The Power Of Testimony

Psalm 103:2-3
2 Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:
3 Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;
4 Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies;
5 Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.

Testimony
• Everybody has a testimony,
  o a story that tells the tale of how God saved you,
    ▪ how he healed your body,
    ▪ how he met your need,
      o or how he delivered you
        ▪ from some desperate situation.
  o The wonderful thing about testimonies
    ▪ is that they are uniquely yours.
      • Your testimony is not like anyone else’s.

• One of the most frustrating things for an investigator
  o is to try to reconstruct a series of events
    ▪ through the stories of the individuals
      • who were first hand participants in the event.

• More often than not,
  o each person has a slightly different
    ▪ version of the story.
  o The way one person perceived it
    ▪ is going to be altogether different
      • from the way another person perceived it.
  o One is no more right than the other,
    ▪ its just that the story is uniquely personal.

• That’s the way it is with a testimony.
  o Several of us may experience the same miracle,
    ▪ God may move in an incredible way
      • and provide a need that we all shared,
    ▪ but each of is going to have
      ▪ a slightly different version of the story
        o of how that happened.
  o Because it impacts us differently,
    ▪ we see it from a different perspective
• and, though we all give God the credit,
  o what we give him credit for
    ▪ may be slightly different
      ▪ from one person to the next.

• That’s OK.
  o Because your testimony is yours,
    ▪ it is unique to you.
      ▪ It was formed in your unique experience
        o as God ministered to you, personally.
  o It doesn’t matter that you may not tell it
    ▪ the same way I would tell it,
      ▪ what matters is that you tell it,
        o that you don’t forget
          ▪ what God has done for you.

Forget Not
• The psalmist admonishes us, in our text,
  o not to forget what God has done for us.
• Don’t ever forget that he forgave you of your iniquities.
  o Some of us need to remember where he brought us from.
    ▪ You need to remember what it was like
      ▪ before the Lord got a hold of you.
  o You need to remember
    ▪ how God delivered you from your sins.
      ▪ Don’t ever forget it!

• Don’t ever forget that he healed your diseases.
  o Don’t ever lose the story
    ▪ of how you were sick unto death,
      ▪ how there was no hope,
    ▪ how you had no where else to turn
      ▪ but in the hour of your desperation,
        o you called on the Lord
          ▪ and he healed your body!
  o Don’t forget the story
    ▪ of how you laid your hand on a fevered brow
      ▪ and spoke the precious name of Jesus
    ▪ and returned only moments later
      ▪ to find that the fever was broken.
• Don’t forget what it felt like
  o to call out to the Lord
    ▪ in your hour of need
      ▪ and to realize that,
        o not only did he hear your cry,
• but he answered your prayer!

- Don’t forget that he delivered you from your hardship,
  - in that crisis moment
    - when your whole world was falling apart,
  - in that moment
    - when nothing short of complete destruction
      - seemed immanent
  - but you prayed
    - and by some miracle,
      - God stepped in.

- Don’t forget the relief,
  - the heavy burden that was lifted,
    - the blessed peace that flooded your life.

- Don’t forget that he crowned you
  - with loving kindness
    - and tender mercies,
  - or that he satisfied your mouth
    - with good things!

- Whatever you do,
  - don’t forget the benefits of the Lord,
    - don’t forget the testimony
      - of what he has done for you.

Tell It Again
- As I sat in Sis George’s funeral, last week,
  - I was struck by a common theme
    - that was repeated throughout the service.
  - As her various grandchildren got up
    - to talk about their grandmother
  - they would inevitably tell
    - how that Sis. George told them
      - the same stories over and over again.

- “Have I ever told you about the time,”
  - she would say,
    - and before someone could speak up
      - and say, yes, you have told us,
    - she would be off to the races
      - telling a familiar story
        - of God and his great power.

- That is exactly what the Psalmist was talking about
  - when he said, *Bless the Lord, O my soul,*
    - and forget not all his benefits.
  - He was saying, tell the story,
- over and over again.

- The most frequent word for testimony
  - in the Old Testament
    - is a Hebrew word that is derived
      - from a root that means
        - to repeat
        - or to do it again.
  - The connotation of a testimony,
    - in the Hebrew sense of the word,
      - is to tell the story,
        - again and again and again!
  - That repetition of the blessings of God,
    - that constant revisiting
      - of the themes of the deliverance,
        - the healing,
        - the provision
        - and the salvation of the Lord
      - were the means by which
        - our soul was made to remember
          - the goodness of God!
  - The power of testimony
    - is that it serves as a reminder
      - of what God has done.
  - As often as we tell the tale,
    - as often as we revisit the story,
      - we are encouraged in our own faith,
        - we are reminded that there is
          - a God who loves us,
            - who watches over us
              - and who provides for us.

Do It Again
- However, there is another meaning to the term.
  - While it certainly carries
    - the connotation of repetition,
      - it also contains another kernel of truth.
  - As we tell the story
    - of what God has done,
      - we are reminded
        - that what he has done before,
          - he can do again.
- The power of testimony
  - is that it makes the power of God
• real and fresh in our hearts
  • and in our minds,
    o it reminds us of what God can do.
• By hearing the stories of miracle healings,
  o we are reminded that our disease
    • doesn’t have to be the end of the story.
• When we hear about
  o the deliverance of the Lord,
    • how he made a way
      • when there seemed to be no way,
  o we are reminded
    • that our current dilemma
      • is just a fleeting crisis
  o and that the same God
    • who made a way for others
      • will make a way for us.
• When we hear the telling
  o of the wonderful provision of God,
    • it serves notice to us
      • that times may be lean,
        o the finances may be tight
          • but God has never
            • failed to provide for his own.
• The power of testimony is that it imparts faith.
  o When some precious saint of God
    • begins to tell the story
      • of the deliverance of God
    • it is as if God is doing again
      • what he has done before
    • and all of a sudden we realize
      • that if he did for them,
        o he will do it for us!
• That’s why the Psalmist declared,
  o “Whatever you do,
    • don’t forget the testimony!”

**Don’t Limit God**
• One may even go so far as to say
  o that when we fail to remember
    • what God has done,
      • we limit the ability of God
        o to work in our current situation.
Psalm 78:40-42

40 How oft did they provoke him in the wilderness, and grieve him in the desert!
41 Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel.
42 They remembered not his hand, nor the day when he delivered them from the enemy.

• The children of Israel in the wilderness,
  o grieved God,
    ▪ they limited his ability
      • to work on their behalf
        o because they did not
          ▪ remember his power.

• They didn’t remember the miracles
  o that God worked in delivering them from Egypt.

• They didn’t keep the story alive
  o of how God turned the great Nile River to blood
    ▪ or how he buried Pharaoh
      • and all of his armies in the Red Sea.

• One translator put it very bluntly,
  o they forgot how powerful God was
    ▪ and because they forgot,
      • they limited the hand of God
        o because they lacked the faith
          ▪ to believe that he could do
            • what they had forgotten
              o that he could do!

• The Psalmist is telling us
  o that if we neglect the word of testimony,
    ▪ if we fail to tell the story,
      • we rob ourselves
        o of the demonstration
          ▪ of the power of God.

• Because God operates on faith,
  o and our faith is what suffers
    ▪ when the stories of God’s deliverance
      • are not told.

• However, the converse, then, must be true.
  o If we share the story,
    ▪ if we take the time to testify,
      • we stand to gain
        o the incredible demonstration
          ▪ of the power of God in our midst.

• That’s the power of testimony;
o it builds faith
  ▪ and looses the hand of God to work.

One Thing I Know
• One of my favorite testimonies in scripture
  o is found in John 9.
• There we find a blind man
  o who is healed by Jesus on the Sabbath.
    ▪ When he was called before the Pharisees
      • to explain his healing,
        o his response was both simple
          ▪ and profound...
        o “One thing I know:
          ▪ that though I was blind,
            • now I see.”
  o I don’t understand anything else.
    ▪ I don’t know if this Jesus
      • is the Christ or not
        o but this one thing I know,
          ▪ I was blind and he touched me
            • and I’m not blind any more.

• That’s the power of testimony;
  o you don’t have to understand it.
    ▪ You don’t have to be able to explain it.
      • And you don’t have to be a preacher to share it.
• There’s something incredibly powerful
  o about simply sharing your story.
    ▪ When there was no way,
      • He made a way.
    ▪ When there was no hope,
      • He gave me hope.
    ▪ When there was nowhere to turn,
      • no resources to draw from,
        o He sent ravens to feed me
          ▪ and caused water to flow from a rock.
    ▪ When there was no money,
      • He put money in a fish’s mouth.
    ▪ When there was no food,
      • He multiplied the fishes and the loaves.
    ▪ If he did it before,
      • you better believe
        o that he can do it again!
Bring Back The Testimony

- One of the things
  - that we have lost over the years
    - is the dynamic power
      - of the testimony service.
- There are a lot reasons
  - why we have slowly moved away
    - from that iconic part of the church service.
- The reasons are many
  - and some of them are valid,
    - however, I am afraid
      - that we don’t recognize
        - what we have lost.
- There was something special
  - about those old testimony nights
    - when the aged saints of God
      - would begin to tell the tales
        - of brush harbor meetings
          - where the glory of God fell.
- When some precious saint of God
  - would share how God lifted them
    - out of their moment of despair
      - and delivered them from
        - the trouble that had almost
          - overwhelmed their soul.
- There was something about hearing those stories
  - that caused the power of God
    - to become real again.
  - When they told the story,
    - it was as if God was doing it all over again
  - and there is something about
    - that dynamic atmosphere of faith
      - that causes the soul to reach out
        - and lay ahold of the promise of God.
  - There is something
    - about the environment of a testimony service
      - that looses faith
        - and takes the limits off of God.
- With that in mind,
  - we are getting ready to make a Testimony Night
    - a regular part
      - of our monthly schedule.
• This is how its is going to work.
  o Starting August the 14th,
    ▪ on the second Sunday of our RESET
    ▪ and then following on the second Sunday night
      ▪ of every month,
    ▪ we are going to have a Testimony Night.
  o We are going to ask 5 people to testify that night.
    ▪ We will notify you ahead of time,
      ▪ so that you have a week or two
        ▪ to think about it.
  o On testimony night,
    ▪ when we get to the portion of the service
      ▪ that would normally be the sermon,
        ▪ we are going to invite those five folks up,
          ▪ one at a time, to testify.

• Listen, you have a story.
  o Your stories are powerful.
    ▪ What is going to happen,
      ▪ when you begin to testify,
    ▪ is that you’re going to feel
      ▪ the power of God as he works
        ▪ that same miracle
          ▪ of deliverance
          ▪ or healing
          ▪ or salvation
            ▪ all over again in your life
              ▪ through the telling of the story.
  o But that’s not all that is going to happen,
    ▪ your brothers and sisters in the Lord,
      ▪ when they hear your story
        ▪ their faith is going to be increased.
    ▪ They are going to realize
      ▪ that if God will do it for you,
        ▪ he will do it for them too!

• I’m going to tell you what I expect;
  o I expect that Testimony Night
    ▪ is going to become
      ▪ one of the most powerful
        ▪ Sunday Night services of the month,
          ▪ every month.
  o People are going to be healed,
    ▪ blessings are going to be loosed,
and miracles are going to take place.
- Because when you remember the power of God
  - it builds your faith
  - and it looses victory into your life!

**The Blood AND The Testimony**

- I’m going to read one more passage of scripture before I’m done.

**Revelation 12:10-11**

11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

- Under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost,
  - John, looking through the lens of prophecy
    - sees the church
      - in its epic struggle with the devil
        - and he declares:
          - They overcame him!
            - By the blood of the lamb
            - And by the word of their testimony.

- Thank God for the blood.
  - It is the source of our victory.
    - We are made to be more than conquerors,
      - More than overcomers
        - Because of the power of the blood.
    - There’s tremendous power in the blood!
      - There’s wonderful victory in the blood!
        - There’s hope in the blood!
        - There’s healing in the blood!

- We are made to be overcomers by the blood!
  - If you ask me where my victory comes from,
    - it comes from the blood of Jesus!
  - If you ask me where my joy comes from,
    - it is the joy of my salvation
      - and it comes from the blood.
  - If you ask me where my peace comes from,
    - it is the contentment of knowing
      - that my sins are washed away
        - and it comes from the blood!

- Oh, there is power, power,
  - wonder-working power
    - in the blood of the Lamb!
      - We have the victory because of the blood!
• And the Blood alone is enough to shout about
  o but the scripture doesn’t stop there.
    ▪ The word says –
      • “They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb
        o AND by the word of their testimony”.
  o “And” is a conjunction that joins
    ▪ two complete thoughts together.
      • The concept of overcoming
        o is void without both parts being applied.
• Listen, you’ve got to get this:
  o These aren’t two separate
    ▪ Independent elements of victory.
  o They work together.
    ▪ We overcome BOTH by the blood
      • AND by the word of our testimony!
• There is power in your testimony!
  o One theologian said it this way:
    ▪ Our testimony demonstrates our victory!
• When we testify about the goodness of Jesus
  o and all he has done for us
    ▪ Right in the middle of our trying circumstances
      • We demonstrate to the devil
        o that we are not defeated!
      • And we are made overcomers
        o by the word of our testimony.
• Let me show you how
  o the blood and the testimony work together.
    ▪ When Paul and Silas were locked up in chains
      • After having been brutally beaten
        o for preaching the gospel.
    ▪ They began to sing in the midnight hour.
      • Why did they begin to sing?
        o Because even though they were
          ▪ in chains on the outside,
            • they were free on the inside!
  o The blood of Jesus Christ had set them free
    ▪ And no amount of chains, shackles and prison bars
      • could change that reality.
  o So they began to sing!
    ▪ Their song testified
      • of the liberty that God had given them.
  o Their circumstances denied it.
    ▪ The evidence was against it.
  o But the blood said they were free.
So they began to testify
  • of the goodness of God
    o in the words of a song!
  o When they began to sing,
    • the prison walls began to shake.
    • The earthquake was loosed by their testimony!
• Listen, your victory is attached
  o to the word of your testimony!
  • When you worship God
    • When you declare your liberty
      o When you recognize
        • that the circumstances of my life
don’t limit my freedom
    • When you begin to praise him
      o no matter what is going on
        • You turn loose victory into your life!
  o We are made overcomers
    • by the blood of the lamb
    • and by the word of our testimony!
  o When you start to praise God,
    • you give testimony
      • to the spiritual reality of your life.
  o When you begin to bless God
    • you testify to his goodness in your life.
      • And your testimony becomes
        o the very thing that brings
          • the victory to your situation!
  o When you open your mouth and declare
    • “Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised.
      • I remember when he delivered me.
        o I remember when he brought me through.”
      • There is power in your testimony.
  o When you look around at your circumstance and declare,
    • “I will bless the Lord at all times,
      • in every circumstance,
        o in every situation...
          • Because he’s never failed me yet!”
      • Your testimony looses
        o the overcoming power of God in your life!
  o When you throw back your head and declare
    • “Thank God for the blood.
      • He has covered my sins
        o and washed away all my iniquities.”
    • There’s deliverance in your testimony!
• There’s freedom from sin’s bondage
  o  in the word of your testimony
  o  We are made overcomers by the blood of the lamb
    ▪  and by the word of our testimony
    ▪  working together!

Close

• Everybody has a testimony!
  o  What has he done for you?
    ▪  Where is your testimony?
• He healed you when you were sick.
  o  He delivered you when you were bound,
  o  He worked the impossible miracle for you,
• I want you to remember tonight the blessings of God,
  o  the provision of God,
    ▪  the mighty miracles that he has worked for you.
• This house is a place for testimonies.
  o  It is a place to share the story.

• This is what I’m going to do, by way of closing.
  o  I’ve asked my wife to come and just testify...
    ▪  Tonight is testimony night!