your sins and having then paid that penalty of death on our behalf on the cross as he said he would. If we look to him and we put all things in submission to him and we ask him for forgiveness from our sins he promises that we'll be raised to eternal life.

You have that truth to take to the world to bear light in everything that you do because he took that judgment already you can go out into the world and you don't have to create judgment.

[ 37 : 20 ] And not only that there's four chapters of the gospel it's not just sin and redemption there's creation and restoration. Creation, fall, redemption, restoration.

Because he created the world he's going to recreate it but he's doing it right now through you. So now that you got your fire insurance from hell that's just the two chapter gospel.

If you forget the whole purpose of what you do with it you miss it. And Jesus standing right there in front of us saying don't miss me. Okay? Don't read the scriptures get your salvation go home and miss me in the process.

Alright. Now I've learned a lot about witness. If you want a practical example of witness has anyone met Adriana Clark? She loves peacocks and if you are around her you know it.

Why? Because they're the most incredible bird ever. And if to be a friend of Adriana is to know that she loves peacocks and I didn't care about peacocks until I met Adriana now I love them because she told me how much she loves peacocks.

[ 38 : 30 ] Witness is simply that. People see God at work in our lives we talk about it and they eventually start to ask questions. Are you doing that? Where do you start?

Right? How might what you love be a doorway for that witness? So think about this metaphor. If I wanted to lose weight and I never exercised it wouldn't be a very effective weight loss program. but weight loss without exercise is not weight loss. In the same way if you wanted to lose weight I wouldn't encourage you to start by running a marathon but rather to start small with a walk or a run or just to change one little habit each day.

Over time you would see a difference. The same is true about bearing witness. It takes time it takes intentionality and you got to start small. Okay? So here's my encouragement to you.

If you're like I want this to be a part of my life and it's not, great. Step one is identifying. This is not a guilt trip. I mean this is me with you in this learning this together.

[ 39 : 38 ] But Jesus is bearing witness about himself not just to say oh now you know who I am. It's to go do something with that. Okay? So start here. Pray. Slow down.

Listen to your breath as you're walking. Remember the breath of Jesus that he breathed upon his disciples when they were scared and afraid. Imagine he's standing there with his hand on your shoulder and ask God to help you.

What do you want me to do God? Two, listen. Read his word. Listen to what it says. While you're doing that throughout the day, start listening to the conversations in your own head with yourself.

Okay? What's he letting you hear? And then what are the conversations you're hearing around you? The voices around you. So pray and listen. Then look.

In the same way that that spider web and that anthill and that fog are open doors to see God's glory and nature, what people has he placed in your path as open doors to bear witness for you, just where you are?

[ 40 : 44 ] Ask him to show you three people. That's just a number I'm picking. It sounds great. It's Trinitarian. Three people to start praying for with the intention to shine the love of God to them.

Not the intention that they end up in church. We get sideways. Let's not go there. The intention to do nothing, ask nothing in return, but bear witness about what God's done in your life. Three people.

If everyone in here just had three people that they were bearing witness about God in, wow! You know how many people are impacted in Huntsville? So pray, listen, look, and then speak last. After you've done all of that, repeat steps one through three a hundred more times. Listen, look, pray, listen, look, pray, listen, look, pray, listen, look.

Then consider speaking and opening your mouth. You don't have to have all the answers to everything to ask somebody how they're doing and believe it or not, somebody is tuned into your frequency.

[ 41 : 50 ] They just need you to start broadcasting. Okay? So every time I tried to interact with Davey, he was cold and he didn't want to talk and he was basically mean.

So it became the backdrop of all the concerts that I would play in Birmingham and I found myself continuing to pray for him and wanting to encourage him, but I didn't know what to do until one day I heard him say that he liked cookies and from that day forward for about two solid years, every time I played a concert, I would take him a cookie and I didn't say anything.

I would just walk up to him and give him a cookie and then walk away and he'd be like, what did you give me this cookie? I said, this is a cookie and I'd just walk off, go play the show. Well, at first he thought it was weird and then he started to talk to me and the next thing I knew he would invite me to sit with him and I would just listen and I would usually just talk about a cookie and then he started to talk about his life and then I was able to talk about Jesus.

Fast forward to two years ago, I mean this is like 15 or something years, I hadn't seen the guy, I ran into somebody here that knew him and I said, hey, would you tell him, would you tell Davey, I said, hey, and the next time they saw him, they said, Davey wanted me to tell you, when are you going to come back here and bring him another cookie?

We've got more than a cookie, okay, to give to people. So, bear witness about Jesus and just watch how it will change it.

[ 43 : 30 ] Let me pray for us. We've got a Savior. Lord Jesus, thank you that we can call upon you and that you give us the good news of the gospel. We're merely beggars showing other beggars we're to find bread.

I pray that you would show this congregation where you're calling them to bear witness in their lives, not out of shame or guilt, but out of joy, and that your spirit would drive them to see these opportunities, to bring these to conversations into their grace groups and into their communities, to bear witness about where they're hurting, but also where you're working.

Lord, as you repair this world, one relationship at a time, we pray for salvation for so many that don't know you and restore unto us the joy of salvation that we may overflow.

And I can't wait until we get to come back next week and hear about you then feeding the 5,000 and how you overflow as well. So thank you, Lord Jesus. We give all this to you in worship and we thank you in Christ's name.

Amen. For more information, visit us online at southwood.org. O deferral, visit us online in worship meals, visit us online in worship on meals, from your zor Effective my life and that's timeless, a place in worship and that few gardens underneath or a place in worship and with yourbas is up again of a death