

PAUL (1): A TRUE AND EFFECTIVE WITNESS *Acts 26:13-29*

by Francis Dixon

This study has application to every Christian, for every Christian is to be an effective witness – look up Acts 1:8. The apostle Paul was a good, effective and true witness who saved lives (Proverbs 14:25), and as we read through the book of Acts and Paul's letters we see his tremendous passion for souls which resulted in his being a mighty witness for his Lord. Look at him as he is presented to us in Acts 26:22-23, and note some of the marks of **a true and an effective witness**.

IS ONE WHO SPEAKS

Notice the word "saying" (verses 22, 25), "speak" (verse 26) – and look up Psalm 107:2! The most effective testimony is that of a consistent, Christ-like life, but the testimony of the life must also be expressed with the lips – look up Mark 5:19 and Luke 8:39. We are all very good talkers when it comes to speaking about our favourite topics, but should we not speak of our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ? The High Priest had pomegranates and bells hung alternately on the hem of his robe – a seed and a bell; that which was seen and that which was heard – look up Exodus 28:33-34. Are you speaking for the Lord, or do you say, "I can't...?" – look up Jeremiah 1:6-9.

PRAISE the Lord for:

- ★ A fruitful trip to South Australia for Carl and Bob. Over three weeks contact was made with around 50 churches.
- ★ His protection and care while travelling around the country roads in South Australia
- ★ Recent editions finalised and sent out – Australia, South Africa main and prison as well as Malawi
- ★ The finalising of our daily schedule while in South Africa for Impact team (June 28 – July 18)

IS ONE WHO SPEAKS TO ALL AND SUNDRY

In verse 22 the apostle tells us that he was constantly "witnessing both to small and great." Wherever he went he talked to others about his Lord; whether his audience consisted of one or many, rich or poor, young or old, educated or illiterate, Jews or Gentiles, kings or commoners, soldiers or sailors – always, in every place, he was an effective witness. See him at work in the synagogue (Acts 13:5); at the riverside (Acts 16:13); in prison (Acts 16:25-32); in the market-place (Acts 17:17); going from house to house (Acts 20:20); at home (Acts 28:30-31); and in the palace (Philippians 1:12-13). Everyone Paul met was a soul for whom Christ died and was therefore a potential Christian. Have we this vision? – look up 1 Corinthians 9:22.

GOES ON DOING THE JOB IN SPITE OF SETBACKS

In verse 22 Paul says, speaking now twenty years after his conversion, "But I have had God's help to this very day, and so I stand here..." He had the grace of continuance – stickability! He had grace and grit in spite of tremendous trials, persecutions, oppositions, setbacks and threatenings – look at Acts 26:21 and 24, and 2 Corinthians 11:23-28. An effective witness must have a set purpose. Two great dangers face every servant of God, and especially anyone who is in any position of prominence or responsibility – conceit and discouragement. Can you find any trace of even

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apparent conceit in Paul? What about discouragement? If he experienced that he soon overcame it and went on with the job – look up 1 Samuel 30:6, and compare Galatians 6:9.

IS UNFLINCHINGLY LOYAL TO THE WORD OF GOD

Verse 22 – “saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen...” Paul believed the testimony of Moses and the prophets. He was quite sure about the absolute reliability of the scriptures; he knew they were fully inspired (2 Timothy 3:16), and that the Holy Spirit was their author (2 Peter 1:21), and he realised the solemn responsibility to accept God’s revealed Word (Revelation 22:18-19), and to proclaim it all (Acts 20:27). How good it is to go back to Paul and hear his testimony – yes, to go back to the Lord Jesus and to see what He said about it! – see John 5:46-47 and Luke 24:25-27. Paul preached the full gospel, as verse 23 tells us – “that Christ should suffer...rise...proclaim...” – compare 1 Corinthians 15:1-4. In other words, Paul preached His Virgin Birth (Luke 1:26-27); His Virtuous Life (John 8:46); His Vicarious Death (2 Corinthians 5:21); His Victorious Resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:20); and His Visible Return (Revelation 1:7).

PRAYER needed for

- ★ Orders from the recent trip to South Australia. Pray they will take the paper on to reach out to their communities
- ★ The Impact Africa team. Pray for the physical, mental and spiritual health of the team. Pray for the Lord’s protection over the team as some areas of ministry can be risky
- ★ Open doors to share the gospel with people in prisons and hospitals
- ★ Further funding for various project areas we support throughout the year in South Africa

IS ONE WHO HAS A WORKING KNOWLEDGE OF THE BIBLE

Paul knew the scriptures and he knew how to use them – verses 22-23 imply this – compare 2 Timothy 2:15. From your Bible, can you lead a person to Christ? Can you show that all have sinned (Romans 3:23); that all need to be saved (Romans 6:23); that the Lord Jesus is the only Saviour (Acts 4:12); and that salvation is by faith in Him (Acts 13:38-39)? An effective witness should be able to do this.

IS ONE WHO MAKES MUCH OF THE LORD JESUS

Read verse 23 again. It is full, not of Paul, but of the Lord Himself. We are not to witness to ourselves, our church, our denomination, but to the Lord Himself – look up Acts 1:8 again, and compare Acts 8:5 and 35. The Holy Spirit always points to and magnifies Him – look up John 16:14 and Acts 19:17; and an effective witness will do likewise. -

IS ONE WHO HAS RECEIVED GOD’S HELP

Verse 22 tells us this. Here was Paul’s secret – and here is ours! No one can be an effective witness without His help. What is this “help”? It is spiritual power, the anointing of the Holy Spirit, for which there is absolutely no substitute – look up Zechariah 4:6. This is the greatest need of all who would effectively witness for the Lord – look up and compare Luke 24:49 and Acts 2:4. When did Paul “receive” this help? – look up Acts 9:17, and read again the Lord’s word in Acts 1:8.

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