



2024 Q2: Themes in the Gospel of John - Lesson #4 Witnesses of Christ as the Messiah

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SABBATH

I love John's Gospel, as well as his 3 short letters and The Revelation of Jesus Christ! John was thought to be the youngest of the disciples, and he is the only disciple who wasn't murdered; but not for lack of trying, because they did try to boil him in hot oil. When that didn't work, they banished him to the Isle of Patmos, where he died as a very old man. His preserved writings are especially for those who love to see "behind the lines." They start at the very dawn of infinity and reach down to Jesus' triumph and restoration of unity in His universe.

For those of us who are older, perhaps feeling a bit useless compared to previous years, and are tempted to think we are no longer of much use to God or to others, let me read this quote from the wonderfully insightful book called "The Acts of the Apostles," pages 573, 574 by Ellen G. White (EGW):

"The history of John affords a striking illustration of the way in which God can use aged workers. When John was exiled to the Isle of Patmos, there were many who thought him to be past service, an old and broken reed, ready to fall at any time. But the Lord saw fit to use him still. Though banished from the scenes of his former labor, he did not cease to bear witness to the truth. Even in Patmos he made friends and converts. His was a message of joy, proclaiming a risen Saviour who on high was interceding for His people until He should return to take them to Himself. And it was after John had grown old in the service of his Lord that he received more communications from heaven than he had received during all the former years of his life.

The most tender regard should be cherished for those whose life interest has been bound up with the work of God. These aged workers have stood faithful amid storm and trial. They may have infirmities, but they still possess talents that qualify them to stand in their place in God's cause. Though worn, and unable to bear the heavier burdens that younger men can and should carry, the counsel they give us is of the highest value.

They may have made mistakes, but from their failures they have learned to avoid errors and dangers, and are they not therefore competent to give wise counsel? They have borne test and trial, and though they have lost some of their vigor, the Lord does not lay them aside. He gives them special grace and wisdom.

Those who have served their Master when the work went hard, who endured poverty and remained faithful when there were few to stand for truth, are to be honored and respected. The Lord desires the younger laborers to gain wisdom, strength, and maturity by association with these faithful men. Let the younger men realize that in having such workers among them they

are highly favored. Let them give them an honored place in their councils.

As those who have spent their lives in the service of Christ draw near to the close of their earthly ministry, they will be impressed by the Holy Spirit to recount the experiences they have had in connection with the work of God. The record of His wonderful dealings with His people, of His great goodness in delivering them from trial, should be repeated to those newly come to the faith. God desires the old and tried laborers to stand in their place, doing their part to save men and women from being swept downward by the mighty current of evil. He desires them to keep the armor on till He bids them lay it down.”

In every respect John has always been an amazing witness to what he experienced with and about God. and we can also bear witness to the truth of he wrote. -- Acts of the Apostles,” pp 573, 574

This lesson focuses on witnesses John the Baptist, Andrew and Simon Peter, Philip and Nathaniel, Nicodemus, and the disciple John.

But I would submit that even prior to these, there were many other witnesses:

- Isaiah seems like a book of information that Jesus in heaven gave Isaiah about the whole life and mission of Jesus on earth. Then, when Jesus was born on earth, he used this book to inform himself of that information. It’s very interesting to read Isaiah from that viewpoint.

John the Baptist’s father, the priest Zechariah, was filled with the Holy Spirit, after he named his son John and regained his ability to hear and speak, and publicly gave this testimony:

“Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come to his people and redeemed them. He has

- raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David (as he said through his holy prophets of long ago),
- salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us—
- to show mercy to our ancestors and
- to remember his holy covenant, the oath he swore to our father Abraham: to rescue us from the hand of our enemies, and
- TO ENABLE US TO SERVE HIM WITHOUT FEAR in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.

“And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will

- go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him,
- to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, by which
- the rising sun will come to us from heaven to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death,
- to guide our feet into the path of peace.” -- Luke 1:68-79 NIV

Mary's husband Joseph was told by an angel that his fiancé's son was actually the Son of God, so Joseph's witness was believing and taking action as he was instructed and was instrumental in keeping Jesus safe in the face of murderous intentions of Satan through King Herod.

Then, of course, there were the Angels giving the good news of Jesus' birth to the shepherds near Bethlehem and guiding the wise men to Jesus. These witnesses told others about the good news and the wise men believed what they were told, going home a different way, and were also part of the escape plan to keep Jesus from being killed.

It's interesting to me that these wise men knew more about the birth of this tiny King than God's own leaders. Remember Daniel, who was made head of all the wise men in Babylon? I believe the wise men kept the prophetic information given them by Daniel, and acted on it when Jesus was born.

Simeon was a witness to the Messiah, when Jesus was brought to the temple in Jerusalem for circumcision:

“Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying: “Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: A LIGHT FOR REVELATION TO THE GENTILES, AND THE GLORY OF YOUR PEOPLE ISRAEL.”

The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: “This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too.” Luke 2:25-35 NIV

And then there's Anna, who was also at the temple at the same time, and was Christ's second witness:

“There was also a prophet, Anna, the daughter of Penuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. SHE NEVER LEFT THE TEMPLE BUT WORSHIPPED NIGHT AND DAY, FASTING AND PRAYING. Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.” -- Luke 2:36-38

SUNDAY

The Testimony of John the Baptist

Jews in Jesus' time expected two messiahs, one priestly and the other royal. But when He came, they did not recognize Him in either of these categories.

Isaiah 40:1-5 predicted the part John would play:

“Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. A voice of one calling In the wilderness “prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all people will see it together. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.” A voice says, “Cry out.” And I said, “What shall I cry?” “All people are like grass, and all their faithfulness is like the flowers of the field. The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath of the Lord blows on them. Surely the people are grass. The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever.” You who bring good news to Zion, go up on a high mountain. You who bring good news to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with a shout, lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah, “Here is your God!” See, the Sovereign Lord comes with power, and he rules with a mighty arm. See, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him. He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young. Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, or with the breadth of his hand marked off the heavens? Who has held the dust of the earth in a basket, or weighed the mountains on the scales and the hills in a balance? Who can fathom the Spirit of the Lord, or instruct the Lord as his counselor? Whom did the Lord consult to enlighten him, and who taught him the right way? Who was it that taught him knowledge, or showed him the path of understanding? Surely the nations are like a drop in a bucket; they are regarded as dust on the scales; he weighs the islands as though they were fine dust. Lebanon is not sufficient for altar fires, nor its animals enough for burnt offerings. Before him all the nations are as nothing; they are regarded by him as worthless and less than nothing. With whom, then, will you compare God? To what image will you liken him? As for an idol, a metalworker casts it, and a goldsmith overlays it with gold and fashions silver chains for it. A person too poor to present such an offering selects wood that will not rot; they look for a skilled worker to set up an idol that will not topple. Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood since the earth was founded? He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like a canopy, and spreads them out like a tent to live in. He brings princes to naught and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing. No sooner are they planted, no sooner are they sown, no sooner do they take root in the ground, than he blows on them and they wither, and a whirlwind sweeps them away like chaff. “To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal?” says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one and calls forth

each of them by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing. Why do you complain, Jacob? Why do you say, Israel, “My way is hidden from the Lord; my cause is disregarded by my God”? Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.” NIV

This reminds me a lot of what God says to Job in chapters 38-42 when they finally talk. What God was John preparing people for?

John’s ministry and mission was to prepare the way for the messiah by being a voice to make straight paths for Him, baptizing people with water and calling for repentance. John also said,

“I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes ONE WHO IS MORE POWERFUL THAN I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. HE WILL BAPTIZE YOU WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT AND FIRE. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and BURNING UP THE CHAFF WITH UNQUENCHABLE FIRE.” -- Matthew 3:11-12 NIV

Most of us will recall that in the days before super highways, men would go in front of a traveling King and fix the road so his path would be as smooth as possible. They would fill in the dips and take down the the bumps.

Since our mission is like John’s, in that we are preparing for Christ’s second coming, how can we “fix the road” for Jesus, like John did?

Let’s think about how we could present these:

- Clear up misconceptions about who God is
- Point to God as our powerful creator
- Understand how God’s Holy Spirit baptizes us
- Clearly explain what it means to be baptized with fire
- Present how God uses his power - to grant true freedom, to serve His creation, to heal us from sin, to save us from eternal death and prepare us for understanding and meeting “the unquenchable fire.”

“Therefore the Lord, the Lord Almighty, the Mighty One of Israel, declares: “Ah! I will vent my wrath on my foes and avenge myself on my enemies. I will turn my hand against you; I WILL THOROUGHLY PURGE AWAY YOUR DROSS AND REMOVE ALL YOUR IMPURITIES.” -- Isaiah 1:24,25 NIV

“Surely wickedness burns like a fire; it consumes briars and thorns, it sets the forest thickets ablaze, so that it rolls upward in a column of smoke.” -- Isaiah 9:18 NIV

John declared Jesus to be “The Lamb of God who TAKES AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD.” As John baptized Jesus with water, “he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.” -- Matthew 3:16,17 NIV

How does Jesus take away the sin of the world?

“Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem. Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering,
YET WE CONSIDERED HIM PUNISHED BY GOD, STRICKEN BY HIM, AND AFFLICTED.

BUT

he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him,

AND BY HIS WOUNDS WE ARE HEALED.

We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. After he has suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; BY HIS KNOWLEDGE MY RIGHTEOUS SERVANT WILL JUSTIFY MANY, AND HE WILL BEAR THEIR INIQUITIES.” -- Isaiah 53:1-6,11 NIV

“The sinners in Zion are terrified; trembling grips the godless: “Who of us can dwell with the consuming fire? Who of us can dwell with everlasting burning?” Those who walk righteously and speak what is right, who reject gain from extortion and keep their hands from accepting bribes, who stop their ears against plots of murder and shut their eyes against contemplating evil— they are the ones who will dwell on the heights, whose refuge will be the mountain fortress. Their bread will be supplied, and water will not fail them. Your eyes will see the king in his beauty and view a land that stretches afar.” -- Isaiah 33:14-17 NIV

MONDAY

The Lamb of God

The Hebrew nation was looking for a Messiah who would deliver them from Rome. The goal of the gospel of John was to change their understanding of the Messiah. They needed to recognize in Jesus the fulfillment of the prophecies regarding the coming King, who would renew the relationship between God and His people.

Since today, this very day, is Yom Kippur to the Jews of today, and corresponds to the Day of Atonement in the yearly sanctuary service, I want to take a little side trip to talk about this a bit. The temple services were in every aspect a witness about Jesus and how He saves us. The feast days were all about the steps in our journey from destruction to salvation. From the Passover through the Feast of Tabernacles; from passing over our sins when the blood of a pure young lamb was on their doors and in our hearts, through to living or tabernacling with God again. It is The Lamb who TAKES AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD.

On the Day of Atonement, to atone for sin and purify the Sanctuary of the accumulated record of the sin of the people and priests, two goats were presented. One goat was sacrificed to death for the life of God's people, but the sins of the people were symbolically placed on the head of the other goat. Was that goat killed? No, it was lead out to the desert and left there.

This reminds me of Satan's final condemnation:

“How you have fallen from heaven, morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, “I will ascend to the heavens; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of Mount Zaphon. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.” But you are brought down to the realm of the dead, to the depths of the pit. Those who see you stare at you, they ponder your fate: “Is this the man who shook the earth and made kingdoms tremble, the man who made the world a wilderness, who overthrew its cities and would not let his captives go home?” All the kings of the nations lie in state, each in his own tomb. But you are cast out of your tomb like a rejected branch; you are covered with the slain, with those pierced by the sword, those who descend to the stones of the pit. Like a corpse trampled underfoot, you will not join them in burial, for you have destroyed your land and killed your people. Let the offspring of the wicked never be mentioned again.” – Isaiah 14: 12-20 NIV

Add to that this information in Revelation:

“And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time. I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony about Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years. When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to

deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth—Gog and Magog—and to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore. They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God’s people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them.” -- Revelation 20:1-9 NIV

Satan is left on this planet, which he has reduced to a wilderness, and with no living people to tempt for a thousand years, to contemplate the results of his rulership, as symbolized by the goat in the desert. These are such solemn times!

So how is the Lamb of God a witness?

The lesson tells us to read Jesus’ lamb-like qualities:

- Mark 10:45, which says Jesus came to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many;
- Romans 5:6, Christ died for us while we were yet sinners; and
- 1 Peter 2:24, by His wounds we are healed. Verse 25 asks us to return to the Shepherd of our souls.

TUESDAY

The Two Disciples of John

Two of John the Baptist’s disciples heard what he had said about Jesus being Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Andrew (Simon Peter’s brother) and Philip left John to follow Jesus from then until the rest of their lives. Both went and found another person - Andrew brought his brother Simon, and Philip brought Nathaniel. So, as witnesses are to believe in Jesus, follow Him to learn from and follow His teachings, and invite others to “Come and See” for themselves!

I find it interesting that no church leaders were among the 12 disciples. Why?

“If John and Andrew had possessed the unbelieving spirit of the priests and rulers, they would not have been found as learners at the feet of Jesus. They would have come to Him as critics, to judge His words. Many thus close the door to the most precious opportunities. But not so did these first disciples. They had responded to the Holy Spirit's call in the preaching of John the Baptist. Now they recognized the voice of the heavenly Teacher. To them the words of Jesus were full of freshness and truth and beauty. A divine illumination was shed upon the teaching of the Old Testament Scriptures. **THE MANY-SIDED THEMES OF TRUTH STOOD OUT IN NEW LIGHT.** It is contrition and faith and love that enable the soul to receive wisdom from heaven. Faith working by love is the key of knowledge, and everyone that loveth “knoweth God.” -- 1 John 4:7... If Nathanael had trusted to the rabbis for guidance, he would never have found Jesus. It was by seeing and judging for himself that he became a disciple. So in the case of many today whom prejudice withholds from good. How different would be the result if they would “come and see!”

While they trust to the guidance of human authority, none will come to a saving knowledge of the truth. Like Nathanael, we need to study God's word for ourselves, and pray for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. He who saw Nathanael under the fig tree will see us in the secret place of prayer. Angels from the world of light are near to those who in humility seek for divine guidance.” -- The Desire of Ages, EGW, pp 139,140

Should we be seeking new light as the disciples were?

“The Reformation did not, as many suppose, end with Luther. IT IS TO BE CONTINUED TO THE CLOSE OF THIS WORLD’S HISTORY. Luther had a great work to do in reflecting to others the light which God had permitted to shine upon him; yet he did not receive all the light which was to be given to the world. From that time to this, new light has been continually shining upon the Scriptures, and NEW TRUTHS HAVE BEEN CONSTANTLY UNFOLDING.” -- The Great Controversy, EGW, pg 148

WEDNESDAY

Philip and Nathaniel

The lesson points out that prejudice easily blinds the eyes from seeing people for what they are really worth. When Philip called Nathaniel to “Come and See” for himself about Jesus, he added, “of Nazareth.’ Undoubtedly, he knew this would not set well with Nathaniel. So of course, Nathaniel uttered the prejudicial line, “Can anything good come from Nazareth?” Fortunately, his friendship with Philip was stronger than his prejudice. We need to be friends of people first!! Show them we care, before they care enough to believe us.

We see in this encounter that the best way to deal with prejudice is not some exalted philosophical or theological argumentation, but rather to invite the individual to experience the truth personally for themselves.

If you have ever seen gemstones before they are cut and polished, you will note that they don’t usually look that special. But cutting and polishing them and then exposing them tonight brings out the beautiful facets! With close observation, we see even greater facets! We need to keep looking for and sharing the beautiful facts of truth!!

They thing I notice about Jesus is His insight into people, more so than His outright miracles. Jesus knew Nathaniel, while sitting under the fig tree, “a true Israelite in whom there is no deceit,” and that built trust into Nathaniel.

THURSDAY

The Witness of Nicodemus

You have to Love Nicodemus. He was a highly respected member of the elite Sanhedrin; he had a paid position he didn't want to lose. Now he was a searcher! Not content with going along with the party line, he dug for the truth, even going so far as to meet with Jesus under the cover of darkness. He was a teacher of teachers, yet he learned from his visit that he had never really understood God's plan for mankind, to be saved from sin, rather than the Romans. He, with us, learned the true meaning of the serpent on the pole lifted up for the believing Israelites to be healed from the venom of the snake. "That everyone who believes in Him may have eternal life." Nicodemus seems to have taken the rebuke and learned his lesson, because after Jesus died, he bought 75 lbs of spices to use for Jesus' burial, and helped Joseph of Arimathea bury Jesus in Joseph's tomb.

I used to think that when Jesus said:

"no one can ENTER the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit," He meant we couldn't go to heaven. But in a different version on this discussion between Jesus and Nicodemus was, "Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can SEE the kingdom of God unless they are born again." -- John 3:3 NIV

Thinking of binoculars, if someone hands binoculars to you usually you have to adjust the focus so that you can see and identify clearly. The Holy Spirit does that same thing for us. Unless He refocuses our spiritual eyes, we can't even SEE the kingdom of God. We can't perceive it and it seems foolish to us.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but TO SAVE THE WOLD THROUGH HIM. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. THIS IS THE VERDICT: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that IT MAY BE SEEN PLAINLY THAT WHAT THEY HAVE DONE HAS BEEN DONE IN THE SIGHT OF GOD." (The NIV says, 'WHAT HAS BEEN DONE HAS BEEN DONE THROUGH GOD.') -- John 3:16-21

"In the interview with Nicodemus, Jesus unfolded the plan of salvation, and His mission to the world. In none of His subsequent discourses did He explain so fully, step by step, the work necessary to be done in the hearts of all who would inherit the kingdom of heaven. At the very beginning of His ministry He opened the truth to a member of the Sanhedrin, to the mind that was most receptive, and to an appointed teacher of the people. But the leaders of Israel did not welcome the light. Nicodemus hid the truth in his heart, and for three years there was little apparent fruit.

But Jesus was acquainted with the soil into which He cast the seed. The words spoken at night to one listener in the lonely mountain were not lost. For a time Nicodemus did not publicly acknowledge Christ, but he watched His life, and pondered His teachings. In the Sanhedrin council he repeatedly thwarted the schemes of the priests to destroy Him. When at last Jesus was lifted up on the cross, Nicodemus remembered the teaching upon Olivet: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." The light from that secret interview illumined the cross upon Calvary, and Nicodemus saw in Jesus the world's Redeemer.

After the Lord's ascension, when the disciples were scattered by persecution, Nicodemus came boldly to the front. He employed his wealth in sustaining the infant church that the Jews had expected to be blotted out at the death of Christ. In the time of peril he who had been so cautious and questioning was firm as a rock, encouraging the faith of the disciples, and furnishing means to carry forward the work of the gospel. He was scorned and persecuted by those who had paid him reverence in other days. He became poor in this world's goods; yet he faltered not in the faith which had its beginning in that night conference with Jesus.

Nicodemus related to John the story of that interview, and by his pen it was recorded for the instruction of millions. The truths there taught are as important today as they were on that solemn night in the shadowy mountain, when the Jewish ruler came to learn the way of life from the lowly Teacher of Galilee." -- The Desire of Ages, EGW, pg 176, 177

I love a God who is not intimidated by questions!

This is Paul's take on living the life of a witness for God:

FRIDAY

Further Thought

Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings. Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? **RUN IN SUCH A WAY AS TO GET THE PRIZE.** Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave **SO THAT AFTER I HAVE PREACHED TO OTHERS, I MYSELF WILL NOT BE DISQUALIFIED FOR THE PRIZE.** -- 1 Corinthians 9:19-27 NIV

How do we become witnesses to the Messiah? We become intimate with God, really know Him, then get to know and care about others and show them how to be saved and become witnesses.

“How, then, are we to be saved? “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,” so the Son of man has been lifted up, and everyone who has been deceived and bitten by the serpent may look and live. “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” John 1:29. The light shining from the cross reveals the love of God. His love is drawing us to Himself. If we do not resist this drawing, we shall be led to the foot of the cross in repentance for the sins that have crucified the Saviour. Then the Spirit of God through faith produces a new life in the soul. The thoughts and desires are brought into obedience to the will of Christ. The heart, the mind, are created anew in the image of Him who works in us to subdue all things to Himself. Then the law of God is written in the mind and heart, and we can say with Christ, “I delight to do Thy will, O my God.” Psalm 40:8.” -- The Desire of Ages, EGW, pp 175