

Why We Don't Testify **10-10-21**

The Concept of testimonies among denominations is usually meant to relate an encounter with God. It is often giving a testimony of what Jesus has done. But what is more important is that it is a form of establishing truth by experience. Is that kind of experience necessary in order to teach the gospel to a lost & dying world? No, since we preach the Gospel. Does that kind of experience give faith to ourselves or to others? No, since faith comes by the Word of God.

The Salvation Experience began on the day of Pentecost when Peter declared that his message "For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call" (Acts 2:39). The message was the same for all; for those who were afar off as well as for those who were to come. Later the same men would declare that all people are saved in the same manner (Acts 15:11). The people in the first century were saved one way, and today we are saved the same way. There is no unique testimony in regards to how we are saved; the Gospel is a UNIVERSAL experience.

But there is another danger in testimony, one seen in the many political movements of today. Society now values experience over knowledge. As an example, if someone experiences an act of racism, it becomes an accepted truth that this action reflects the truth of systemic racism. Suddenly people are making decisions based on personal experience; they are choosing moral right and wrong based on the circumstances of occurrences in their lives. This is a dangerous idea that bleeds into the thinking of some brethren.

Often we begin to make an experience equal to the Truth. For example, someone is mistreated by another Christian and they conclude that "The church is full of hypocrites". Is that Truth? Often times church members do not act as they should, even elders did not act as they should. But is that the proof that the church does not work properly?

What about when someone seeks to work in a spiritual way (such as praying or forgiving, and they do not receive the outcome they had desired. "I did it and it didn't work" or "I did something else and it did work" is a statement many make in regards to handling life according to God's rules. When someone does what is right and suffers, or does the wrong thing and prospers, sometimes they believe that this is a testimony to the right way to behave.

Finally, some begin to believe that it is testimony alone that gives us credibility. They might say "If you don't experience it you have no insight" or right to speak. This thinking would leave even Jesus unable to teach on marriage or other subjects.

There is a great danger in determining Truth by experience. It creates authority that does not exist or removes authority that does exist. Do not be deceived; the only way to know Truth is through the Word of God (John 17:17).