



# 2026 Weekly Devotions

Week of: February 9<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup>

Sermon: February 8<sup>th</sup>



SMYRNA BAPTIST CHURCH  
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February 9

**1 John 1:1-4**

The inspiration behind these devotions is rooted in verses 8-11 of Exodus 18 which record for us the account of Moses offering his testimony to Jethro of all that God had done for Israel. Verse 11 has long been one of my favorite verses in all of Exodus. I love Jethro's response to hearing of God's activity in liberating the people of Israel as he says, "Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods..." What a statement!

We could summarize this portion of Exodus 18 by saying that Moses shared the truth of his experience of the power of the One True God and Jethro responded in astonished praise. We could further argue that Moses stands as an example for us to emulate in this respect. Every single one of us, as Christians, has a testimony of God's goodness and power in our lives, my goal this week is to remind you and exhort you to follow Moses' example and share your story.

Today, I want us to begin our journey through the biblical teaching on the topic of testimony by seeing that Moses was not alone in offering his testimony. In fact, John saw testifying as central to the Christian mission. There are two components of this passage that interest me. First, notice the ground of John's testimony. He was speaking about what they had "heard" and "seen" and "touched". Obviously, in his case, the stories centered around his time following Savior. Nevertheless, the point remains that John saw to it that he spoke about what he experienced in following the Lord. John was not sharing conjecture, or secondhand information, he was talking to others about his personal experiences!

Second, notice that this was not a mere personal point of emphasis, instead the Apostle uses the term "we" to describe those who testify. John evidently included more people than himself in this discipline of testimony. The implication is that all those who had encountered Christ and believed were sharing their faith and that teaches us something profound. The Bible is going to show us that all people who know and believe in Christ have a story to tell. The story might be different (I wasn't there when the physically blind received sight or the thousands were fed with a little bit of fish and bread) but all of us who have encountered Christ have a story nonetheless!

The assertion before us today is a simple one, if we have experienced the power and presence of God both in our moment of salvation and in our subsequent walk, then those around us need to hear about it! I can almost imagine Moses nearly exploding as he spoke to Jethro about what it was like to see the waters part or the taste of manna or the joy and relief of seeing water flow out of a rock. You can imagine the fervor and gratitude that seasoned his words as he spoke to his father-in-law about all that God had done and you can also see the result. Jethro was amazed by the testimony of God's power and goodness and he isn't alone. Folks, we still have a story to tell. I was dead, now I'm alive. I was lost and now I'm found. I've been in need and God has provided. I've seen God do amazing things and now I have the privilege of sharing those things. My desire is to tell the world what I have seen and heard and touched in the faith that there are many "Jethros" in the world who will hear the story and give God glory.

February 10

**Luke 8:39**

As a younger believer, I had a category for evangelism through personal testimony. I understood that I was supposed to share my story. I knew that God desired for me to talk about His power in my life, but I rarely considered the numerous and enduring platforms I had been given in my day-to-day, “ordinary”, life.

Evangelism, or personal testimony, is often the kind of thing that we can do as we are living our daily lives. In fact, I would argue that personal testimony is perhaps most effective when it simply becomes a part of our typical interactions and routine. Obviously, there is a way to make testimony weird and forced! Nevertheless, there are many chances in normal life for us to go about sharing all that Christ has done for us. Oftentimes, these are the settings that give us golden opportunities to share our faith, and this means that we ought not discount the privilege and stewardship God has given us to share as we go about our normal activities.

Today’s text has always fascinated me for the precise reason that Jesus denies a man’s stated desire to follow Him! Now, to be clear, I am not saying that Jesus denied this man an opportunity to be His disciple, instead what we have in this text is a man who is healed of demon possession that desires to physically walk with Christ as He journeys about the towns of Israel, but Jesus refuses his request. At first glance, this seems odd! After all, didn’t Christ demand that His apostles (and others) leave their father and mother and follow Him? Yes, He did but that does not mean that every individual is called to uproot their entire lives. Instead, the story today shows us that God’s plan is often to use us where we are located already.

Why would Jesus refuse this healed man’s request? Because his testimony would be most powerful in his hometown. After all, they were the ones who had known him prior! They knew his demon possessed behavior. They knew the reputation he had earned and, therefore, his standing before them and sharing of God’s power in his life would be incredibly impactful precisely because of the obvious change that had taken place. Jesus’ goal was for the healed man to follow Him in His teaching but to remain with the same people as he grew and testified.

Notice how Luke describes this man’s activity from the point of his healing forward, “he went away, proclaiming throughout the WHOLE city how much Jesus had done for him.” (emphasis mine). The language is unmistakably clear from that moment forward, everyone in Gerasenes knew about Christ’s work in this man’s life. Could we say something similar about you? Perhaps your calling today is to remain, in your neighborhood, at your job, in your family gatherings, and so forth for the purpose of sharing with the whole community what Christ has done for you.

I can imagine that people in Gerasenes grew to anticipate the conversation they would have with this man when they saw him coming! They knew as he walked through the aisles of the farmer’s market or strolled along the coast that his coming would bring the same old story of Christ’s power in his life. He earned the reputation of being the one that always talked about Christ! May we earn a similar badge in our spheres of influence precisely because we talk about Jesus every day, in our mundane comings and goings and amongst the people that we have known for quite some time.

February 11

**Psalm 71:15-18**

Our first two devotions emphasized our responsibility to our peers. Today's passage reminds us that we are commanded by God to testify of His wondrous deeds and marvelous identity to upcoming generations. Biblically speaking, the Kingdom grows in two ways. As we have seen already, the Kingdom of God is intended to grow through the testimony of the saints to those who live outside of the grace of God in the Gospel. John was called of God as an Apostle to take the truth to the ends of the earth and that task largely consisted of telling those who about Christ who had never heard of Him (or rejected Him previously).

Today, however, we should be reminded that the Kingdom of God also grows through our passing down the truths of the faith to those behind us. To be clear, I am not saying that children and grandchildren who are born into our nuclear families are born as Christians. I do believe that all men are conceived in iniquity and, therefore, EVERY person needs to hear the Gospel and believe which means that there is a time in all of our lives where we don't know the truth and a subsequent moment where we hear and embrace the truth. In that sense, unbelievers "out there" and those in our homes are the same. Nevertheless, there is a distinct difference between a person who grows up in the household of faith, amongst and around God's people, and those who do not have such a blessing. Many people who populate the Kingdom never recall a moment that they were ignorant of Christ. They were told about Him and taught His Word from the earliest of ages, and this is part and parcel of our responsibility to share our testimony.

Far be it from us, Smyrna folks, to be so consumed with winning the world to Christ by our testimony that we neglect to share His goodness and teach His ways to those who are apart of our family. David desire in Psalm 71 is to pass along the truths of the faith "to another generation". What generation is that? The contextual answer is a generation of the people of Israel, God's covenant people. David earnestly wants to remain steadfast in his task of passing down the faith to those who come behind him within the covenant people of God.

How about us? I pray that we never tire of telling our children and grandchildren about Christ. I pray we remember that our responsibility is to provide testimony to God's goodness and glory as we have experienced it in our lives. I pray we endeavor to impart the wonder and the joy of knowing this God such that our children and grandchildren hear these truths and latch onto them with fervor, knowing that the God of their parents is the same God who desires a saving relationship with them as well.

February 12

## **2 Timothy 1:8**

Sharing our testimony is a powerful activity! My assumption is that many of us have stories to tell of the ways that God has blessed us as we sought to tell others about His work in our lives. Indeed, we should assume that God will often richly bless our otherwise feeble efforts and the reality of His faithfulness to use us is the very catalyst for obedience. However, we must acknowledge the truth that Scripture does not guarantee universally smooth sailing when we speak of Christ.

Today's passage reminds us that sharing in the testimony of the Gospel of Christ entails sharing in the sufferings of Christ. Obviously, Paul does not mean here that we somehow suffer in the way that Jesus suffered for us (as a substitute for us in our sin). Instead, the point here is that we should expect that the same message that precipitated the masses' desire to crucify Jesus is the one that we are now sharing with lost people today.

In other words, Paul is reminding us that we ought not be surprised when the world treats us with contempt when we share our faith. This has many implications, but one practical result of this kind of thinking is that we shouldn't be discouraged or surprised when people react poorly to our efforts. I'm afraid that some of us are prone to think that we are doing something wrong when our audience doesn't respond with immediate and fervent praise! To be clear, there will be times when others hear our words and give glory to God but there will also be moments in which nothing, but blowback occurs and this is not necessarily because we are doing something wrong!

I suppose my prayer for this devotion is rather simple and a bit counterintuitive. It may seem like our passage today is nothing but a stark warning but, in my experience, it is also a wonderful balm to my soul for the simple reason that it reminds me that all who speak about Christ will eventually experience a bit of suffering. Perhaps you are suffering today because of your testimony. Maybe your family isn't enthused with your commitment to Christ. Perhaps they think that you are taking things a bit too far. Maybe you have a co-worker or neighbor who looks at you funny or even starts rumors about you because of the faith you proclaim. If so, take heart brother or sister, the Scriptures say that we will suffer due to our testimony and we are in good company when the world reviles us. Stay strong believing that Christ's power is strong enough to convert even the most hardened sinner and that His reward is greater than any momentary blessing this world might offer in exchange for our silence. Fe

February 13

**Matthew 10:32**

Perhaps yesterday's devotion was not as convincing to some as I had hoped! My assumption is that some of you have decided that silence might be the best path forward. It is extremely appealing, after all, to continue to believe in Christ in our personal lives without taking the risk (or the heat!) for proclaiming Him publicly. If that is you, I want to remind you that testifying of the Gospel of Christ is not an option for the believer, it is a command and our obedience to the Lord's directive in this regard that has immense ramifications.

Today's verse is straightforward as Christ reminds us that our testifying of Him, and therefore our claiming Him as our Lord and Savior, is non-negotiable to our relationship with Jesus. The parallel is unmistakable as Christ says that it is those who claim Him (or "acknowledges me") are those who Christ will claim as His own. The point of the passage is simple, we either confess Christ or we don't. There is no third category of those who profess faith in Christ but hide that faith from the world. We are either testifiers or deniers.

Unfortunately, our world has sold many believers a bill of goods in this regard. The popular messaging on the topic revolves around this idea that our beliefs or "faith" (insert whatever system you may embrace) are not to be divulged in the "neutral", public square. The idea is that we are free to believe whatever we desire but we are not free to tell others what we believe. Perhaps more concretely, we are not free to compel others to embrace what we know to be true.

The result of this kind of thinking is a privatizing of the Christian religion. If we take the admonitions of the culture to heart, we are left with nothing but "personal devotion" and a culture that is largely devoid of the saving and obligating message of Christ. This is the exact antithesis of what Christ obligates us to do, as we see in a passage like Matthew 10.

Jesus makes it clear, those who "acknowledge" Him before others are the ones He will acknowledge before the Father. The word means to "confess" or "profess". This contrast of this activity is actually recorded in the following verse when Jesus tells us that whoever "denies" Him before men will be denied before the Father. Furthermore, Christ assumes that the motivation behind our temptation to deny Him is persecution! This means that Christ is telling us that professing Him will often be hard. There will be times in which it costs us to proclaim Christ but these are the moments that we demonstrate to the world and to our own soul that we are followers of His. Do you deny Him before men or are you acknowledging the Lordship of Christ in all that you do? Do people know that you follow Him? Are you prone to obey His directives over the instructions of the world?

February 14

**John 21:15-17**

Yesterday's passage (and accompanying devotion) can be terrifying to those of you who are like me and have blown it in the area of testifying of Christ when the circumstances get difficult. Perhaps you read yesterday's entry and thought, "well, I suppose I am in deep trouble with the Lord!". The truth is that it is serious to deny Christ in any arena, but Scripture would have us remember that our Lord is a gracious, and merciful King who is more than willing to forgive and restore.

Today's passage demands that we understand the larger context of the story in order to grasp what is taking place. If you recall, Peter had denied Christ on the night of His betrayal. Christ prophesied that Peter would not stand firm in acknowledging his relationship to Jesus and that is precisely what happened. John 21 takes place days later (after the crucifixion and resurrection) when Jesus and Peter met again.

One might think that Jesus' response upon seeing Peter would be that of judgment and disdain! After all, Peter had denied Christ before men! While we might anticipate such a response, we should see the grace of Christ and the renewal that took place in this moment for Peter's subsequent calling.

First, notice that Jesus restores Peter to his calling. The significance of the term "feed my sheep" is only realized when you understand that Peter was called to shepherd the flock of God that was getting ready to be birthed in Jerusalem. The beauty of this passage is that while Peter had been unfaithful in the past, his previous sin did not disqualify him from his future duty. Jesus restores friend! Peter was broken over his sin and some of you are as well but don't allow your previous failure to skew the Lord's willingness and ability to forgive.

Second, notice that Peter was restored to be faithful in persecution in the future. The significance of the prophecy in verse 18 is that Peter would eventually be crucified (like Jesus) for his testimony. Whereas the bombastic disciple missed it the first time, the Lord forgave and restored our brother, setting him up to be faithful in the future! What has happened in your past does not have to define how you behave in the future. God is good, He is kind and gracious and he will take even your most obvious failures and use them for your good. Peter struggled with pride. He was a man who needed to be humbled, and he was that night as he looked, from a distance, at Christ. Nevertheless, Jesus saw to it that he would be picked up and restored to service and, in the future, Peter stood strong in the face of persecution. The same can be true of you. If you have not acknowledged Christ before men in the past, run to Him! Confess your sin and trust that He will treat you with the same kindness and grace that He bestowed upon Peter years ago.

February 15

**Psalm 119:46**

As we end this week's devotions, I want to ask a very simple question... why would we be faithful to share our faith? The only answer that I can come up with is that we have confidence that our testimony is true and that our God is real and that He is able.

Today's verse reminds us that, ultimately, those who testify about the Lord will not be put to shame. The picture here of speaking before kings carries great weight. The point that is being made is that there should be confidence to proclaim the goodness and truths of God even in the company of the most powerful. There is not an individual on the planet that can put our Lord to shame. He is victorious and exalted over them all and this means that we (lowly, unqualified and unimpressive servants) can speak with confidence in the presence of all men.

Over the years, the church has spoken boldly of the goodness of God, and we have yet to be put to shame. The Lordship of Christ rang out in the Roman Empire and evil men like Nero and others attempted to silence the message, but the church grew. The truth of the Gospel exploded in Germany through a formerly Roman Catholic monk and the church (and state) did all that they could to curtail the message, but the church grew. The Gospel of Christ was proclaimed with boldness in pulpits across this country during the Great Awakening and many of the "enlightened" and influential despised the message, but the Lord saw fit to use the testimony to expand His Kingdom.

Today, we have the chance to speak of the goodness of God to our generation. We have the privilege of proclaiming the unchanging precepts of the Word of God to politicians who don't want to hear it and professors who think they are too smart for such "foolish" verities. In these respects, may we remember that our testimony might seem like nonsense to a lost and dying world, but we will not be put to shame.

The only way we lose, dear ones, is by being quiet! So, grow in your faith and wisdom. Drink in the truths of the Word of God... deeply. Meditate on what the Lord says and contemplate who to express these truths clearly and with boldness and compassion and then stand to speak! Perhaps, the response that we receive will be like that of Jethro in Exodus 18 as he expressed amazement and conviction that our God is the One True God, greater than all of the false gods our world might attempt to manufacture for our praise. He is worthy of our worship and He is worthy of our testimony!