## City on a Hill, Saturday session 4

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[0:00] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. It is our prayer that you will be blessed by the preaching of God's Word.

Yes, that's always a good thing. Did you hear what she said about Publix? Let's do something before we pray, because I want to do a commercial. Can we do commercials?

Okay, the neat thing about my commercials is they don't cost you money. I want to talk to you about different opportunities that you have. By the way, somebody else asked about the Jewish, how do you get information about current events in Israel?

There's a guy named Joel Rosenberg. He is an American Jewish Christian who has recently made Aliyah. He's immigrated to Israel. He was a political campaign manager guy here in the States and in Israel.

And now he's become an author. He writes books, fiction and nonfiction, that have to do with Bible, prophecy, and current events. His books are quite interesting. But if you're interested in staying up on current events that have to do with Israel, he has a blog.

[1:07] It's Joel Rosenberg, and he calls it Flash Traffic. And if you sign up for his blog, he will send you more emails than you want to read about current events going on in Israel. Okay, now, things that you might possibly be interested in.

First of all, out on my display, I have three different kinds of gospel tracts, four Jewish people, same gospel, different approach. Okay? Take one of each.

Take ten of each. Take however many you're going to use. Okay? If you run out, see me, or write to the address on the back that says Everlasting Nation. That's the same thing as IBJM. And we will get you more.

So we will supply you with all the gospel tracts that you can need or want. That was number one. Number two. I really want to talk to you about this. It's called Four Day Focus. It's like what we're doing today except for it's four days all day long.

It's a four-day seminar in Jewish evangelism at the board's headquarters in Chattanooga, Tennessee, actually, in a suburb of Chattanooga called Hickson. It's only about two hours from here. It's four days of instruction.

[2:08] I'm one of the teachers. There are other teachers as well. And we will be doing that June 19th through 22. If you would like to know more about this, we invite you to come and take part. It costs \$125.

Unless you're a full-time college or high school student, it's free. I think I can convince them if you're in the training center that it'd be free. I think they'll go with that.

So anyway, that's an opportunity. If you have a mind toward more excitement, now I know that we're in a church that never offers opportunities to visit the mission field. But IBJM is offering two mission trips this summer.

One of them is to New York, June 5 through 12. It's being led by a lunatic named Sam Wilson. And we're going to be a week on the streets of New York City talking to Jewish people and Gentile from the whole world.

We'll be centering with Shalom Baptist Church in Forest Hills, which is a part of Queens, New York. Forest Hills is 50% Jewish. And so we are going to be working there with the whole world there.

[3:14] Is there anybody here from New York? Right? I have to tell you that most of us, when we go to New York, we don't feel like we're in America anymore. The joke on the team is we're on a mission strip to an island off the coast of America. Anyway, or if you like something with a little more salsa, we have a trip to Mexico as well.

The New York trip is \$995 and Mexico is \$13.95. So as mission trips goes, they're relatively inexpensive. If you want more training and experience in dealing with Jewish people, these are great opportunities.

Just an aside, it's not something I spend a lot of time on. But a lot of times when I go to churches, people say, oh, what do you think about this thing? There's this Jewish Christian Alliance or Christians United for Israel.

All these different groups that are saying, send us your money and we'll help the poor, needy Jewish people in Israel. There is one called Project Nehemiah that's an independent fundamental Baptist ministry. It's a ministry of the local church that I pastored in Tel Aviv.

I worked with them every day for three years. I was the pastor, so I was the leader of it in a sense. We had a director that just did that. He's really the one that was doing it.

But if you are inclined to give money to needy people over in Israel, give it to Project Nehemiah. Okay, because it's really going to get to them. And it'll get to them in the name of Christ from Christians who will be saying, we're Christians and we're giving you this in the name of Christ and seeking opportunities to witness to them.

Okay, next, Tanakhs. We have this set. I don't know what this would cost if you bought it in the store. A bunch of money, I think. But you can't buy it in the store because it's free.

Okay, there is an organization in England called the Society for Distributing the Hebrew Scriptures. And they make these and provide them to us for free. They give them to IBJM by the pallet loads.

Okay, as many as we can use. Now, here's the rule. I can't give it to you. I'm not allowed to give it to a Gentile. But I can give it to you to give to a Jewish person. I can't have one in my own library because it can't go to me.

I'm a Gentile. But they're forgiving to Jewish people. As I've already said, I use them extensively if I'm talking to Jewish people. One of the ways to say, our church loves Jewish people. In fact, our pastor asked me to give you this gift from our church as an expression of our love for you.

[5:33] And by the way, it comes as a set. There's also a New Testament, also Hebrew, English. And we'd like to give that to you if you'd like that one as well. You can have both. And it's free. Can we pay for it?

No, no, no, no. It's a gift because we love you. Okay. This is a great opportunity. Rhonda has used it with success as an opportunity to open doors to witness to her Jewish doctor. Here we've got these.

I've got someone with me today. If you know a Jewish person and you want to take one and give it to them, see me afterwards. And I will most happily give them to you to go. And they're totally free. Last part of the commercial.

I'm doing this thing. I call my little ministry that I do lightbearers. And I have something called a lightbearer's letter. It is not a letter about Sam's ministry to tell you about all the wonderful things that Sam is doing.

Okay. It is a letter I send out by email once a month to say, here are ideas about how you can reach your Jewish neighbor for Jesus. Okay. If you're interested, sign up on the lightbearer's letter and you will begin to get the lightbearer's letter on a monthly basis.

[6:39] Also, we have a website, the lightbearer's website. Again, it's not about my ministry. It's about how you can reach your neighbors for Christ. It will give you all kinds of ideas and suggestions.

So you can, if you sign up here, I'll also get back to you about the website and you can get on to the website. Okay. It's not a website that I get. It's a sign up only website. You have to sign up and you have to log in when you go to it.

Because if we make it open to the whole world, everybody will be in there flaming us all the time. And so we, it's kind of a closed thing just for people who are invited. But you are invited. Okay. Okay. Enough of that.

Now, we have remaining, better eyes I could be able to see that, 54 minutes. And we're going to go straight through from now to one and then we're going to stop and we're going to have lunch. And I'm really looking forward to lunch.

We're going to try to get two lessons done and we won't make it. We're going to get one lesson done and we're going to start the second one. And then we're going to drop it off at one and be done. Okay. And so that's the plan. Let's have a word of prayer and we'll get started.

[7:35] Father, we thank you for the chance to be together. Lord, I thank you for my brothers and sisters. Lord, what a joy it is to spend this time with them.

Bless us, Lord. Help us to learn how we can better share your gospel with the people around us. In Jesus' name, amen. Mrs. Whitholm came to me in the break and she said, you know, in the English versus the second language classes that we're doing, we have a lot of Muslim people coming.

And she said, a vast amount of what you're saying about how to reach Jewish people works just the same for Muslim people. And I was thrilled because truly an awful lot of the things that I'm doing, you know, I'm purporting this to be a Jewish evangelism seminar, but an awful lot of this can be work for Muslims or for Bulgarians or for whoever you want, for anybody.

And so I hope that you will find use for it. We're going to switch the thing and we're supposed to do the next one. The next thing is walls and gates, but we're going to do your story first. So flip to page, I forget which page number it's on.

Okay. Page seven is it? 14. 14. Page 14, your story. By the way, that last page, that's Sunday. So bring it tomorrow to church. So we're going to be doing your story and then we'll go back to walls and gates.

[8:54] Assuming we have some time to do so. Your story is going to talk about how you can use your personal testimony to witness. Okay. This is an important thing to do. I want to start out with Mark 5, 19, where it says, Now, he was talking to the guy that was demon possessed, but he wasn't demon possessed anymore because he'd gotten saved.

I am not suggesting that you're demon possessed. But the principle here is still very good. The principle here is that he said, you know what? The guy said, can I go with you? I want to go with you.

And Jesus said, no. I don't know of any other situation where God said, where Jesus told somebody, no, you can't go with me. But he said, no. Here's what I want you to do. You go home to your family and friends and you tell them what God has done for you.

Okay. That's powerful. Okay. Because those people knew that he was a crazy, naked, screaming, frightening demon guy out in the woods. And now he shows up in his right mind saying, I want to tell you about the love of God.

Do you think anybody listened? I think maybe they did. He even had clothes on and things. And that was great. And so, so why was his testimony powerful? Because they knew him.

[10:08] And they saw the change in him. Okay. Now, probably you weren't as demon possessed as he is. Maybe you weren't demon possessed at all, which would be really good. But if you got saved, then God changed your life.

And the people who are closest to you saw that change. And that's powerful. And so, I want to go, I want to talk a little bit about how to use your story, your personal testimony as a way to witness.

So, the first thing I want to say about it is that your personal testimony is powerful. Got a slide for that, I think. See there, I told you. It's powerful in a lot of ways.

First thing is, is stories are interesting. Did you ever notice that? If I get up and say, all right, I want to tell you a doctrinal thesis on verses of the Old Testament that prophesy about Christ.

You're all going to go, oh boy. If I say, I want to tell you this story about what happened one day when I was talking to you, you're going to say, yeah, what happened? Okay.

[11:11] Because theological treatises are boring, but stories are neat. Everybody likes stories. Okay. And so, when you tell a story, it automatically attracts interest.

Second reason that stories are powerful is that it's hard to argue with your story. Okay. If I say, I hold the position of eternal security, somebody could say, ah, I disagree.

I believe this way. You're wrong. But if I say, Jesus did this in my life, how can he tell you? You're wrong. You don't know what happened in your life? I mean, who is the world's greatest expert on my life?

Me. Okay. And, you know, you can't really argue with somebody and say, something wonderful happened to me. It's like, okay. It's hard to argue with that. People got to listen.

And they don't have to believe it, but you can't really argue with it. So, that's a good thing. Thirdly, I'm going to go off on you just a little bit. I get aggravated with Christians who say, well, I can't really use my testimony because, like, nothing really happened in my life.

[12:15] I'm just kind of a normal, regular person. And I just went to my church and got saved. And really nothing special. Do not say that to me. Don't even think about saying that to me.

Folks, will you think about this for a minute? Like, think about this. You are a sinner. You are lost. You are dead in trespasses and sins. You are on your way to suffer eternally in hell without hope.

And God, you know, the one that created the heavens and the earth, the almighty omniscient one. God, he looked down and he saw you. And he should have gone and sizzled you.

But he looked at you with eyes of love and had compassion on you and sent his son, his son, and sacrificed for you. And he saved you. And he transformed you.

And he indwells you. And you have a home in glory. And he's transforming you. And you're going to be made in his likeness. Yeah, but it's no big deal. Seriously, if you go around saying my testimony is nothing special, you really need to apologize to God.

[13:20] Okay? Your testimony is incredible. What God has done for you is way bigger deal than the Red Sea parting. Okay? Get over this. Well, I'm nobody special.

No, you're not, but God is. And what he did for you is amazing. Okay? So don't be ever ashamed of your testimony. Be thrilled with your testimony.

Not puffed up. But thrilled to death and thankful to God for it. Okay? So don't denigrate your story. Your story is amazing. And God uses your testimony.

Okay? You say, well, what do you mean? Think about Paul. Everywhere Paul went, he was telling a story. Everywhere he'd go, he'd say, hey, I want to tell you something. I was going down the road in Damascus. There was a big light knocking me off the horse.

Actually, we don't technically know that he was on a horse, but I got to think he was on a horse. And I heard this voice speaking. He told that story everywhere he went. Okay? Because God uses our testimony. And God will use your testimony.

You say, yeah, but you know what? You know, I was a little kid. Mommy and Daddy told me about Jesus and I believed. And how is that interesting? You know what? You're going to be talking to somebody and say, you know what?

I was just growing up in coming Georgia and I was just a normal coming kid. But somebody came to me and told me about Jesus. And they're going to say, you know what? I'm just a normal coming kid too.

And that sounds like my life. Tell me again what happened. See, people are going to relate to your story. And God's going to send you those people. We have this idea that you have to be like a murderer, biker, gang, survived some death-defying act in the war in order to give a good.

No, you don't. Okay. Next. Prepare your story. Now, people look at me like I'm stupid and say, what do you mean prepare your story? Okay. Preacher prepares a message. Gets up and preaches it.

Trust me. Those kinds of messages he's preaching, you don't get them up and make them up overnight. He prepared them. He worked hard to put those together. Okay. Now, you need to prepare your testimony for witnessing.

You're like, oh, that's crazy. I already know my story. I know what happened to me. Yeah, but if you try to tell it just off the cuff, you're going to mess it up. Okay. And so it needs to be thought through and prepared and worked out just like the pastor works out his messages.

Okay. Except for you don't have to do three of them every week. You just have to do one. Okay. So prepare your message. First of all, prepare your story. First of all, the purpose. You need to understand the purpose.

Folks, we live in a Facebook world. And the truth of the matter is, yes, we are all consumed with knowing what you ate for breakfast. Okay. I mean, we're dying to know. But we're not telling your story for the purpose so that everybody will know all about your life.

We're telling this story with a specific goal. And that goal is communicating the gospel. Okay. Now, the next slide says a well-aimed story.

If we have a goal and the goal is to communicate the gospel, somebody's going to say, Sam, you're asking me to not tell the truth. No, that's not what I'm asking you to.

[16:26] I'm asking you to select those events that accomplish your goal. Okay. Pardon me. I'm talking around a cough drop so that my throat doesn't give out. All right.

So, when the apostles wrote the gospels, they didn't write about everything that Jesus did. Jesus got up. He had, well, he didn't have a ham and cheese on it.

That probably wouldn't have been kosher. He had scrambled eggs for breakfast. Then he went and he brushed his hair. And then he took a walk in the field. They didn't tell everything he did. Okay. They selected certain events with a specific purpose.

Now, they did this under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Okay. But when you read it, it's not just telling everything that happened to him. The way you tell a good story is you say, what is the goal?

What am I trying to accomplish? And then I select those events from the story that will meet the goal. Okay. So, we don't need to hear about how you had a best friend in third grade and he was just the nicest guy.

Okay. What we need to hear about is how you came to Christ. So, you want to make a well-aimed story that is carefully crafted to go to the heart of the matter. And the matter is getting the gospel to the people.

So, don't tell every detail. Please do not tell every detail. Choose the events you need. Now, next, you want to use scripture.

Okay. Because it's quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword. And it's the power of God unto salvation for everyone that believeeth to the Jew first and also to the Greek. So, you need to use scripture.

However, may I tell you something? Don't use tons of it. Okay. We're talking about, you know, in a witnessing situation, being able in two or three minutes to share your story.

Okay. Now, some Christians who are very zealous want to include paragraphs and paragraphs of scripture in that. That's not what you want to do here. Okay. Preacher does that when he preaches.

[18:26] And that's good for preaching. But when you're telling your story, you're going to want to incorporate scriptures. Okay. And you're going to want to memorize some verses to go with that. But not paragraphs. Okay.

Two or three verses. Okay. I was just living my life. I was having a big time. And you know what? I heard somebody talking and they said the wages of sin is death.

And I got to thinking, wow. That's pretty scary. Okay. Incorporate some verses into it. But don't just go on and go. You're not preaching. You're telling a story. Okay. So use the scriptures.

Next thing is it needs to be timed. I already mentioned that. The timing on it, honestly, two to three minutes is a good number. Okay. Now, you can always embellish and add more.

Okay. But it's nice to have it nice and concise so that you meet the guy on the street. You strike up a conversation. You know, you went to how to get started. You know, five different ways of starting a conversation with him.

[19:22] And so you strike up a conversation. And then you say, well, you know, I just want to tell you what happened to me. And if you go on for 20 minutes, he's like going to throw rocks at you and leave. But if you can take two minutes, two to three minutes and say, here's what happened in my life and tell your story in two or three minutes.

You're not going to get offended by that. He's going to be interested. It's not long enough for him to get bored. So make it tight. Now, if he wants to stay and ask questions and you can keep going, that's fine. But make it so you can do it two to three. Okay.

Next of all, you're going to think I'm crazy. Write it out. Okay. You say, why would I write it out? And practice it.

Because when I was studying Russians, there's the funniest thing about our brains and our mouths. I could hear the teacher would get up and she would say a word. I'd say, oh, I got it.

That makes perfect sense. And then we were supposed to repeat it. And you know what? I couldn't say it. I could say it in my head, but I couldn't say it with my tongue. Sometimes we've got it in our head, but it won't come out.

[ 20:22 ] She would say, mezhdu narodny. And I was supposed to repeat mezhdu narodny. I'd go, mezhdu narodny. And it just wouldn't come out. Okay. I actually told her about mezhdu narodny.

It means it's the word international in Russian. I said, I don't need to study that word. And she said, why not? And I said, because never in my fondest dreams will I ever be able to pronounce it. So why would I bother to study it? But because it just sounded crazy to me.

But take your thing, write it out. Because anybody that's ever done writing knows that our thinking is sloppy. Okay. It's got all kinds of extraneous stuff and it goes in circles and it does.

But if you write it out, you think more clearly. You can go back and edit. Okay. That isn't needed. And that sounds stupid. I should rewrite that. And you can get it. So it's like, okay, that makes sense. That works. Yeah.

I like that. And then practice it. Now, I'm not saying memorize it. When you're talking to people, say, and then, okay, what was the next word? No, don't do like that. Okay. But have it written out and then practice it.

[21:21] Read it out loud a bunch of times. And after you've read it a bunch of times, you don't even need the paper anymore. You won't say it word to word, but you'll say it close enough that it'll just spill right off your lips very naturally.

Okay. I mean, actually, you do know the story. It's kind of your story. Okay. And so if you write it out and you practice it, then when you're talking to somebody about Christ, one of the most effective things you can do, they go, well, you know, I don't even know if I believe in God.

Okay, well, that sure gave me something to think about. That's good. Okay. Now, touching all the bases. The next thing I want to talk to you about is making sure what needs to go into the story.

Need another slide, gentlemen. And in fact, you know what? Run them all on there. Give me the whole list. Okay. So these are a bunch of things that need to go into the story.

[22:25] Okay. And you say, that's a lot to do in two minutes. Yeah, but you can do it. Okay. First of all, you need to talk about your past. Now, let me tell you what you need to say about your past. You don't need to glorify your sin. Okay.

I want to tell you, I was involved in some pretty awful things. Please. No. Don't do that. Okay. What you want to do is explain where you came from so they'll be able to see the change in your life.

And you want to say where you came from because some of them are going to say, that's where I came from too. Okay. So tell. Now, with me, I just say, you know what? I grew up in Ohio.

I'm just a normal Ohio kid. I didn't really, I wasn't a church kid. Didn't know anything about God. Didn't really care. I just lived in my life. You know what? I was living for me. Doing what I thought was best and doing what I thought I'd like.

And I thought I had it all together. Okay. Do you think anybody could relate to that? I bet you there's a lot of people that grew up just like that. Okay. It's not very, it's not like lurid.

[23:23] It's not thrilling. But it is who I was. Okay. And so a few words about where you came from. Maybe say, I grew up in a Christian home. I was really blessed. I had a Christian mom and dad.

But you know what? At first, I didn't listen to them. I figured I was fine and I didn't need it. Okay. Or whatever. Tell about your life. Okay. Secondly, how you began to seek God.

Now, I want to tell you a secret. You didn't begin to seek God. He began to seek you. Okay. It didn't start with you. It started with his Holy Spirit coming down and touching your heart.

But then when he began to touch your heart, then you did start seeking God. Okay. In response to his touch. And so there was a day when you began to seek God. Now, I'm talking to my neighbor and he's not seeking God.

He ain't even thinking about God. He's thinking about how to pay the mortgage. Okay. And so I come to him and I'm talking. I'm trying to witness to him. I'm going to tell him what it was that moved me to begin to seek God. Because that's going to speak to him.

[ 24:26 ] So maybe I'm going to say, I was just living my life, having fun. And my friend died. And he was only 18 years old. And he was in this horrible car wreck. And he died. And I thought, I was just torn up that he died.

And then I got to thinking, where is he? Where am I going to go? Okay. Maybe that's your story. Or maybe mom got sick. Or maybe I had this friend that was always bothering me about going to church.

So one day I went to church with him. I was like, oh boy. This is going to be weird. And I went there. And there was this crazy man in the front yelling at me. But I got to thinking about what he was saying.

And I realized, you know what, this is serious. I don't know what your story is. I don't know what happened in your life. But tell what it was that provoked a spiritual interest in you.

Why you began to seek God. Thirdly, talk about conviction of sin. Okay. This world does not like to even believe in conviction of sin. But people need conviction of sin in their lives.

[25:24] Okay. And so, here's the thing. Okay. I've been picking on you all day long. I'll go bother Peter for a minute. Okay. If I say, Peter, you know what, you're really a sinner.

And you really ought to be afraid. Because you're a bad sinner. And God's going to get you. He might get offended by that. But if I say, you know, I went to that church. And that guy preached. And I got to thinking about my life.

And I got to thinking about someday I'm going to stand before God. And I started remembering all the things that I've done. You know, I'm a pretty good guy. Most people think, but I've done some things I'm really ashamed of.

I've done some things I don't want anybody to know about. And I got to thinking I was standing before God. And I was terrified. Now, I didn't say anything to Peter about his life, did I? But you know what?

I promise you his experience is the same as mine. He probably thinks he's pretty good. But he starts thinking about standing before God and giving an account and the things that he's ashamed of that he's done because we all got them.

[ 26:24 ] Okay. And he's thinking, wow, yeah. Yeah. And maybe he gets under conviction hearing about how I got under conviction. And then, this is amazing to me, but some Christians forget to put the plan of salvation in their testimony.

Put the plan of salvation in there. You say, well, you're telling a story. You want me to preach? Yeah, it's really easy. And so I was really worried about this. And I was thinking about it. And I didn't know what to do. There was this, like, battle going on in my life.

And then my good friend came to me and said, Sam, you seem upset. And I said, I don't know what to do. And he said, what's going on? I said, well, I've been thinking about this. And you know what my friend did? He opened the Bible. Now, listen to it.

And my friend showed me that God created me. But that because of my sin, I was separated from God. And that because of my sin, I was going to die and go to hell. But then my friend told me that Jesus Christ was God the Son.

And that he came down from heaven to earth. And he gave himself on the cross. He shed his blood for me. And my friend told me that he rose again the third day. And that if I would believe in Jesus, that he'd forgive my sins.

[ 27:26 ] See, I'm telling the story. But I'm telling the gospel. You say, well, my friend didn't tell me. Okay. And then I went to the church. And I heard the preacher preach. And he said. And I tell what the preacher said about the gospel.

Or I was reading this book. And you know what the book said? And it said the gospel. Okay. Somewhere you heard the gospel. I mean, if you're saved. I'm thinking you heard the gospel. So tell how you heard it.

And in telling, tell the gospel. Okay. And then tell the story of how you came to Christ. Okay. I was walking on an island. I was at Christian college.

Lost at a Christian college. And there was a river that ran through the town. And the college had a camp on an island in the middle of the river. And I was out there at the camp. And I was just walking around on that island.

And I was just wrestling in my soul. And I finally came to a place where I realized. I'm at a crossroads. I'm either going to. I'm either going to go my own way.

[ 28:23 ] Which sounds great to me. But God says the end thereof is the way of death. Or I'm going to go God's way. And frankly, I'll tell you what. God's way sounds really boring to me. I mean, hanging out with Christians and reading the Bible and listening to preaching.

That's what I thought. But God said that's the way of life and of joy. So really, it comes down to this. My opinion says this way is better. God says this way is better. Which one of us is smarter, me or God?

I think maybe I'm going to put my money on God. And I repented and trusted Christ. And he saved me and transformed my life. Now, that's what happened to me.

Okay. Tell the story of what happened. Maybe you're going to say, I was five years old. And I knelt beside my bed. And my mama helped me. And I prayed. And I asked Jesus to save me. And then tell about how your life has changed.

Okay. Now, some of us, our lives have changed in incredible ways that are very open. Some of us, the change has been different. You know, it's been something that's not as visible to the outward observer.

[ 29:23 ] But all of it, I hope your life has changed. If your life hasn't changed, we need to counsel with you after the service. Okay. You've got serious issues. Okay. If God's come into your life and you haven't changed something bad wrong.

Okay. So, tell about how your life has changed. Say, you know, since I got saved, I still have problems. But I always know that in my problems, God is with me. And he's helping me to deal with them.

And God has given me a wonderful marriage. I've got the world's best wife. And because we both love God, God has given us the sweetest relationship. And he's given me purpose in life. And I am so thrilled about the things that God has allowed me to do and be a part of.

And I'm an old guy now. And God is still changing me and growing me. It's an adventure. Okay. So, tell about your past. How you began to seek God.

How you came under conviction. Plan of salvation. How you accepted Christ. And about the change that happened in your life. Okay. Now you say, is it possible to do all that in two or three minutes? Yes. It absolutely is.

But you need to write it out. Edit it and take out all the junk that doesn't need to be there. Practice it. And you'll have it. And then when you run into your friend, your Jewish friend or your Gentile friend, and they say, I don't know.

I'm not sure I believe in all that. So, I can understand. A lot of people don't believe. But you know what? I believe. And I'll tell you why. God has changed my life. Let me tell you about it. And in two minutes, you'll be able to give him that story.

And folks, how can that not be impressive? Especially since you're talking to somebody who knows you. And you have credibility with them. Use your story. It's a wonderful tool that God's given you.

Paul used it. You have permission to use it too. All right. End of that one. 20-second break. Next lesson. Okay.

Next lesson is called Walls and Gates. And I've got, wow, right at 30 minutes. Yeah, we're not going to finish this. Walls and Gates. You know what? I've spent a month and a half thinking about this time.

[ 31 : 25 ] I can't believe it's going by too fast. This is really too quick. Everybody else is saying, oh, please, please. Quick, quick. Go to the end. So, Walls and Gates.

Now, Walls and Gates is my term for the fact that when we talk to people, there are things that get in the way of an effective witness. Okay.

Now, I'm going to focus in on Jewish people, but this is true with anybody. There are things that they'll say, okay, I don't believe in God because of. Or I'm not willing to listen to you because of this. Or I have this question.

I have this problem. I have this issue. And that's a wall. Okay. Now, when you run into a huge stone wall, there's just no way forward. What are you going to do? Okay. You're stopped because of this question or this problem or this issue.

But here's the thing I want to say to you. And this is a wonderful thing. The world is full of walls. But our God puts gates in everything. Mr. Robert. No, no, no, no.

[32:19] Oh, no. Go back. Forward. Isn't that good? We got walls, but God's got gates. And every problem has an answer.

And every issue has a solution. And usually those answers are gates that lead right to Christ. Okay. And so what I would like to do in this session is talk to you about some of the problems that you'll run into in witnessing to Jewish people and about the gates that God's put there, ways that you can answer them, ways to get through them that will lead the person toward Christ.

Okay. So that's what walls and gates are about. Now, next slide, please. Jewish people are not known for being exceedingly open to the gospel. Yeah, that's true. There's a lot of reasons for that.

There were a lot of problems. There are theological problems, historical problems, cultural problems that act as walls. But God's got gates in them. Now, I want to say, I'm kind of trying not to plagiarize too badly here.

There's a really smart guy named Dr. Michael Brown who wrote a series of books called Answering Jewish Objections to Jesus. And much of the material I'm giving you is his material. And I just thought it was to be honest to mention that to you.

Okay. It is not possible to prepare for every question that they might come up with. Okay. I hear people say, well, I would witness, but I'm just afraid somebody's going to ask a question I won't know how to answer.

Oh, you don't need to be afraid of that. You need to be certain of that. I promise you that's going to happen. It happens to me all the time. If you're going to talk to people about Jesus, you're going to hear some of the wackiest things in the world. Okay.

People can come up with this incredible multitude of completely wacky things. And so you're going to run into wacky stuff. That's okay. Okay. So you're not going to, I'm going to try to answer you in 30 minutes.

We're going to go through two or three of these. And you'll be really equipped for those two or three, but not for the 10,000 other ones. But that's okay. It's good to study and to be knowledgeable so that you can answer the questions.

But you're never going to know all the answers of the questions. And so ultimately what you have to do is rely on the Holy Spirit for wisdom to answer. There is this experience that happens to you when you're witnessing.

[ 34:30 ] And if you've witnessed much, you will understand exactly what I mean. But there are times I knock on the door and I talk to the person. I walk away. It's cool. But there are times you knock on the door and they come and you start talking to them. And it's almost like the Holy Spirit says, Sam, get out of the way.

And he just takes over. And there's times I'm sitting there looking at myself thinking, wow, where'd that come from? Oh, that was really good. I ought to write that down. And he's just putting words in my mouth and I'm saying them and with confidence and with power.

And I'm sitting there watching myself doing one. Whoa, yeah. Okay. And just Spirit of God just took over and he's doing it. And I get the biggest thrill out of that because it's like I am being used by the hand of God.

Oh, that's neat. I just love it when God jumps in and takes over. And folks, he will. And so they ask a question. You're like, I got no idea. You know, all that time you're talking to me and praying and saying, Lord, help me to see their heart.

God, open a door. God, give me wisdom. And God will do it. You'll find yourself saying things that some things, a lot of times it's stuff like you say. I can't believe I said that. I would never say that again.

[35:35] But in that situation, it was perfect. It was just the right thing to say. That's a God thing. Okay. And it happens. So you're never going to know them all, but don't let that dismay you.

Some basic advice about dealing with issues when people come up with objections or problems or stuff. Next. Oh, we already got there. Number one is pray before you go and depend on the Holy Spirit. Number two is stay calm, reasonable, and loving, even if you feel like you're being attacked.

Okay. Don't give in. Don't answer fire with fire. Okay. Soft answer, turneth away wrath. Can I tell you something that Rhonda and I have learned? She brought it to my attention, and she's so right.

Usually, we'll be in a situation. I was in a park. I was witnessing. And there's some young people standing around. And I start witnessing to one of them, and he's a troublemaker. And I start witnessing to him, and he starts getting in my face, and he starts being ugly.

And I'm trying to calm it down, and I can't calm it down. I'm trying to speak to his heart. He won't listen. But I'm not going to get mad. I'm not going to get ugly with him. I stay calm. I'm loving. I just, I refuse to take it personally.

You know what? Usually, I didn't do a bit of good with him. He wouldn't listen. He wasn't receiving it. But his friend there didn't say a word, but he was watching that whole interaction.

And God, through my testimony of staying calm and loving in the midst, in the face of attack, God touched his heart. I've seen it happen over and over and over. I was last year in New York City.

And honestly, in New York City, we usually have a great time. Usually, people are really nice. You wouldn't really think New Yorkers would be nice, but they are. Most of them are. But there was this one Jewish guy.

There was a young lady from PCC that was with us on the trip who wanted to be a missionary to Ukraine. And she was with us on the trip. And so she and I were going together because we were witnessing in Russian to Russian people, Russian Jewish people there in the neighborhood.

And this one Jewish guy came out. I was working on one side of the street, and she was on the other side of the street. He went off on her. No, you know what? We weren't opposite sides. I had met a Jewish guy, an Israeli guy.

Okay, he was from Israel who was visiting there in Queens. And he and I were talking in Russian. And so she said, well, I'm going to go down and talk to somebody else. So she went a little further, just 50 yards down, and she was hanging out of tracks.

This little, short, fat Jewish guy came out of his shop and began to curse her horribly. I mean, it was the foulest language, as loud as he could. And it went on and on and on.

And I was horrified. And I said to the Israeli guy, I said, excuse me. I said, I got to go take care of this. So I went down and I tried to calm this guy down. He wouldn't calm down. He just cursed us all the more. We did everything we could.

Finally, we basically said, listen, excuse us. We're going to go on. And we went on, and we were like, and, you know, I thought, man, I ruined my conversation with this guy. And that guy didn't listen. And the girl was a little shaken.

And we thought, what a terrible thing. And I was really disappointed that I lost the chance to talk to the Israeli guy. Five minutes later, the Israeli guy came looking for me.

[ 38:45 ] He said, hey, I was looking for you. I wanted to talk to you. I was like, uh-oh. He said, I want to apologize to you. I cannot believe that one of my people treated you in this way.

That was a shameful thing. I am so embarrassed. And he said, I really want to hear what you have to say. Could you please tell that to me? Could you please sit down and explain this to me? Came to church the next day and heard the gospel preached.

Okay? The abuser, maybe you get a chance to do some good with him. A lot of times you won't. But there's somebody else watching. Stay calm. Okay? Next thing.

It's okay to say, I don't know. Okay? Like I said, there's 10,000 things. You can study all your life. You're still going to run into new stuff. I have a really good joke about that, but I'm not going to do it right now. You're still going to run into some new questions, okay, that you haven't heard before.

But don't worry about that, okay? If you say, I don't, just say, you know what? I've never heard that question before. I'm not sure about the answer to that. Tell you what. Give me your phone and I'll get back to you on air.

[39:45] Okay? And then go find out. Go ask the preacher. He knows everything. And then get back to him. And you have another chance to witness to him. Okay? And you say, well, I would be too embarrassed. Why would you be too embarrassed?

Nobody knows everything except the preacher. Okay? Don't be defensive. Okay? Just don't, don't be, just don't go there. Be nice. Be loving.

Just stay there. Okay. First, first problem. Okay? First wall. Hope the next slide is another wall. Yes. Born a Jew, die a Jew. You'll hear this all the time talking to Jewish people.

They'll say, you'll say, I want to tell you about the Messiah. And they say, I was born a Jew and I'll die a Jew. They think they have said something very profound here. I will explain to you what they mean by that in just a moment.

But that's a big wall. But you know what God's got? He's got a gate. Okay? So let's go into that. What is the wall about? Okay. Jewish people, there's this hostility between Jews and Gentiles.

[40:42] Okay? The Jewish people have been persecuted by Gentiles for many years. And so to them, to many Jewish people, the idea of becoming a Christian is of converting.

To convert means to go over to the dark side. Okay? It means to abandon thousands of years of history. To abandon my people. My father, my mother, my grandparents, my ancestors.

To spit on them and go over to the other side of the people who have hated and slaughtered us for centuries. How many people would like to do that? No. Nobody in their right mind would want to do that.

And so what they're saying is I was born a Jew. And see, here's the thing. With Jewish people, you can be a Jew who worships at the synagogue. You can be an Orthodox Jew.

You can be a Reform Jew. You can be a conservative Jew. You can be a non-religious Jew. You can be an Orthodox Jew. Excuse me. You can be an atheist Jew. No problem with that. Anybody know what a Jew-boo is?

Okay? Jew-boo is a new word. It means a Jewish Buddhist. Because many Jewish people are embracing Buddhism. So they have a new word for it. It's Jew-boo. Okay? You can be a Jew-boo. All right?

And be a Jewish Buddhist. But you cannot be a Jewish Christian. According to Jewish culture, Okay, maybe your grandparents were all Jewish. Maybe your mom is Jewish and your daddy is Jewish.

Maybe all the blood in your veins is all Jewish. But the day you believe in Messiah, you're not Jewish anymore. That's really messed up. Okay? They believe that if you become a believer in Messiah, then you have lost your Jewish identity and you have betrayed and abandoned your people.

Okay? And Jewish culture teaches that very strongly. Okay? So when they say, I was born a Jew and I die a Jew, they're saying, I will never betray my heritage.

That's a powerful thing. Okay? How do you answer that? Okay? Well, let's look at the answer.

[42:41] Let's look at the gate here. Okay? The answer is, yes, you were born a Jew and certainly you will die as a Jewish person. There's no question about that.

But what does it mean to be Jewish? That's the question we need to ask ourselves. Next slide, please. Is it an ethnic thing? If it's an ethnic thing, what, do you think that ethnically you were Jewish but when you got saved, we're going to drain all your blood out and put Gentile blood in you?

No. Nobody's changing your ethnicity. Is it cultural? The truth of the matter is, we rejoice in Jewish culture. Okay? And we have respect for the Jewish culture.

You don't have to change your culture. You say, is it a religious thing? You know what? If there can be Orthodox and conservative and reform, if there can be non-religious, if there can be traditional, if there can be atheist Jews, if there can be Jew-boos, you know what?

There are Jewish people of many different faiths. Believing in a faith other than Judaism does not take away being Jewish. If it were true, then most of the Jews in the world are not Jewish.

Okay? Let me tell you a better question. You're saying, you're saying, I was born a Jew and I'll die a Jew. Let's look at something better. The better question is, am I a faithful Jew? Am I faithful in God's eyes?

Am I the kind of Jew that God wants me to be? What does the Tanakh have to say about that? It says that God promised to send a Messiah. And he told us through the prophets who that Messiah was going to be.

And someone came and fulfilled those prophecies. And that was Jesus, Yeshua, Amishayim, Jesus, the Messiah. Believing in, grab this phrase.

Believing in the Jewish Messiah is the most Jewish thing you can do. By the way, you've got a blank there. If it's not on the slides, it's Jewish. Believing in Messiah is the most Jewish thing you can do. Now, folks, let me say to you, let me say something about this.

Here we have a disagreement. Jewish culture says to believe in Messiah is to abandon your Jewish roots. God thinks believing in the Messiah is the most Jewish thing you can do. So they're going to have to decide, am I going to do what God thinks or am I going to do what Jewish culture thinks?

[ 44:50 ] And truthfully, many of them are going to do what Jewish culture thinks. But just tell them, you know, how can it be unfaithful to the Jewish people to believe in the Messiah that the Jewish God and the Jewish prophets told what was coming?

That's the most Jewish thing you can do. Yes, that is contrary to what the rabbi says, but the rabbi is wrong. Okay, so that was our first wall. Second one, why do Christians persecute the Jews?

Wow, that's a big wall. Why are you Christians? You're all, you're trying to tell me about Jesus. You guys have been slaughtering my people for 2,000 years. Why are you guys always persecuting us if you want us to believe it?

That's a big issue. Next slide. So the wall is, oh, you have a gate. See, there was a gate there. I love it. Okay, Jewish people are painfully aware of the 2,000 years history of Christians, so-called Christians, persecuting Jews.

This is a powerful hindrance to their believing in Christ, and it is. So how do I answer that? Number one. Okay, the answer, number one, is I acknowledge it. Okay, if you say, well, no, no, really, Christians don't do that?

Yeah, you just lost every bit of credibility you might ever have had because they know very well that Christians absolutely do, have done this. And so, if you deny it, you're, you know, it's just not true and they know that.

The best thing you can do is say, you know what, you are absolutely right. People who call themselves Christians have done unspeakable things to your people and it grieves me to the depths of my heart.

I'm ashamed of the way that your people have been treated. But, can I tell you something? Next slide. There are genuine believers and there are false and misguided believers.

Okay? In fact, you know, it's true in every religion. In every religion, there are some people who are genuine believers who are genuinely seeking truth and seeking God. And in every religion, there are people who are using that religion for their own evil purposes.

And there have been many, there have been many people who in the name of Christ have done evil things. And you're right. That's true. And it's shameful.

[ 46:57 ] And it's something that causes me a great deal of pain. And I'm sorry for the things those people have done to your people in the name of their religion. Some branches of Christendom, Catholic Church, for instance, have a long history of horrible anti-Semitism.

But, Bible-believing Christians love the Jewish people and strongly support Israel. The Israeli president, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, said, we have no greater friends and allies than the American evangelicals.

They use evangelicals to mean Bible believers. Netanyahu, the prime minister, said, Bible-believing Christians are the best friends that we've got. Okay? And it's true.

It's true. America is pro-Israel because of the Christians in America that are strongly in favor of Israel. And that's true. And we love the Jewish people.

Okay? What do you do about the fact that there's been 2,000 years of persecution? How do you get over that offense? Well, 1 Peter 5a, charity shall cover the multitude of sins. The only thing you can do is love them.

Okay? And that love does go a long ways. You can say, I don't have any idea why Christians would want to persecute the Jewish people when Jesus and the apostles were Jewish and we worship the God of Abraham.

And so, you assert our love for them. And then, something I want to make note of. I said this briefly, but I want to make note of it. Walls are barriers.

Gates are the, the ways to get through them. But they're not just a way to get around the barrier. The gate, usually, will point them to Christ. Gates got to go somewhere. And the gate needs to go to Jesus.

Okay? And so, you know what we say? Persecution of the Jewish people is horrible. And I am 100% against it. But it's not the main issue. Okay?

That's not the main thing we need to be talking about. What do we need to be talking about? See, you're judging Christianity Christianity and you're judging Christians, you're judging Christ on the basis of those people who are mostly false believers who have done horrible things.

But, but, rather than asking the question, what about the Christians who have persecuted us? Why don't you look at Jesus? What has he done? Why don't you judge him on the basis of the prophecies of the Tanakh?

Why don't you judge him on the basis of the things that he said and did? Why don't you open up the New Testament? You've been taught that it's a book of hatred. Why don't you open it up and try reading it? And you, you come back and tell me if it's a book of hatred.

You'll find out that it's a book written by Jewish people about a Jewish man for Jewish people and it's a book full of love. Okay? So, instead of judging Jesus based on his worst, the people, people who claim to be his representatives who are the worst in the scum of the earth, maybe you should judge him on the basis of what he said and did.

That would probably be more useful. Okay, next wall. The Holocaust. The Holocaust is a huge wall.

It's enormous. Okay? In two ways. And let me tell you the two ways. Number one, okay, there's a Holocaust but there's a gate. You see, there's a gate.

[50:12] It's a tough gate. I'll be honest. It's a hard thing. Two things. Number one is they can say, you Christians slaughtered six million of our people. Yeah, that's tough.

Okay? But you know what else? Somebody asked me yesterday, why are so many Jews atheists or non-religious? I thought they had a zeal of God. Why are so many not unbelievers? A lot of it goes right back to the Holocaust.

Okay? A lot of Jewish people say, where was God during the Holocaust when the Nazis slaughtered six million innocent men, women, and children? That, see, Americans, we don't realize that event to us is ancient history.

It isn't to the Jewish people. By the way, it isn't to the people who live in Europe. Okay? To the Russian people, that's current events. Okay? Those wounds are still open.

They're still very much raw. And to the Jewish people, you know, in Israel, it's a very common thing you meet somebody and you talk to them, so where are you from? And they'll say, I'm the only one.

Out of all of my family, out of all my relatives, I was the only one that got out. Everybody else died. All of my family. If that doesn't break your heart, there's something wrong with your heart.

Okay? It's horrible. Okay? And Jewish people, sometimes they blame us for it, but they blame God for it. They go, God, where were you? There is a very poignant moment.

There's a famous Israeli author, named Elie Weisel, and he wrote a book about, he went through the camps and survived. The war ended before they slaughtered him.

And he wrote a book, and in the book, there's a scene where all the prisoners are made to come out and stand for hours, you know, in the sun, baking, because somebody tried to escape and they caught him and they brought him back, and we all have to stand and watch him be tortured horribly and long and then hung.

And that was just normal, standard thing that they would do. And they're standing there for hours and hours watching the torture and then the execution of this young man. And one prisoner in the book, this is, he wrote this in his book, one prisoner turns to the other and he says, where is God?

[52:35] Meaning, how could God let this go on? And the other guy looks back at him and he said, there is God. Meaning, he's dead. And that was the point of the book, is, there's no way to explain the Holocaust.

God is dead. There cannot be a God, or this could never have happened. Okay? As Christians, we need to be able to have an answer about the Holocaust.

But if you can talk at a Holocaust without tears in your voice, you're doing it wrong. Okay? It's unspeakable and unimaginable.

It's really horrible. And if you can't speak with compassion, then shut up. Okay? I mean, really. You've got to be able to sense the loss that they suffered.

It's just, it's just horrible. I keep saying the same things. I'll shut up and go on, but you need to realize the big deal that it is. Okay? So, what can you say? How can you answer that?

[53:40] I'll tell you that usual answers don't satisfy. By the way, it's not just us. Philosophers are wrestling with this. Jewish rabbis and Jewish thinkers are wrestling with this. And nobody has a good answer. Okay?

The typical answers that come up, and I'll get to mine in a minute because mine is different than what most people would say. Some say, well, it was a punishment for their sins. They sinned, and so God was punishing them. Yeah, you can go there.

You can go there scripturally. You know, you talk about the Babylonian captivity. Clearly, that was punishment for their sin. But when you go to the Holocaust, it's like, okay, if they deserve that punishment for what they did, what do we deserve?

You know, it just seems all out of proportion. And it almost seems, for me as a Gentile to go to a Jewish and say, well, it's because you guys sinned. It's like, okay, we're going to blame the victim for the crime.

Okay? I just, I just can't do that. A lot of people say that's what, there are some Jewish rabbis who say that it was a punishment for sin. I just can't do that. Okay?

[54:43] So, some people say, well, it's just the evil of man. Man is evil, and man has always done evil things and this was a horribly evil thing. True that? But does that satisfy?

Okay? And they'll still say, so God couldn't help? Where was God? There's a very famous rabbi recently that wrote a book and he said, he said, God, when you consider the Holocaust, there's only two possible conclusions.

God is weak or God is evil. He said, either he let it happen on purpose and so he's evil or he couldn't stop it and he's weak. There is no other possible conclusion.

That's what the rabbi said. Okay? Now, we don't agree with that, obviously. So what can you say to them about it? I'm a little harebrained and so I go in a completely different direction.

They say, what about the Holocaust? I say, which Holocaust? They say, which Holocaust? Which Holocaust? I'm like, yeah, which Holocaust? Are you talking about the Holocaust that happened in Egypt when Pharaoh tried to wipe your people out?

Or maybe you're talking about the Holocaust that happened when the Babylonians tried to wipe your people out? Or maybe you're talking about the Holocaust in Persia when Haman and the Persian Empire tried to wipe all of your people out? Maybe you're talking about the Holocaust that happened when the Romans came or when the Syrians came under Antiochus Epiphanes?

Maybe you're talking about the Holocaust that happened when the Nazis... Which Holocaust are we referring to? okay now those are crazy words to a jewish person they've never thought of it in that sense that's why i say look at the big picture i say listen the holocaust is horrible beyond reason but like get your eyes off of the event that happened in 1940s and look at the big picture of your history this keeps happening to you guys over and over and over and over this has happened to you guys something's going on here so let's try to figure out what is the issue and the issue is we can go to isaiah 43 the issue is is that god chose your people to be his vessels through which he would work his plan to redeem mankind you are the chosen people you are the one that god chose to work through and god has an enemy god's enemy does not have the power to hurt god so he picks on god's kids okay satan will do anything possible to destroy god's plans and the way he's trying to do that in egypt in babylon in persia in syria in rome in germany is if i can wipe out the people that are going to bring in redemption then i can stymie god's plan and so when you look at the big picture it's not about germ it's not about hitler it's the guy that's standing behind hitler it's satan who is constantly trying to destroy your people and because of that your people have suffered horribly okay this is the source of anti-semitism can i say to you though you might say to me the holocaust proves there is no god let me say to you how does the tiniest of nations who for thousands of years the great empires of the world have done everything they could to wipe you out and yet you remain and you're alive and you are prospering how could that even be i would say to you the holocaust does not prove there is no god your continued existence and even prosperity proves that there is a god because there's no other explanation okay dr michael brown said something that i think it grabs me by the heart jewish people refer to the holocaust as a reason to reject the messiah but dr michael michael brown wrote this the ultimate image of an innocent jew suffering atrocities at the hand of godless murderers is not so much the image of a jew dying in the holocaust as it is the image of our messiah the best known jew of all time beaten flogged humiliated and nailed to a cross he is a messiah with whom we can identify and who can identify with us i think that's powerful okay and i don't think i'm going to get through the next wall and gate in the next two minutes so i think we're going to call it quits we've got two more walls and gates uh you've got the notes there i hope you'll take a look at them because they're actually quite interesting and i want to say that it has been an incredible privilege for me to be able to share this time with you thank you so much for coming and being a part of it i've enjoyed it enormously and i hope it's been a blessing to you more than that folks coming in alpharetta your circle of acquaintance your neighbors co-workers friends relatives need christ we need to focus we need to make some specific decisions about are we going to what are we going

to do about it are we going to share christ how are we going to do it and i i hope you will be i hope that today you won't just say wow sam sure talked a lot in those four hours but i hope you'll say lord what would you have me to do what's my part i hope you'll identify that neighbor that friend that co-worker and say god i'm going to start i'm going to go find them i'm going to love them i'm going to pray for them i'm going to sow seed and i'm going to keep at it until they come to christ i hope you'll choose one jewish person and say they're going to be mine i'm going to love them and pray for them and sow seed and i'm going to keep doing it until jesus comes back or until they get saved i hope that we will take these things and put them into action this message was recorded at vision baptist church in alpharetta georgia for more information log on to www.visionbaptist.com where you can find our service times location contact information and more audio and video recordings you