Testimonies Are Contagious

Chris Staples 15 December 2022



At our first church gathering of 2022, we heard personal testimonies shared by saints of all ages, backgrounds and experiences. Their stories told of the faithfulness of God in many different ways – from family miracles, spiritual growth and employment openings to incredible deliverance, healing and restoration.

One of the most powerful testimonies came from a precious lady who led her father to Christ in the last days of his life. Everyone who heard these testimonies was challenged, encouraged and thankful.

> … hearing what God has done in the lives of our brothers and sisters over the last year carries a fresh power.

Our eldership team felt the Lord reminding us of the incredible power of sharing testimonies in church. Perhaps we had neglected or undervalued the impact of our church family proclaiming what God has done in their lives. As preachers, we can easily go to our favourite stories of seeing God move, even though some of these happened many years ago. That's great, but hearing what God has done in the lives of our brothers and sisters over the last year carries a fresh

power.

Why We Share Testimonies

It made me reflect on why. The Word of God tells us that making known what God has done is a mandate to His people, ‘Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done.’ (1 Chronicles 16:8) And here’s the ‘why’:

1. It’s Personal

‘Come and hear, all you who fear God; let me tell you what he has done for me.’ (Psalm 66:16)

Our testimony is ours! It is our experience of God and is deeply personal. It is also often accompanied by tears and laughter because it carries our own faith and emotion with it. Testimony also gives opportunity to grow, as it is verbal, public and should be constant. We need to be ready to tell it. ‘All day long I will tell the wonderful things you do to save your people. But you have done much more than I could possibly know.’ (Psalm 71:15 CEV)

2. We Recount God’s Blessings

Who is our God? Well, let me tell you something about how He treats me. He is steadfast, loving, compassionate, good and abundantly generous. Surely His many blessings are worth recounting? The word ‘recount’ means to give account for and when we testify, we realise we are indebted to His love.

‘I will recount the steadfast love of the Lord, the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord has granted us, and the great goodness to the house of Israel that he has granted them according to his compassion, according to the abundance of his steadfast love.’ (Isaiah 63:7)

3. It’s Good For Us

It is not only good for us to testify but it is also potentially bad for our spirits and well-being to not share. The prophet Jeremiah found that keeping God’s word within him burned and made him weary. Perhaps there is truth in the saying ‘better out than in’!

‘But if I say, ‘I will not mention his word
or speak any more in his name,’
his word is in my heart like a fire,
a fire shut up in my bones.
I am weary of holding it in;

indeed, I cannot.' (Jeremiah 20:9)

On the other hand, Daniel found delight in telling what God had done for him: 'It is my pleasure to tell you about the miraculous signs and wonders that the Most High God has performed for me.' (Daniel 4:2) Paul encourages the Thessalonians to 'encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.' (1 Thessalonians 5:11) What better way than using our testimony.

4. It's Our Duty

Remembrance of God's goodness is a Christian obligation, and we know that God hears. Remembering is part of our walk with the Lord, including the Lord's Supper. As we share our testimony, we call to mind before others how we honour Him in our lives and church. 'Then those who feared the Lord talked with each other, and the Lord listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared the Lord and honoured his name.' (Malachi 3:16)

We follow in the footsteps of the first disciples, spreading the fame of Jesus. 'But they went away and spread his fame through all that district.' (Matthew 9:31)

5. It Becomes Irrepressible and Contagious

Like a lot of good habits in following Jesus, the more we do it, the better it becomes. We see in the early church that witnessing to the realities of what they were seeing and experiencing became a compulsion; a force that could not be stopped. 'As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.'... We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.' (Acts 4:20; 5:32)

> Testimonies breed testimonies... It's contagious!

It does not need to always be big things. In Acts 26:22, the Apostle Paul even says he testifies to 'great & small'. Testimonies breed testimonies. Since hearing the stories shared at our first service of the year, many others have come forward with a testimony to share. It's contagious!

I say, 'More, Lord!' Why not make testimonies a regular part of our church life? Simply because we have Jesus, we speak of Him, and this makes us want to testify. 'It is written: 'I believed; therefore I have spoken.' Since we have that same spirit of faith, we also believe and therefore speak'. (2 Corinthians 4:13)