

A WITNESS—ARE YOU?

As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him. 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.**” So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis (*the Ten Cities*) **how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed.** (Mark 5:18-20 NIV)

The above passage was the end of the written account of the man possessed by Legion (many demons).

A witness can only testify or witness to what they have seen or experienced. What matters in a courtroom is truth and facts, not hearsay.

Others may have shared greater things, more impressive experiences. We believe them, and we can share these. I can tell you their experiences, but it is more powerful from their own lips as their passion is strong in their sharing. Many times God instructed His people to do various things, literally and symbolically, so that they could pass on what the Lord had done for them to coming generations. Even so, I think it was much more powerful and meaningful to those who saw it for themselves.

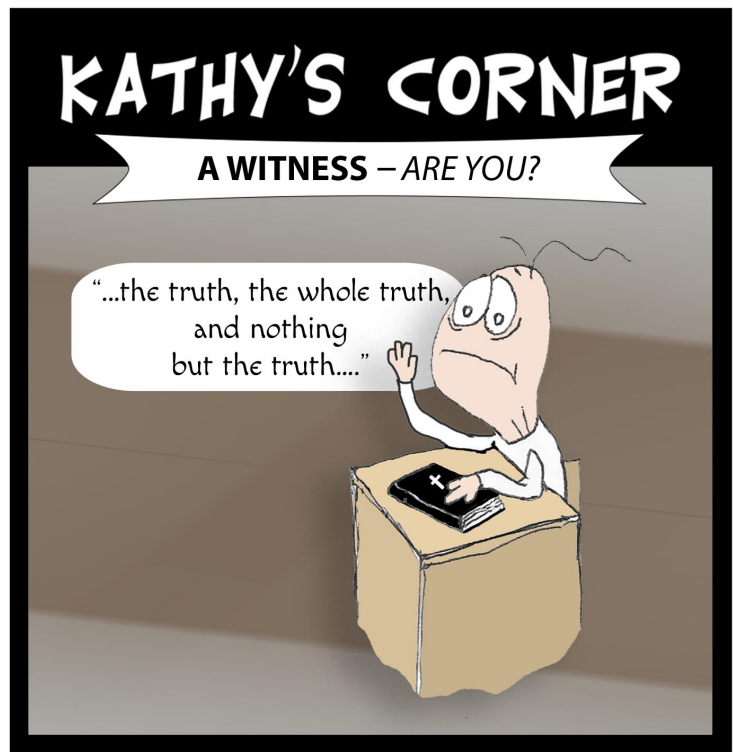
“I have to hear it from the horses mouth.” How many times have you heard that? The closest one to what has taken place is often considered the most reliable. A small personal story shared might be a powerful testimony to the one God has sent to cross **your** path.

I love hearing personal testimonies and reading autobiographies of Christians. These encourage me and strengthen my faith. When my daughter comes to visit we often watch movies; the ones that mean the most to me are the ones based on true stories of struggles, faith and victory.

Like a snow-cooled drink at harvest time is a trustworthy messenger to the one who sends him; he refreshes the spirit of his master. (Proverbs 25:13 NIV)

When we have been born again—born from above, we have at least one huge miracle we can bear witness to. Also, the way we live subsequently should speak volumes, though silently, to those who have known us and to others. A faithful witness brings glory to God, and makes God real to people. A witness who chooses to be transparent does the same. Like me, you may have heard testimonies of those who have been freed from addictions and loveless, evil lifestyles. These can be powerful if the one giving testimony doesn’t glory in how wicked they were, giving the impression that their sin was somehow cute. Pride rears up its ugly head at every opportunity! That being said, transparency gives us hope. If God didn’t waste what others went through—yes, even that bad stuff, the He can use our lives for His purposes, in His time, too; and it does take time.

Come and hear, all you who fear God; let me tell you what he has done for me. (Psalm 66:16 NIV)



Transparency is not for the faint of heart, but it has benefits. When it is *all out there*, there is nothing left to hide. It has been confessed, forsaken and forgiven. Now, a walk in freedom is possible. You no longer have to walk guardedly. The light has shined into the dark places of shame and secrets. You are free. Yes, you risk judgment and condemnation when you are transparent, but you are free. The devil can no longer blackmail you. You don't answer to men and their judgments—only to God who sees you covered by the blood of Jesus—a new creation! **If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.** (1 John 8-19 NIV) Transparency is not only a risk, but it's also an opportunity to witness to the transformational power of the Holy Spirit, as we live faithfully (not in hypocrisy, infidelity or disloyalty).

I could speak all day about the miracles, signs and wonders I would like to see. God is fully capable of performing miracles and providing signs and wonders. And He does! I have hope to see such, and faith that I will, but until they happen in my sight or experience, I cannot be a witness to them personally. Thankfully, I have experienced a lot from a very good God. To these things I can confidently testify. As I fill my heart with the word of God, step out on it, or stand on it, I find it to be reliable; I have more to which I can personally testify.

The disciples testified in their Gospels. In the book of Acts there are testimonies being given. John summarizes it this way: **“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us.”** (1 John 1:1-3 NIV)

As with all things done by the Holy Spirit through us, **the motive and the method is love.** Read again the last line of the passage immediately above. It explains the reason for witnessing. *Can you see it?* —It is love! It is an inclusive love. Here is verse three again, with verse four: **We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We write this to make our (or your) joy complete.**

What John had was what he wanted to share. He loved, therefore, he witnessed.