

Session 9

Romans 1:16-17

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. ¹⁷ For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith”

John 3:16

“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.”

Romans 3:23

“...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...”

1 Peter 2:24

“‘He himself bore our sins’ in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; ‘by his wounds you have been healed.’”

Romans 10:13

“Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

Sharing the Gospel

The Gospel is the most important news you will ever hear, and it is the most life-changing news you could ever share.

The Gospel is not about you; it is about Jesus! Jesus is the center of the Gospel. Your testimony is not the Gospel. Your testimony is the story of you hearing the Gospel then acknowledging your sin, repenting, and asking Jesus to be your Lord and Savior. When sharing your personal testimony, it should never be a substitute for sharing the Gospel. However, it can be used as an incredibly effective tool (see Sharing Your Testimony) to point people to Jesus.

Read Romans 1:16-17. Why does Paul tell us we are not to be ashamed of the Gospel?

“For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, ¹³ for, ‘Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’”

Romans 10:12-13

According to Romans 10:12-13, who does Paul tell us will be saved?

How will we be saved?

Not everyone explains the Gospel the same way, but we always need to include the critical elements below.

- ▶ Tell them about God’s plan (John 3:16)
- ▶ Share our problem (Romans 3:23)
- ▶ Tell them about God’s remedy (1 Peter 2:24)
- ▶ Our response (Romans 10:13)

People need to hear the Gospel. They need to hear that God loves them, that Jesus died for them, and that that they too can have eternal life. As Christ Followers, we are commanded to share God’s redeeming love to everyone everywhere.

“And then he told them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone.’”

Mark 16:15 (NLT)

Sharing Your Testimony

We all love stories. Your testimony is God's story in you. Since it is your personal story, you know it well. Whenever we discover something wonderful, our first response is to treasure it, and then we want to share it with others. As Christ Followers, we are called to share the joy and peace of knowing Jesus with others.

Your testimony is God's
story in you!

In Mark 5:18-20, read what Jesus tells the demon-possessed man He has healed. *"As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him. ¹⁹ Jesus did not let him, but said, 'Go home to your own people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.' ²⁰ So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed."*

Testimonies come in all shapes and sizes, and each one is unique. Sharing your testimony is simply telling someone else about how you came to know Jesus, your relationship with Him now, and what He has done for you and in you.

Your testimony story should have three segments:

First Segment - 'Before' you came to know Jesus. This should make up about 25% of your story.

- ▶ Be relevant. If you happen to know something about the person you are talking to, connect with them by using the part of your story that matches their situation.
- ▶ Be transparent. Explain what your life looked like before you accepted Jesus. Include past failures, unhealthy relationships, bad attitudes, sin, etc.
- ▶ Do not glorify a sinful lifestyle or exaggerate your past.

Second Segment - 'When' you received Jesus. This should make up about 50% of your story.

- ▶ This is where you want to share the Gospel, the Good News.
- ▶ Be relatable. Avoid using words or phrases that you only hear in church. If you cannot avoid these words, be sure to explain them. Some examples are "I got saved" or "I was washed in the blood of the Lamb."
- ▶ Describe how you felt when you first believed.
- ▶ Do not boast about what you gave up for God BUT rather about what He gave up for you. You gave up sin, hell, judgement, guilt, and shame. God gave EVERYTHING. He was judged, made guilty, and put to shame, and died for you.
- ▶ Do not portray the Christian life as perfect and trouble free. If you speak of a better life, be sure to inform them that in this life we will all have trials and tribulations. Otherwise, if their life after 'coming to Jesus' is not what they expected, they may be disappointed. Jesus tells us that

there will be trials in this world, BUT He has already overcome them through His work on the cross.

Third segment - What your life is like 'after' coming to know Jesus. This should make up about the last 25% of your story.

Avoid the idea that everything has been perfect since you came to know Jesus.

Be transparent and share how your struggles reveal the character of God: His mercy, His grace, and His patience.

Lastly, give the other person a chance to respond to your story. Get their thoughts. Ask them, "What do you think about what we have been discussing?"

What, in your opinion, is the most powerful part of your salvation testimony?

What was the most impactful moment that helped you realize your need for the Savior?

Share one truth about God that you have experienced since coming to know Him.

Navigating the Conversation

Understanding your testimony and how to relate it to others is important. If you do not know how to start the conversation and move it in a spiritual direction, you will not get the chance to share your story.

Be Engaging

***"When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her,
'Will you give me a drink?'" John 4:7***

Jesus engages in conversation with this woman, but not in an overly spiritual way. He was thirsty, there was a well, and the woman had the means to draw water. It was a perfect springboard into a conversation. It made sense. Be natural, not spiritual, when starting a conversation. Use the situation, the surroundings, or current events to begin the conversation. Examples include current events (even deaths and tragedies), or things they are wearing (logos, sports jerseys, jewelry, tattoos, etc.). Make eye contact, smile, and say, "Hi." If you receive a cordial "Hello," then proceed with the conversation.

Gospel tracts are another great conversation starter. Gospel tracts are literature, usually not very long, that share the Gospel. Try to find Gospel tracts that do not seem too religious or too 'churchy.' Funny or light-hearted tracts are easier to use and will keep the conversation going.

Swinging the Conversation

In John 4:10, Jesus answered the Samaritan woman, *"If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."*

Jesus moves this natural conversation to a spiritual conversation in one sentence. An effective transitional phrase is, "Do you have any spiritual beliefs?" It is common to feel like you do not have an opening to 'swing' the conversation to a spiritual one. The conversation does not normally swing to a spiritual conversation by itself. Notice, Jesus moved the conversation deliberately.

By swinging the conversation to the spiritual, you will be able to naturally roll right into your testimony. You will be surprised how eager people are to talk about spiritual things. The more you do it, the more natural it will feel.

Using your imagination, come up with three additional transitional phrases that you could use.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What in your opinion, would be an effective transitional phrase for you?

Here are four things a person needs to do to receive God's gift of salvation:

- ▶ Recognize - Admit they are a sinner and that Jesus died on the cross for their sins.
- ▶ Repent - Ask forgiveness and be willing to turn away from their sins.
- ▶ Receive – Ask Jesus to be their Lord and Savior and commit to follow Him.

Sharing your testimony is not about accomplishing a task. It is about sharing God's love with the person you are talking to; someone He loves and wants a relationship with.

Summary Points:

- ▶ The Gospel IS Good News.
- ▶ We are called to share the Good News.
- ▶ The Gospel is not your testimony.
- ▶ Your testimony is your personal God story.

Next Steps:

- ▶ Attend an entry level evangelism class. This will provide you with training on evangelism from start to finish.
- ▶ Volunteer for outreaches where you will be able to observe, participate and practice sharing your faith.
- ▶ Volunteer to go on a short term mission trip with your church.

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Romans 1:16