

John 1:35-46
"Who Will You Tell?"

1. WHERE YOUR WITNESSING STARTS

- A. A revelation of Jesus
- B. A relationship with Jesus

2. WHO YOUR WITNESSING SEEKS

- A. Those to whom you are connected
- B. Those for whom you are concerned

3. WHAT YOUR WITNESSING STATES

- A. An indication of something personal
- B. An invitation to someone special

1. Peter Guber is the CEO of *Mandalay Entertainment*, an award-winning movie producer, and chairman of the NBA's Golden State Warriors.
2. As if all that is not enough to keep him busy, he has also written a book that is due to be released the first of March. The title of the book caught my attention. It is called *Tell to Win*.
3. In the book, the author shares the importance of story-telling as a way of influencing people. A description of the book says, "In *Tell to Win*, Guber shows how to move beyond soulless Power Point slides, facts, and figures to create purposeful stories that can serve as powerful calls to action."ⁱ
4. While a Hollywood executive rarely has anything valuable to offer the church, winning others by telling them a story is an idea the church ought to be familiar with.
5. And if there is anyone on earth who has a story to tell, it is those of us who have experienced the transforming power of the gospel and know the truth of Jesus Christ.
6. Unfortunately, too many Christians treat the story of the gospel as if it were a family secret; something we discuss together on Sunday, but keep to ourselves the rest of the week.
7. That is not how it should be. Years ago, the great preacher Charles Spurgeon said, "I will not believe that thou has tasted of the honey of the gospel if thou can eat it all thyself."
8. The good news of the gospel is too sweet, too eternally precious for us to keep to ourselves! We must tell someone else about it.
9. With that in mind, the close of John chapter 1 records for us the story of the first five disciples of Jesus. Two of those five came to Jesus because of someone else told them about Him.

10. From their example, I want to challenge you about the issue of witnessing for Christ. Knowing Christ yourself, who are you going to tell about Him?

11. Notice what we draw from this text about the subject of your witness for Christ. First of all, notice:

I. WHERE YOUR WITNESSING STARTS

1. A witness is someone who is called upon to testify of their own experience.
2. We cannot be a witness for Christ until we have had an experience of some kind with Him. That fact is borne out for us in this text.
3. The two witnesses in this passage are Andrew and Philip. Both of them became witnesses only after they had encountered Jesus themselves.
4. That is where our witnessing must start as well; out of a genuine encounter with the Lord Jesus.
5. Consider the experience of these two witnesses in our text. Notice that before they became witnesses, they had:

A. A revelation of Jesus

1. Notice verse 36. Referring to John the Baptist, it says, *"And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!"*
2. Verse 37 says, *"And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus."* One of those two disciples was Andrew.
3. Andrew heard John the Baptist preaching about Jesus. He heard the revelation of the Lamb of God, and it turned His heart toward Christ.
4. Before Andrew ever revealed the truth of Jesus to his brother, Simon Peter, someone had revealed that truth to him first.
5. If you are saved, then it is likely that somewhere there was a John the Baptist in your life. Someone served as a prophet to point you to the truth of who Jesus is, and prepare the way for His work in your life.
6. Perhaps it was a parent, a pastor, a friend, or a Sunday school teacher. Regardless of who it was, somewhere God used someone to reveal to you the reality of His Son.

7. We are thankful for those people in our lives. We praise God for what they told us, because we know that we can never relate to others what has not been first revealed to us.

8. You see; I have nothing to say today about quantum theory. I have no information regarding nuclear physics. I cannot speak of that which I do not know myself. I can, however, tell you about Jesus, because somewhere He was revealed to me.

9. Before we become a witness, there must be a revelation of Jesus. Consider also further that there must be:

B. A relationship with Jesus

1. Jesus noticed that Andrew and the other disciple of John were following Him. In verse 38, He invited them to come to where He was dwelling.

2. Look now at verse 39. It says, "*They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour.*"

3. Andrew spent some time with Jesus before he went and witnessed to Simon Peter. Andrew not only knew *about* Jesus through the testimony of John, but he knew Jesus personally.

4. I think we are reminded here of a real problem as it relates to witnessing in our day.

5. I fear that the reason many church members don't tell others about Jesus is simply because there is a vast difference in their *factual* knowledge of Jesus and their *actual* knowledge of Jesus.

6. That is, they know all the facts about Jesus historically, biblically, and theologically, but they do not really know Him *personally*. That is, in a real and living relationship.

7. They have not spent any real time with Him, listening to His Word and talking to Him in prayer. They have information without intimacy. They have a practical knowledge, but not a personal knowledge.

8. Contrast that with what John says at the beginning of I John. He wrote, "*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, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)*" (I John 1:1-2)

9. Vance Havner once said, "Too much of our Christianity is second-hand. It's like eating canned goods instead of vegetables from your own garden."ⁱⁱ

10. If your witnessing for Christ is to amount to anything, then it must start with a genuine, personal knowledge of who He is. That comes from a real relationship with Jesus!

11. If you really meet Him and know Him, then you will be able to effectively and powerfully tell someone else about Him. With that being said, consider not only *where your witnessing starts*, but consider also from this text:

II. WHO YOUR WITNESSING SEEKS

1. In this text both Andrew and Philip met Jesus personally. In Philip's case, verse 43 says, "*The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me.*"

2. Based on their personal knowledge of Jesus, these two men sought to reach out to someone else and share with them what they had discovered in the person of Jesus.

3. It is interesting to me *who* they first sought to reach with their witness. Though one day these disciples would preach to people everywhere, they started initially with someone they knew.

4. Though the Great Commission commands us to go into "all the world" with the gospel, the first mission field that you can and should reach is the one closest to you, filled with people you already know.

5. Consider what Andrew and Philip teach us about who it is we should we seek to reach with our witness. In the case of Andrew, it is:

A. Those to whom we are connected

1. Look at verse 41. After Andrew had spent time with Jesus himself, the Bible says, "*He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.*"

2. I am intrigued by the word "first" in that verse. I'm not exactly sure what John means by that, but it seems to indicate that witnessing to his brother was a priority to Andrew.

3. The old commentator, Matthew Henry says of this, "We ought with a particular concern...to seek the spiritual welfare of those that are related to us; for their relation to us adds both to the *obligation* and to the *opportunity* of doing good to their souls."ⁱⁱⁱ

4. In other words, we ought to see those who are most closely connected to us as the ones to whom we must *first* seek to witness about Christ.

5. Your family and friends, the people you are with the most, are the ones you have the greatest opportunity and the greatest obligation to speak to about Jesus.
6. It is true that there are thousands of people around us who need to hear the gospel. However, rather than thinking of the lost in terms of nameless, faceless statistics, we need to recognize that many of those lost people are folks we know by name, and speak to on a daily basis.
7. Andrew challenges us to seek to witness *first* to those with whom we are already connected.
8. Andrew did not have to build a relationship with Simon Peter before he told him about Jesus. The relationship already existed.
9. Likewise, in your life and mine there are many connections and relationships already in place that could serve as opportunities to witness for Christ.
10. Looking again at this text, Andrew encourages us to seek out those to whom we are already connected. Looking at the example of Philip, we are challenged further to seek:

B. Those for whom we are concerned

1. Look now at verse 45. Having been called by Jesus as a disciple, the Bible says of Philip, "*Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.*"
2. John doesn't give us all the information here, but we can deduce that something led Philip to go and find Nathanael.
3. Perhaps they were friends. Perhaps they went to the synagogue together. Perhaps they were neighbors.
4. We don't know their exact relationship, but we know that something moved Philip to go and tell Nathanael about his meeting with the Lord Jesus.
5. I believe it is safe to say that God led Philip to Nathanael. I believe His heart was moved with a burden to introduce his friend to Christ.
6. In my own experience, there have been times when God placed a certain person on my heart. Their name and face kept coming to my mind, and I felt led to talk to them about Christ.

7. We ought to witness to everyone, but there are times when God will give you a unique concern for a particular individual.
8. Like Philip, we ought to see that concern as a motivation to go and find them and speak to them about the Lord.
9. With that being said, is there someone in your life you are concerned about? Do you have a burden for some relative, some friend, some co-worker?
10. If so, then *you* are the one God is calling to tell them! You are the one who must find them and speak to them about Christ!
11. Have you no burden for anyone? Then pray with the songwriter:

*Lord, Lay some soul upon my heart,
And love that soul through me,
And may I bravely do my part,
To win that soul for thee.^{iv}*

12. Looking at this text, we see not only *where your witnessing starts*, and *who your witnessing seeks*, but we also find something about:

III. WHAT YOUR WITNESSING STATES

1. In this passage, Andrew and Philip provide us an example not only of *who* are seek in witnessing, but also *what* we are say when we witness.
2. What Andrew said to Simon, and what Philip said to Nathanael is very similar, and I believe it gives us a guide as to the way we should speak to others about Christ.
3. Consider their witness and what it teaches us as witnesses today. First of all, their witness was:

A. An indication of something personal

1. Look again at verse 41. It says, "[Andrew] *first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.*"
2. Compare that now with verse 45. It says, "*Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.*"
3. Both Andrew and Philip began their witness by talking about their own personal knowledge of Jesus. They witnessed about what they knew themselves.

4. They testified of a *personal contact with Jesus*. Both said, "We have found him..." They had discovered for themselves the "pearl of great price", the treasure that is the person of Jesus!
5. They testified also of a *personal conviction about Jesus*. After having met Jesus themselves, they were both convinced that He was the Messiah, the Savior that God had promised in His Word.
6. Andrew and Philip remind us that a powerful witness is a personal witness. When those you witness to hear and see the impact that Jesus has made upon you, they are drawn to Him themselves!
7. I read of a young salesman who was disappointed in losing a big sale. He told his manager, "I guess it just proves that you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink."
8. The manager replied, "Son, your job is not to make him drink. Your job is to make him thirsty."
9. When we witness, our personal testimony of Jesus ought to make others thirsty for the water of life that has first quenched our thirst.
10. Our witness then should be an indication of something personal, but we see further in this text that our witness should also be:

B. An invitation to someone powerful

1. Notice again the example of Andrew and Philip. Having told Simon about Jesus, verse 42 says of Andrew, "*And he brought him to Jesus...*"
2. Once he got Simon to Jesus, Jesus did the work of converting Simon to Himself.
3. Likewise, when Philip told Nathanael about Jesus, he found him skeptical at first. Nathanael asked in verse 46, "*Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?*"
4. I love Philip's answer. He said, "*Come and see.*" He invited Nathanael to come and see for Himself that what He had said was true.
5. It is not our responsibility to convince people about Jesus. All we can do is point them to Him, and invite them to come to Him for themselves.
6. We do so believing that just as He has transformed us, He will transform them as well!

7. I don't have the power to save anyone. I can't forgive sin. I can't change lives. But, I know the One who can!

8. If I can get someone to look to Jesus for themselves, I know that what He did for me, He can do for them as well!

9. You don't have to be a great preacher, theologian, or Bible scholar to be a great witness for Christ. You simply need to know who He is, and where others can find Him for themselves.

10. Someone once said that a good witness is not like a salesman, where the emphasis is on a product. A good witness is like a signpost. That is whether it is young or old, pretty or ugly, it only needs to be easily read and pointing in the right direction.

11. When we witness, we tell of what we know ourselves, and we invite people to Jesus, saying to them in the words of Psalms 43:8, *"O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him."*

1. At the end of World War II, Winston Churchill said of England's airmen, "Never did so many owe so much to so few."

2. It could be said of those of us who know Christ in the midst of this lost world, "Never did so few owe so much to so many."

3. Those of us who know Jesus personally, owe it to those who do not to tell them about Him.

4. No more than a doctor could rightfully keep a cure for cancer to himself, can we keep to ourselves the salvation that Jesus offers.

5. We are to be His witnesses to those with whom we are connected. Understanding that I ask you, who will you tell?

ⁱ "About Tell to Win", www.peterguber.com, accessed 2/11/10,
http://www.peterguber.com/telltowin/about_tell_to_win

ⁱⁱ Hester, Dennis J., *The Vance Havner Quote Book*, (Baker Books House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1986), p. 32

ⁱⁱⁱ Henry, Matthew, *Matthew Henry Bible Commentary*, www.ewordtoday.com, accessed 2/11/11,
<http://www.ewordtoday.com/comments/john/mh/john1.htm>

^{iv} "Lord, Lay Some Soul Upon My Heart, lyrics by Mack Weaver, copyright 1940