



WHEN Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, *Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?* She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, *Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.* (John 8:10-11)

The above text comes from my very favorite passage of the Gospels, John 8:1-11. The text comes at the end of a trial at the bar of, not only justice, but also of mercy and grace. There was a plenitude of witness of a woman's guilt who was taken in adultery. The defendant had already been prejudged to die the terrible death of stoning. The hypocritical Scribes and Pharisees wished the woman the gravest of harm – even the cruel death of stoning. It was these decadent fellows who dragged her, without mercy, and cast her down before the Lord.

As it turns out, the ones who wished her the greatest harm were the very ones who had forcibly dragged her to the One who could do her the greatest good. During our Lord's cross-examination of the witnesses, some great guilt must have manifested itself by His writing upon the ground that destroyed their hateful fervor for blood, and caused them to slink away as the pole-cats that they were. Their testimony was not credible since they were probably guilty of the same sin. *O Lord, the hope of Israel, all that forsake thee shall be ashamed, and they that depart from me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the Lord, the fountain of living waters.* (Jer 17:13)

There are legal requirements for one to serve in a court of law as a witness. One requirement is that they be CREDIBLE. You do not drag a convicted murderer into court as a witness against someone taken in shoplifting. The credibility of the witness will have great bearing on the manner in which their testimony is received. A man or woman of impeccable character will be believed before a common drunk, for example.

A second requirement is that the witness must be competent in rendering his or her testimony. An idiot would not be competent.

The most important qualification for a witness is that they have first hand, personal knowledge of an event in question.

There are a profusion of witnesses of the mighty works of God mentioned in Holy Scripture. But I will limit our devotion today to those who were witnesses to the miracles and mighty works of the Lord Jesus Christ. These witnesses are the most qualified of all for they were recipients of the blessings of which they give testimony out of love and not the hatred of the Scribes and Pharisees mentioned above.

I will begin with an illustration I read this morning from a very old edition of Sunday School Times. I think it worth mentioning that the older the testator, the more balanced the testimony; thus, I prefer the older commentaries of the Bible to the pabulum of the modern.

A missionary physician in one of China's hospitals cured a man of cataracts. A few weeks later, 46 blind men came to the doctor from one of China's wilds, all holding on to a rope guided by the man who had been healed. He had led them in this way, walking in chain 250 miles from a distant province to this hospital. The indifferent multitudes who saw them may have cared little, but we should not be discouraged when the lost prefer to remain so. The greater blind were not holding on to that rope, but looking on without seeing. It is our mission to seek out the spiritually blind and lead them to the Light. Whether they grasp the rope of salvation or not is not our concern, but solely the work of the Holy Spirit and God's omniscient will. We have performed our calling by providing the Rope.

Let's examine, briefly, some of the witnesses who shared the beauty and glory of Christ when touched by His mercy and grace.

Thessalonika, *"For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost: So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing. (1 Thess 1:5-8)* What a blessing if the modern church followed the example of the Thessalonians.

In the Gospel of John, there was a man blind from birth whom Jesus mixed soil and spittle and applied to his eyes. He told him to go and wash in the Pool of Siloam. He did so and was healed. The Scribes and Pharisees were enraged at the healing and asked how the boy came to be healed: *Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner. He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see. Then said they to him again, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes? He answered them, I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciples? (John 9:24-27)* In this we see a reflection of our modern political climate in which truth and righteousness is of no account to the demagogues. We, too, have had our eyes opened, not by the power of our own sinful souls, but by the power of the Holy Ghost convicting our hearts.

Here follows an amazing example of witnessing by a healed leper: *40 And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. 41 And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean. 42 And as soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed. 43 And he straightly charged him, and forthwith sent him away; 44 And saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any man: but go thy way, shew*

thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them. 45 But he went out, and began to publish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places: and they came to him from every quarter. (Mark 1:40-45)

Note the great compassion of Christ in physically touching one whom no one else would dare touch for his sores and filth. He healed the man, but note that he told him to tell no man of the healing. Did Christ not know that the man could not keep such a secret? Ridiculous! Of course, He knew. The lesson was for you and me! When we have been the recipient of so great a salvation, how dare we keep closed mouthed about it. We must declare the wonder to all who will hear us.

The Lord likewise healed the deaf man of Luke 7:32-37, again instructing him to tell no man – but he could never have kept silent. The entire multitude of witnesses voiced it about everywhere as well.

The disciples of 2 Peter 1 were exuberant witnesses of Christ: *16 For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. 17 For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. 18 And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. (2 Peter 1:16-18)* These did not forget His wondrous works – how can we?

There are far more amazing witnesses of Christ than can be mentioned in a devotion, or, indeed, in many volumes of books. I have touched on only a few to make my point that we have a God-given responsibility to witness of the faith and hope that is within us. But I would like to mention one last truly impressive witness in closing. That is the Woman at the Well of Sychar (John 4).

She came there seeking a temporary resolution for her thirst, but left with a life-giving water which would eternally quench her thirst. She was a woman of ill repute who had slept with many men of Sychar to whom she was never married. She was the talk of the town among the women gossipers, and she dared not show her face at the well in the cool of the day when all of the other women came to draw water. But she met a man who told her things about her life that were impossible for any other to know. She came to know Him as her Lord and Savior. As a result, she became one of the most extraordinary witnesses in all of the Gospels. Why so? Because, despite her tawdry reputation as an adulteress and profligate sinner, something had changed. A day earlier, she would have had no credibility whatsoever as a witness; but now, everyone believed her testimony in the village owing to that grand and new authority granted her as a daughter of her Father in Heaven, and a recipient of the blessings of Salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ whom she had met at the Well of Jacob – an event predestined for her from before the Foundation of the World. She brought perhaps hundreds of souls to the Well to meet Christ!

How about you?

Have you been a witness today for the tired, the thirst, the lame, the blind, and the deaf? Go find your ROPE!