

The One Thing - Class Outline – Building your Testimonies 1/21/2024

1. What is a testimony?

- a. General Definition
- b. General Purpose
- c. Purpose of a Christian Testimony:

My mouth will tell of your righteous acts, of your deeds of salvation all the day, for their number is past my knowledge. With the mighty deeds of the Lord God I will come; I will remind them of your righteousness, yours alone.

Psalm 71:15-16 ESV

Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will tell what he has done for my soul.

Psalm 66:16 ESV

We have nothing to give of value, but He asks for us to tell others about Him. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he has redeemed from trouble

Psalm 107:2 ESV

In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Matthew 5:16 ESV

2. 4 Phases of the Christian Life

- a. Where I was (Condemnation!)
 - i. What did your Savior save you from?

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

Romans 3:23

- b. What God did (Justification!)
 - i. What did God accomplish through Christ to Save you?

But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Romans 3:21-26

John 3:16

2 Corinthians 5:21

- c. What God is doing (Sanctification!)
 - i. What is your Savior saving you from?

We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin.

Romans 6:6-7 ESV

But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.

Romans 6:17-18 ESV

But that is not the way you learned Christ!—assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

Ephesians 4:20-24

Example Tool:

God graciously provided **[circumstance/trial]** to grow my faith. In his gentleness, he revealed that my heart wanted **[desire of the flesh]**. Through **[means God used to reveal truth: study of his word, sermon, encouragement from fellow Christian]** I was reminded that God is **[attributes I was tempted to doubt or ignore]** and has promised to provide me with **[strength, wisdom, patience, peace, joy, if I obey]** therefore I could trust him in this situation. Trusting him meant I could respond in obedience **[describe what obedience looks like]** rather than out of the desire of my flesh, and by responding obediently in faith I received peace, joy, and gratitude, **[even if the circumstance/trial wasn't resolved the way I want]** which increased my faith in Him as he showed himself to be faithful.

- d. Where I am going (Glorification!)
 - i. What has your Savior saved you to?

But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 6:22-23 ESV

- ii. How does your sanctification increase your faith and hope in your future glorification?

The One Thing - Class Discussion – Building your Testimonies 1/21/2024

For your discussion time today I've provided some questions to consider and talk through to help build and/or refine your testimonies.

“But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect.”

1 Peter 3:15 ESV

Start thinking about your testimony

1. Have you already developed a testimony that you are ready to share? What advice would you give to someone who is developing this for the first time? What elements do you think are key? What would you encourage them to focus on?
2. What are the elements you need to remember from your own story?
3. What are you most excited to share with others about your story? What aspect of this is most intimidating for you? What do you struggle with the most to share?
4. Who could you share your testimony with? For practice? For encouragement? For evangelism?

The core of our testimony is God's grace through Jesus Christ. Start thinking about how you have received God's transforming grace.

1. Sin prevents us from seeking God. How did God seek you out and find you?
2. Sin blinds us. How has God opened your eyes to see and know him better? (e.g. Wrathful Tyrant vs. Loving, patient Father)
3. Sin makes us doubtful and cynical. How has God increased your faith in Him?
4. Sin clouds our mind. How has God transformed your thinking?
5. Sin enslaves. How has God changed you and enabled you to obey?
6. How has he provided all that is needed to walk in obedience? (This can include provision for physical needs and spiritual needs. How has he enabled ministry in impossible situation? How has provided Christ-like love and courage?)

The One Thing - Class Homework – Building your Testimonies 1/21/2024

This week we will be working on developing our personal testimonies. The goal is to have ready answers that can be shared in three main contexts: a “Full Testimony”, a condensed “full testimony”, and a “short testimony”. On the next page you will find outlines of the 3 types.

1. Read through the outline (don't feel the need to start developing your testimony yet, this is just to give you an idea of where we are headed).
2. Pray for God's help in this exercise.
3. Spend some time thinking about your life, and see if you can answer the following questions:
 - a. What moments stand out to you as major changes in your life?
 - b. Were there certain people that God put in your life that were instrumental in those moments?
 - c. When did you first realize your need for Jesus?
 - d. What things did you focus on before you became a Christian? What did you pursue? What did you think the purpose of your life was? What things did you place your hope in?
 - e. How has your life changed? How has God changed your focus, the things you value and pursue, how you view your purpose, and what you hope in?
4. Spend some time thinking about where God is working in your life now.
 - a. What current trials and circumstances is God using to grow your faith?
 - b. What does your sinful heart want in those circumstances?
 - c. What are you tempted to doubt about God?
 - d. What does a worldly response look like?
 - e. What do you know to be true through Scripture about God? (Scripture)
 - f. What would obedience to Christ look like in this situation?
 - g. What has God promised to provide if you choose to walk in obedience/repentance? (Scripture)
 - h. What has God promised if you fail to obey? (Scripture)
 - i. How can others be praying for you?
5. Spend some time thinking about what God has done that has impacted you the most (this will help develop the condensed and short versions of your testimony)
 - a. What gets you most excited about your faith?
 - b. What stories do you love to tell?
 - c. What moments jump out at you as the most critical? What was God doing in those moments?
 - d. What changes in your life are you most grateful for?
 - e. How do you know that God loves you? What are you most grateful for about that love?
6. Start telling your story by filling in the details of the outline. Script it and practice it.

Note: if you are not a good story teller, focus on working through answering the questions and getting the information down, then ask for help from a trusted brother or sister to work through the “story telling” part of this. Practice giving your testimony to someone who can provide honest and constructive comments. Don't feel like you have to get it perfect the first time. The goal is a living testimony that can be refined, updated, and adapted.

Full testimony – 5-10 minutes

- Your conversion experience
 - o Tell about where you were before He called you. (You were an enemy of God, what did that look like for you?)
 - o Tell how He reached out to you (who shared with you? what Scripture opened your eyes?)
 - o Tell what God accomplished through Christ that changed your relationship with Him?
 - o Tell how your understanding of who God is and who you are changed
 - o Describe how your life changed
- Past sanctification experience - How has your life continued to change?
 - o Tell about the victory God has given you over sin, or describe circumstances in which you reacted in obedience to the Spirit that you never would have before.
 - o Talk about the reason for that victory (refer back to Christ's work on the cross and God providing his word, his Holy Spirit, and his church)
 - o Tell how this experience gave you hope for tomorrow? (near-term)
 - o Tell how this experience gave you hope in the resurrection and eternal life (Hint: seeing Him work to overcome sin in your life now provides proof of His promise of eternal salvation from sin and death through Christ's work on the cross)
- Current sanctification experience. How has God continued to build your faith through your daily experiences?
 - o Describe what are you going through right now? (trial, circumstance, or opportunity)
 - o Tell what is God revealing to you in this situation about His character and yours?
 - When we walk in obedience, we see His faithfulness to provide what we need to obey, we are encouraged and grow in faith.
 - When He reveals sin in our hearts, we see His faithfulness and love to grow us and discipline us, and we can be thankful for his grace and the opportunity to grow since he is faithful to forgive and provide what we need to walk in repentance.
 - o Tell how this experience give you hope for tomorrow? (near-term)
 - o Tell how this experience gives you hope in the resurrection and eternal life

Condensed Full testimony <5 minutes

- Your conversion experience (a shorter version that focuses less on specific details, or focuses on one or two key details that are most impactful)
- Your sanctification experience (focus on 1 key experience)

Short Testimony <2 minute of God's faithfulness in your sanctification

EITHER

- A past sanctification experience (Helpful when counseling someone who is going through a similar experience, whether believer or non-believer, focus is on God's faithfulness)

OR

- A current sanctification experience. What is God doing now? How has God continued to build your faith through your daily experiences? (Helpful especially in discussion with other believers to encourage and be encouraged)