

131. Witness By Arland Steen

Sticky Statement

Tell the truth about what's already taken place in your life, which is, you've met Christ and you simply need to tell people. The purpose of this message is to motivate you to simply tell someone your story.

Supreme Scripture

Acts 1: 4-8 (NKJ): ⁴And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me; ⁵for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." ⁶Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. ⁸But **you shall receive power** when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and **you shall be witnesses** to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

One: Be A Witness That Talks

When you are baptized with the Holy Spirit you shall receive explosive power AND you will BE WITNESSES.

Please see the word BE.

You will BE witnesses. He didn't say you will DO witnessing.

The question is, are you a witness that talks or not.

You ARE A WITNESS but the question is, 'Can we get you to tell anybody about it?'

What is a witness? A witness is someone who has seen and heard something and communicates his experience accurately.

Witnesses Who Saw & Heard

You won't believe how many times the phrase "seen" and "heard" is in the Bible. Here's a few of them:

Jesus: John 3:31-32 (NKJ): ³¹He who comes from above is above all; he who is of the earth is earthly and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all. ³²And what He has **seen and heard**, that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony.

The Son of God Himself when He came to this earth was a witness of what He had seen the Father do and say. Jesus is a witness and came and told people and it changed the world.

The Shepherds: Luke 2:20 (NKJ): *Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had **heard and seen**, as it was told them.*

The disciples of John: Luke 7:22 (NKJ): *Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things you have **seen and heard**: that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the gospel preached to them.*

The disciples of Jesus: Acts 4:20 (NKJ): *For we cannot but speak the things which we have **seen and heard**."* I wish every Christian felt that way.

Paul: Acts 22:15 (NKJ): *For you will be His witness to all men of what you have **seen and heard**.*

John: 1 John 1:1-3 (NKJ): *That which was from the beginning, **which we have heard, which we have seen** with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of*

*life—² the life was manifested, and **we have seen, and bear witness**, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us—³ that which we **have seen and heard** we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.*

You Have Seen & Heard

Their witness was so strong because they saw Him and heard Him. You might say, “But I didn’t see Him like that.”

No, but you’ve seen Him and heard Him.

I walked with God as a child and then grew frustrated with the legalism I saw in the church and turned away from Him. But then, I saw Him and heard Him at age 18 in the same little Pentecostal church I had grown up in, that my Dad had pastored. Another man now had the church and they had a female minister as a guest and during the altar call, Jesus manifested Himself and it turned me around. That’s why I’ve been doing what I’ve been doing for the last 44 years. You’ll never convince me that I didn’t see Him and hear Him! And you have too, if you are saved.

I think sometimes the world throws out our witness because we don’t tell them what we’ve personally seen and heard. In court if you try to tell something you haven’t personally seen and heard, it’s called “hearsay” and “inadmissible evidence.”

How many Christians are only telling what others have seen and heard instead of what they have seen and heard?

Let’s say you go out to lunch with your family and then exit the restaurant and you’re standing there and your group is talking and you happen to look up and see a red light turn green and witness one car slamming into another car. You witnessed the accident and you stick around until the police arrive. They inform you they need you to be a witness. So, you have to go to court because one says the light was green and another red.

Now that you must go to court, what are they asking you to do?

Are they asking you to go to automotive school so you can testify about engines and brakes?

Are they asking you to go to red-light/green-light school to make sure you know your colors?

What are they asking you to do? All they want you to do is to simply tell them what you saw and what you heard – nothing less, nothing more.

What I’m saying is that there is a story you could share five minutes after you get saved.

I want to tell you a true story from a pastor who has a friend who is now a pastor who got saved trying to commit suicide. He was going to put his head in an oven. He was stoned at the time and it was an electric oven.

He turned it on, stuck his head in there, it got hot, he started thinking how he didn’t want to go to hell and he gave his life to Jesus. Instantly, he wasn’t stoned anymore. He got so excited that that night a friend came over to party and he told him he wasn’t going to party anymore because he had gotten saved. His friend asked him, “How did you get saved?”

He said I turned my oven on, put my head in the oven., felt it getting hot and started thinking about how hot hell would be and decided I didn’t want to go there. So, I said a prayer and asked Jesus to come into my life.

His friend told him, “I want to be saved.” He said, “Okay, and turned the oven on and had his friend put his head in and asked him, “Do you feel how hot that’s getting?” His friend said, “Yes.” He asked, “Do you want to go to hell?” His friend replied, “No.” He continued, “Alright, pray this prayer.”

Here’s the point: He just told his personal story.

Two: Be A Witness That Doesn't Argue

When you are an eye witness, there is no arguing. A personal story is verifiable.

You are not required to know what happened to the dinosaurs, in order to be a witness.

You are not required to identify the locusts with stinging tails or the angel of the bottomless pit named Abaddon, in order to be a witness.

If you're going to be a witness, just remember:

S – Start a conversation

A – Ask questions

L – Listen

T – Tell the story – the story of Jesus or your own personal story

But most of us do this when we witness:

T – Talking

A – Argue

L – Louder

K – Kick em

We argue because we get so caught up in a person's:

- Actions or
- Beliefs – their politics or their drinking or living together

Don't allow yourself to be shocked when you learn of people's sinful actions.

Jesus wasn't shocked with sin.

God understands we sin; that's why He sent Jesus.

Here's why you shouldn't get shocked when sinners sin - dogs bark, cat's meow, sinners sin. That's why they're called sinners.

Hunters hunt, liars lie, golfers golf, sinners sin. Somehow, we expect them to know the rules but we didn't know the rules.

In other countries, you may have six cars and four mopeds trying to drive in four lanes. You'd think they would have a lot of accidents. But they don't. We have more in America. Why? Because we expect people to stay in the lines. They don't expect that so they look out for trouble. We don't. In fact, we are shocked if someone comes into our lane; we even get offended. And then when we go by, we give them the look. I did that one time and in a few moments my phone rang. A voice said, "Pastor Arland, did I do something wrong?"

Here's why I'm not going to argue with a sinner about politics. Because that's not what matters right now. What matters is Jesus.

A witness just tells a story.

Three: Be A Witness That Has Fun

Witnessing can be fun. Look at it totally different – it's not something you have to do or if you don't do it you're going to get a small cabin in heaven and if you do, you're going to get a big house. Let it just unfold. I want to end with a story.

No, I'm Not Going To Shoot You!

This is a true story involving me. I got stuck in Charlotte going out this past trip. I couldn't get my connection because we got to Charlotte and we only had like a half-hour to make our connection. There was a little bit of weather, not a lot, but a little bit of weather but it caused the pilot to decide we needed to circle Charlotte for 45 minutes. That doomed me. I was supposed to be picked up in Florence. But I couldn't make it and it was getting later and later. So, they booked me, they would not put me up in a hotel but said, "We'll put you on the next flight out." That was too late for my ride to pick me up. And, then, I learned before exiting the airport that that flight got delayed, so it was going to be 12:30, 1:00 or 1:30 in the morning before I would be picked up.

We had plans for the next day so that would ruin everything. So, we decided I would take Uber and Barbara would drive up that night and we were going to stay in a room there in Charlotte. So, Barbara made all the arrangements for the hotel.

I was tired, had gotten up at an ungodly hour, hadn't eaten all day so I was not on my best behavior. Barbara made the Uber arrangements and said it's going to be a female driver, gave me her name, gave me the car she would be driving. Barbara had the location so I was going from the airport to this location.

I got in the car and it happened to be a black lady. I was tired and hungry and know this is probably not normal protocol but I asked her, "Is it possible for you to stop at a convenience store so I can just get some junk to eat?" She said, "Yes, I can do that." So, I reached in my bag in the dark to search for my wallet. She turned around and asked, "Are you searching for a gun to shoot me?" I said, "No, I'm reaching for my wallet so when we get to the store I can pay."

We went on and talked a little bit more. And then she brought it up again. She asked, "Are you going to shoot me with a gun?" I said, "No." We drove some more and she brought it up a third time. And, by this time I'm getting a little concerned that maybe she has a gun or something. So, I thought, 'Okay, this is an opportunity here.'

So, I pulled out my phone thinking I might can't diffuse the situation if I showed her a picture of my wife. So, I did. It lessened the tension quite a bit. She said, "Oh, you married a black woman!" And then she wanted to fist-bump me. Then I discovered she had only lived in Charlotte for a couple weeks and didn't really know the city well and we could not find a convenience store. And also, as we drove, I felt like I needed to tell her what I did so I told her I was a pastor. I told her, "It wouldn't be good for my career if I shot you." This is what was going on. I said kiddingly, "At least for that reason I'm not going to shoot you."

We finally found a store and I thought that I needed to do more. So, I got myself some junk to eat and I got some junk for her and had them package it separately and returned to the car and gave it to her. I considered it a peace offering.

Just prior to this and before she found the store, I said, "You've already told me you've worked all day and you want to get home, so just make a big loop back to where I'm supposed to spend the night and if we don't see anything then just drop me off and just forget it because this is getting crazy. You know what she said? "I'm not stopping until I get you to a convenience store because I'm doing this for the Lord." I found out she was a military veteran, she was disabled in some way although it wasn't apparent to me and she was 35 and wanted to be married. She was in school and knew what she wanted as a career. So, when we got back to my location, I reached into my bag and said, "I'm not going for a gun." I'd written a tract and wanted to give her one. So, I said, "This is something cool to read that I wrote a number of years ago and I want you to have it." She took it. Then I asked, "Can I pray for you?" So, I prayed for her and exited. And, you know what? I'll never see her again but I was able to tell her enough of my story that she knows I'm not going to shoot her."

And, that's all I did. I told my story. And, every one of us has a story to tell. As this incident began to take shape I realized it was an opportunity to tell my story.

You're going to meet somebody this week that will give you an opportunity to tell your story. Tell it! Just tell your story!

