



TESTIMONY

Sermon script to go with the PowerPoint slides.

*(NB. This message is shorter than other Grateful Living sermon scripts, as we are encouraging you to include a testimony time as part of the program, and maybe even start having testimony times every Sabbath. Some churches set aside a Sabbath each month, or each quarter, as a 'Say So Sabbath'. These special testimony days are built on the idea found in Psalms 107:2 that says "Let the redeemed of the Lord **say so.**")*

Introduction

Have you ever listened to someone sharing about what God has done, or is doing, in their life and thought, "Wow! If God can do that for them then He can do it for me too."? A testimony spurs us on to believe that God can do in our lives what He has done in the lives of others.

Testimonies are powerful, both for the teller and the hearer. Giving testimony to what God has done in our life helps us to heal, to grow and to endure. And the beauty of it all is that it does all those same things—healing, growing, enduring and encouraging—in the lives of the hearers.

There is something powerful in testimonies that can be a catalyst for great good in the lives of all involved. A testimony is 'a firsthand authentication of a fact'. When we share our authentic and personal testimony, we testify, like in a court of law, to what God has done, and is doing, in our life. Testimony is possibly the most powerful form of Christian witnessing.

Your testimony is a gift from God. Today we will explore what it means to live gratefully, by accepting and sharing the testimony that God has entrusted to each one of us.

SLIDE: As we've been doing in the rest of this Grateful Living series, let's look at the Great Controversy, the great cosmic battle, that is occurring around our testimonies.

- God's Word tells us that by sharing your testimony, you strengthen the faith of yourself and others. But Satan says, "No-one is interested in your testimony. If you try and share your testimony at work or school, people will avoid you."
- God says that your simple, Christ-centred testimony can overcome Satan and his temptations. Satan responds with discouragement, saying, "Your testimony isn't powerful enough to share so don't bother."
- The Bible tells us that every person can testify to something God has done or is doing in their life. Satan counters this with, "God hasn't really done anything in your life, it's all just coincidence."
- God tells us to accept courage from Him and to share our testimony at every opportunity. While Satan tempts us with the attractions and distractions of the world and says, "Go out and live on the wild-side so that you'll have a cool testimony!"

The war is real isn't it? But so is the victory! Amen!

SLIDE: Peter and John were often commanded by the priests and others to stop sharing their testimony, but they answered their oppressors with. “We cannot stop telling about everything we have seen and heard.” *Acts 4:20 (NKJV)*

They just had to share their testimonies, and it’s no exaggeration that their testimonies changed the world!

SLIDE: In the beautiful little book *Steps to Christ* (which has been translated into more than 175 languages!), Ellen White wrote, “No sooner does one come to Christ than there is born in his heart a desire to make known to others what a precious friend he has found in Jesus; the saving and sanctifying truth cannot be shut up in his heart.” *Ellen G. White, Steps to Christ, 78*

SLIDE: We see a beautiful example of this in Luke 8, Now the man from whom the demons had departed begged Him that he might be with Him. But Jesus sent him away, saying, “Return to your own house, and tell what great things God has done for you.” And he went his way and proclaimed throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him.” *Luke 8:38-39 (NKJV)*

That’s exactly what God invites us to do too. Go and tell others about the great things that God has done for us. It’s the personal and authentic telling of what we have experienced.

SLIDE: “As witnesses for Christ, we are to tell what we know, what we ourselves have seen and heard and felt. If we have been following Jesus step by step, we shall have something right to the point to tell concerning the way in which He has led us. We can tell how we have tested His promise, and found the promise true. We can bear witness to what we have known of the grace of Christ. This is the witness for which our Lord calls, and for want of which the world is perishing.” *Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages, 340*

Testimonies have always been important and even more so as we reach the last days of earth’s history. In fact, the Bible tells us that our testimonies will be a mighty tool in the hands of God’s last days remnant people.

SLIDE: “And they overcame him [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony.” *Revelation 12:11 (NKJV)*

Tell people what the Lamb has done for you!

But, maybe you are asking, what does this have to do with faithful stewardship and our theme of Grateful Living? Listen to this beautiful explanation from the pen of God’s messenger, Ellen G. White.

SLIDE: “A living Christian will cultivate gratitude of heart. He will seriously, earnestly recount the blessings of his life and the precious results of all his afflictions. He will recall every occasion upon which the hand of Christ has lifted up a standard for him against the enemy. The great love of Jesus, the infinite sacrifice made for man’s redemption, will be an unflinching theme for grateful, humble praise.” *Ellen G. White, Review & Herald, May 30, 1882, par. 8*

Did you catch that? It's our gratitude for all that God has done, and is doing for us, that compels and fuels and drives us to share our testimony.

So who should we be sharing our testimony with?

SLIDE: "For He established a testimony in Jacob, ... That they should make them known to their children." *Psalm 78:5 (NKJV)*

As is described so beautifully in Deuteronomy 6, we are to share what God has done, and is doing, with our children at every opportunity—when we are walking, sitting, eating, resting and playing.

SLIDE: "You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles." *Matthew 10:18 (NKJV)*

We are also to share our testimony with those who ridicule or persecute us. There are many stories of conversions when God's people share their testimony with their persecutors.

SLIDE: "And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God." *1 Corinthians 2:1 (NKJV)*

We are to share it with fellow believers. Every church should have a time set aside for testimonies. It's really important, because that's one of the ways that God's remnant people overcome Satan!

Who else are we to share our testimony with?

SLIDE: "The presentation of Christ in the family, by the fireside, and in small gatherings in private houses is more successful in securing souls to Jesus than are sermons delivered in the open air to the moving throng, or even in halls or churches." *Ellen G. White, Review & Herald, December 8, 1885*

Wow! More powerful than sermons like this one! We are to share Christ and His power to change our life wherever we get the opportunity.

Does the Bible tell us what to include in our testimony?

SLIDE: "And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son." *1 John 5:11 (NKJV)*

That's what we testify of—that we have been saved! God has given us eternal life, right now, and we are now living our life in Jesus. Hallelujah! That's the simple, good news right there.

SLIDE: "The Saviour knew that no argument, however logical, would melt hard hearts or break through the crust of worldliness and selfishness. He knew that His disciples must

receive the heavenly endowment; that the gospel would be effective only as it was proclaimed by hearts made warm and lips made eloquent by a living knowledge of Him who is the way, the truth, and the life." *Ellen G. White, Acts of the Apostles, 31*

Isn't that beautiful? When our hearts have been melted by the warmth of God's love and grace, He can place us near others to melt their hearts too.

Someone once described the testimony-creation process like this:

SLIDE: "God is able to turn a test into a testimony, a mess into a message, a misery into a ministry and a trial into a triumph!"

What an all-powerful, Creator God we serve.

SLIDE: As we finish our time together today, I want to encourage you to keep the fire of your testimony burning so that your children and neighbours and colleagues can warm their hands and hearts on the fire of your faith.

SLIDE: And remember that, "Our testimony must be SPOKEN *and* LIVED, one without the other has little impact." We need to be living witnesses to the joy of salvation, to the benefits of living the 'abundant life' that Jesus came to give to all.

SLIDE: As has been said so cutely, yet wisely, "If you've been saved, notify your face!"

There is no witness so powerful as the living testimony of a loving and loveable Christian.

SLIDE: So how can we be faithful stewards of our testimony? A faithful steward does what their Master would do if He were present.

My charge for you this morning is the charge of Jesus Christ Himself, "Go, and tell what great things God has done for you."