

- Witness -

"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." (Acts 1:8)



Berean Lamp Ministries
For the Body of Christ

Vol. 24
Sep/Oct 2014

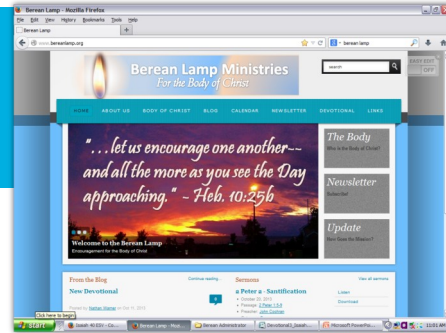


TABLE OF CONTENTS

A New Command I Give to You

by Scott Moller - Page 3

Witnessing in the Last Days

by Nathan Warner - Page 4

The Hitchhiker

by Bob Larsen - Page 7

Blameless and Harmless Lights in This World

by Ginny Larsen - Page 8

To Die Is to Gain

by Bob Larsen - Page 10

Social Witnessing

by Bob Larsen - Page 11

Are You Present?

by Lynn Warner - Page 13

I Love to Tell the Story

by Maggie Moller - Page 17

Visit www.bereanlamp.org/lampstand/ for an explanation of the cover art.

Administrator: Nathan Warner

Oversight Committee: Pastor Scott Moller, Deacon Bob Larsen, Nathan Warner

Editors: Natalie Warner, Julie Moller

The Berean Lamp Newsletter is a monthly publication of the Berean Lamp Ministry.

Visit our website at www.bereanlamp.org.

The Berean Lamp Ministry is a service of the Berean Christian Fellowship of Zimmerman, MN.

The Berean Lamp Ministry seeks to:

1. Encourage and strengthen the Body of Christ by providing the means for each of its members to share their spiritual gifts with one another, rooted in the Word of God, thereby growing into deeper union with one another and with Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-31).
2. Minister to non-believers; be a witness for Christ and a testimony to His Body in the world.

We would appreciate your help in contributing to the content and in spreading the work of this ministry. Thank you, and God bless.

- Pastor Scott Moller





A New Command I Give to You

By Scott Moller

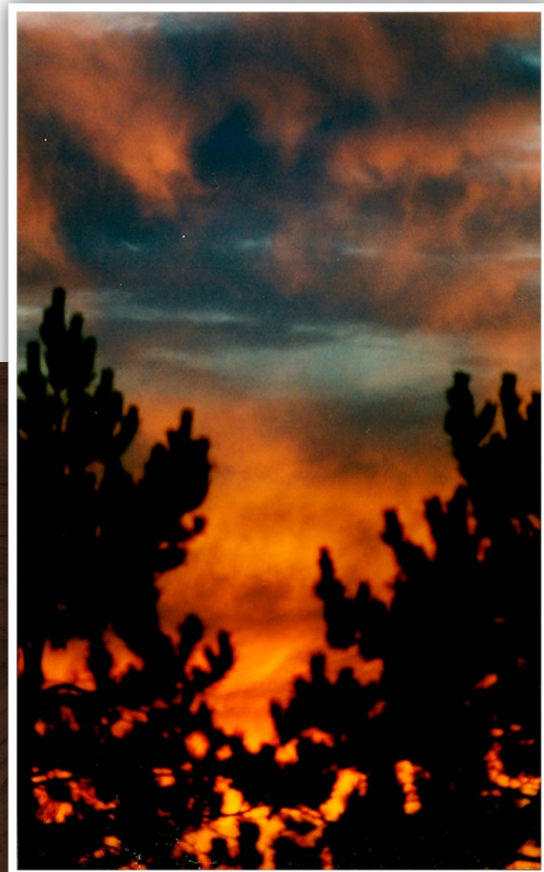
"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another."
(John 13:34-35 NIV)

In the verses above, Jesus is instructing His disciples about their witness in a manner that should cause us to pay special attention. In the first place, Jesus states that He is giving them a new command. This is not merely a suggestion but a direct order from the commander in chief. This new command carries weight. So much so that not following it is disobedience. In addition, it has a direct impact on our witness.

This new command is to "love one another." If Jesus had stopped there, this command would not be that hard to keep. As we all know, there are many accepted definitions of love. If we could just define "love" as we see fit, obedience would be simple. But Jesus does not allow us that option, because He provides us His definition of "love." He states: *"As I have loved you, so you must love one another."* Note that Jesus sets Himself up as the standard, not man. This makes this command so much greater. We have to ask ourselves, "How did Jesus love?" So many books and hymns have been written over the centuries trying to describe the love of Jesus, and yet man has only scratched the surface of the topic. The hymn "The Love of God" describes this dilemma in its final verse – "Could we with ink the ocean fill, / And were the skies of parchment made; / Were every stalk on earth a quill, / And every man a scribe by trade; / To write the love of God above / Would drain the ocean dry; / Nor could the scroll contain the whole, / Though stretched from sky to sky." In short, the love of Jesus is without measure. It

is a love that would cause one to lay down his life for another. This type of love is rarely seen even among the followers of Christ.

Jesus goes on to state: *"By this [love] everyone will know that you are My disciples."* It is by our very Christ-like love for one another that we are giving witness to the world that we are disciples of Jesus. This matter is so often overlooked by Christians when they consider Jesus' command to be His witnesses. Most Christians are more concerned about "what to say" than how they are loving other Believers. Sadly, they do not understand that their lack of love towards other Believers so often negates the very witness they want to be. We must understand that our witness starts in the Body of Christ.



By Nathan Warner

Witnessing in the Last Days

By Nathan Warner

When we think of witnessing, we generally think of Believers reaching out to people who don't know the Gospel. When we think of examples, we think of the Apostles in the book of Acts, don't we? And when we think of persecution resulting from our witnessing, we think of the unbeliever rejecting the Gospel. While there certainly are many circumstances in our lives today that may echo the work of the Apostles, the work before many of us today is actually more akin to the work of the Prophets.

The task before the Apostles was to share a new revelation from God with people everywhere around the world. No one in the world had heard the Gospel, except for them. Today, nearly the entire world has heard the Gospel. They may not have a perfect understanding of it, but most people "know" about Jesus and His claims in one way or another, and they have "made up their minds" on the subject. Many people around the world today claim to be Christians (nearly 1/3 of the world population), yet many of them live lives that oppose the Gospel. Many more people claim to think Jesus was a good man and they approve of His words about the poor and downtrodden, while they may not agree with His claims to be God's Son. And many more people have walked away from the faith of their parents and grandparents but hold to some forms of tradition. Does that sound familiar? If you have read the Prophets, you know that they were God's witnesses sent to a people called by His name – Israel and Judah. Unfortunately these people, like many "Christians" today, brought sinful pollutions into His house and taught the people a different message than the one He spoke—out of the very words He had given them! They spoke lies in His name, saying, "Thus says the Lord!" and "Hear the Word of the Lord!" Do you not see a parallel in the Church today?

Like the Prophets, many Believers today are tasked with calling people to remembrance of

the very Truth that they claim to live by and to heed God's warning of judgment for unrepentant sin. Like them, we often must witness to a people who call themselves by God's name and "know" about Him. In the last days, true Believers who preach the Gospel of repentance will be despised and hated by "Christians" and "churches" just as the Prophets were hated by priests and religious leaders of their day, even though they were preaching the exact law that the prophets and priests were tasked with protecting and teaching to the people! You see, to many people today, churches stand as monuments to "their father's religion." It is the "old way" that didn't work so well for their parents. For many people, churches are seen as nothing more than a cultural tradition. Many more attach themselves to flashy ministries and "relevant" churches that preach a different Gospel in God's name. Many more still call themselves "Christians," but they are becoming some of the greatest enemies of true Believers *"having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power"* (2 Timothy 3:5).

In these last days, God might just as easily address "Christians" as He did the Jews at the time of Jeremiah: *"They have turned to Me their back and not their face. And though I have taught them persistently, they have not listened to receive instruction. They set up their abominations in the house that is called by My name, to defile it"* (Jeremiah 32:33-34).

Through the Prophets, God continually characterized the people of Israel as His wife. While speaking specifically to Israel and not to the Church, there are still many things we can draw from this parallel. God describes Jerusalem in Isaiah as the faithless City who was once *"full of justice! Righteousness lodged in her, but now murderers. Your silver has become dross, your best wine mixed with water. Your princes are rebels and companions of thieves. Everyone loves a bribe and runs after gifts. They do not bring justice to the fatherless, and the widow's cause does not come to them"* (Isaiah 1:21b-23). *"I remember the devotion of your youth, your love as a bride, how you followed Me in the wilderness, in a land not sown... What wrong did your fathers find in*

Me that they went far from Me, and went after worthlessness, and became worthless?...I brought you into a plentiful land to enjoy its fruits and its good things. But when you came in, you defiled My land and made My heritage an abomination. The priests did not say, 'Where is the LORD?' Those who handle the law did not know Me; the shepherds transgressed against Me; the prophets prophesied by Baal and went after things that do not profit" (Jeremiah 2:2b, 5, 7-8). "Run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, look and

take note! Search her squares to see if you can find a man, one who does justice and seeks truth, that I may pardon her. Though they say, 'As the LORD lives,' yet they swear falsely. O LORD, do not your eyes look for truth? You have struck them down, but they felt no anguish; You have consumed them, but they refused to take correction. They have made their faces harder than rock; they have refused to repent" (Jeremiah 5:1-3).

How was Jeremiah's witness received? Did "many believe"? Jeremiah described himself



"When the BOW is in the cloud, then I will look UPON it, to remember the EVERLASTING covenant between God and EVERY living creature of all FLESH that is on the EARTH." (Genesis 9:16)

By Maria Madsen



as *“a man of strife and a man of contention to all the land! I have not lent, nor have men lent money to me, yet everyone curses me”* (Jeremiah 15:10b). *“I have become a laughingstock all the day; everyone mocks me. For whenever I speak, I cry out, I shout, ‘Violence and destruction!’ For the word of the LORD has become for me a reproach and derision all day long”* (Jeremiah 20:7b-8). Aren’t we described this way today, especially by other “Christians”? We cause “strife” and “contention” by preaching the Word of God, by witnessing repentance of sin to a people who know their sin and love it. When we share the Word of the Lord, we are laughed at and mocked for our “obsolete” interpretation of it. When we speak God’s Word, the “church” tries to reign us in, telling us Jesus taught “acceptance” and “love.” They spout Scriptures out of context, sandwiched between man’s thinking, fearing people will leave their assembly if repentance and judgment are preached. The pastors and teachers of the “church” preach out of the Bible a different gospel entirely – a word of acceptance, tolerance, union with sin, no judgment, no responsibility, no discernment, and self-indulgence, for “God wants you to do what makes you happy.” These false teachers then point at Believers and call them teachers of “hate,” narrow-minded, and spiteful, desiring cruel and terrible things to happen to “good people.” Because of this powerful opposition and the “tickling” delusions they teach, few will be the people who turn to the truth, as Isaiah cried, *“Who has believed our message? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?”* (Isaiah 53:1) No one wants to hear that they must repent, though they know they must if they are to live. In the end they find a teacher or a religious authority who teaches in God’s name what they want to hear. This gives them cover for their sin, and this is why they hate the witness of Truth, because it threatens the justification they live by.

Jeremiah, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and all the other Prophets weren’t witnessing to heathens who had no knowledge of God. They were witnessing to a people who identified on some level

with God and His Word, yet they were opposed by the vast ranks of the religious leaders and priests who had become false teachers. Jeremiah was physically sickened by the wickedness being taught in God’s name. *“As for the prophets: my heart is broken within me, all my bones tremble; I have become like a drunken man, even like a man overcome with wine, because of the LORD and because of His holy words. For the land is full of adulterers; for the land mourns because of the curse. The pastures of the wilderness have dried up. Their course also is evil and their might is not right. ‘For both prophet and priest are polluted; even in My house I have found their wickedness,’ declares the LORD”* (Jeremiah 23:9-11). *“I did not send the prophets, yet they ran; I did not speak to them, yet they prophesied. But if they had stood in My council, then they would have proclaimed My words to My people, and they would have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their deeds. Am I a God at hand, declares the LORD, and not a God far away? Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him? declares the LORD. Do I not fill heaven and earth? declares the LORD. I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy lies in My name, saying, ‘I have dreamed, I have dreamed!’ How long shall there be lies in the heart of the prophets who prophesy lies, and who prophesy the deceit of their own heart, who think to make My people forget My name by their dreams that they tell one another, even as their fathers forgot My name for Baal?...Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, declares the LORD, who steal My words from one another. Behold, I am against the prophets, declares the LORD, who use their tongues and declare, ‘declares the LORD.’ Behold, I am against those who prophesy lying dreams, declares the LORD, and who tell them and lead my people astray by their lies and their recklessness, when I did not send them or charge them. So they do not profit this people at all, declares the LORD. When one of this people, or a prophet or a priest asks you, ‘What is the burden of the LORD?’ you shall say to them, ‘You are the*

burden, and I will cast you off, declares the LORD” (Jeremiah 23:21-27, 32-33).

In these dark days, we should draw from the example of the Prophets in our witnessing to our friends, families, acquaintances, churches, pastors, and teachers who call themselves “Christians.” But while we witness the one true Gospel, sharing the Word of the Lord, we should not look for converts and friends to come from our work. We face a tough situation today, not unlike Isaiah’s commission when God told him his task was to preach to the people for decades with very few people turning to the Truth: *“Go, and say to this people: ‘Keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing, but do not perceive.’ Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and blind their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed”* (Isaiah 6:9-10), for the Day of God’s Wrath has arrived.

The Prophets suffered rejection by their own people for their witness: *“Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through His own blood. Therefore let us go to Him outside the camp and bear the reproach He endured. For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come. Through Him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge His name”* (Hebrews 13:12-15). We need to take comfort in the fact that we are in God’s will, and the persecution we face is a testament of our identity in Him. So *“lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look at the earth beneath; for the heavens vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment, and they who dwell in it will die in like manner; but My salvation will be forever, and My righteousness will never be dismayed. Listen to Me, you who know righteousness, the people in whose heart is My law; fear not the reproach of man, nor be dismayed at their revilings. For the moth will eat them up like a garment, and the worm will eat them like wool; but My righteousness will be forever, and My salvation to all generations”* (Isaiah 51:6-8). Amen.

The Hitchhiker

By Bob Larsen

Sometimes when we share the gospel with people, it seems like an exercise in futility. Some people show a negative response or no response at all. Don’t let that bother you. Keep praying for them. Many years ago, I had an experience that may be as much of an encouragement to you as it was to me.

I was riding with a Christian friend and we picked up a hitchhiker. I gave him a brief explanation of salvation, but he did not show any response at all, and I was disappointed. A year later, I was doing work for the Billy Graham crusade that had taken place at the Minnesota State Fair grandstand. I was working on contacting people who had gone forward and made a profession of faith in Jesus.

When I called one of the people on the list, his mother told me that he was in the hospital at the University of Minnesota. She encouraged me to visit him, so I went there, and to my surprise, her son was the hitchhiker that I had talked to a year before. I thought, “What a miracle it is that God arranged this meeting.” It reminded me that God is working in people’s hearts, whether we see it or not. So, don’t be discouraged when you don’t see an immediate positive response to your message of salvation. God may be working in their heart, and it may be invisible to us.



Blameless and Harmless Lights in This World

By Ginny Larsen

“Do all things without murmurings and disputings, so that you may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation. Among these you shine as lights in the world.”
(Philippians 2:14-15)

When I sat in church recently, looking around me at my brothers and sisters in Christ, it dawned on me what a witness we are to one another, even in the Body of Christ. We think of *witnessing* as something we go out in the world to do...and it is, but it is also something we are every day to those who are around us, and in fact, that is where we have the greatest impact on lives. I look around me and see these dear people and really know very little of their daily lives, but each Sunday I see them, and each one has been a testimony to me in some way. They have all ministered Christ to me without realizing it. Their presence in church is sorely missed each time one person is not there on a Sunday morning. I guess that's one advantage of being in a small church.

All the more important, then, that all we do in our home, in our community, our work, and our church is done without murmurings and disputings but in the love of the Spirit in us, working through us, with thanksgiving. This is a witness and a light to everyone in our lives, that something outside of ourselves is present in our hearts. Something outside the natural response to life is having a greater impact on us, and it doesn't go unnoticed. It's not the natural way of the flesh...of the world. It stands out in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. His Light shines through us, when we “put on Christ” and walk in the Spirit and by the Spirit mortify the deeds of the flesh, not letting them control our actions, thoughts, and words. As we walk and live by the Spirit, we become a witness (or testimony) of some-

thing greater than ourselves – of being saved from our own base reactions to life and circumstance, and we become His vessel of light to a dark world.

For the word “harmless,” Robertson's Word Pictures defines it “**Harmless** (*akeraioi*). Unmixed, unadulterated.” When we have pollution in our lives from worldly thinking, fleshly appetites, or anything contrary to His Word, we have a mixture. People see a confusing message. When they see we claim to be a Christian and then go along with another philosophy that is unbiblical, there is confusion in our witness. We are not “harmless” anymore in our testimony. Instead, we become “harmful” to the true testimony of the Gospel, and our witness is mixed and adulterated. How important it is then to be in the Word of God daily, that we might know the mind of God and the heart of God, allowing that to fill us. It's when His Word fills us that we are able to act according to it by the power of His Spirit at work in us, mortifying the deeds (thoughts and actions) of our flesh. If we are reading the writings of others without being Bereans and checking what is written in the Bible, we can have a mixture in our thinking, and bring a mixed message to others as well.


For the words “murmurings and disputing,” Vincent Word Studies says, “Better here *questionings* or *doubtings*....The murmuring is the *moral*, the doubting the *intellectual* rebellion against God.” If we look in the beginning of Philippians chapter 2, we see Paul talking about the humility of Christ, and this is the mind we are to have, just as Christ had even though He was God, taking on the form of human flesh, humbling Himself to be obedient even unto death. When we murmur and complain, doubting and questioning God's plan in our lives or providence in our lives we are in rebellion against Him and cannot be His testimony in this world. But as we put on the humility of Christ in our thoughts and actions toward our circumstances in life, giving Him glory, we become a light that shines brightly to all around us. We become a light that stands out against the corruption of this world. We become undefeated by the forces of darkness,

because Christ is very much at work in us to work all things together for our good, according to His purposes. We become a Body growing together as a family of God, and a light to the world.

When there are murmurings and disputings against that light within the body of Christ, rather than a humility of all of us learning together (as we are all being conformed to His image and the unity of the Spirit), we are no longer “harmless” but have become a mixed message and a harm to the truth of the Gospel. All things that we do, as Believers, must be done in that spirit of humility, each esteeming others as more important than ourselves, remembering that we are not the only ones God is able to teach but having patience with one another as we are learning and growing together. We can be so “right” that we’re terribly wrong. We can also be wrong and unable to receive light to correct our thinking, because of “vain glory” (Philippians 2:3) – then comes

murmurings and disputings in our hearts and minds against one another.

We must in all things put on Christ in order to be His true light in this world...His unadulterated, harmless, and unmixed message to a lost generation, as well as to one another in the Body of Christ. As the world in these last days becomes darker and darker and more evil, we must all the more be filled with His Spirit to be lights that shine all the brighter. As we do, the darkness will hate that light increasingly and come against us. Yet, just as Jesus, we must be obedient witnesses of His glory, even unto death if necessary, not showing any intimidation or fear of them, *“only let your conduct be as becomes the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you, or else am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, striving together with one mind for the faith of the gospel, and terrified in nothing by your adversaries. For this is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you*



When I look at your
heavens, the work of
your fingers, the moon
and the stars, which
you have set in place;
what is man that you
are mindful of him, and
the son of man that
you care for him?
(Ps. 8:3-4)

© Ginny Larsen

By Ginny Larsen

of salvation, and that of God. For to you it is given on behalf of Christ not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake" (Philippians 1:27-29).

To a world that rejects Christ and persecutes the Church, we are an evident token of their perdition. We are a witness to them of the judgment that they will suffer if they do not turn to Christ in repentance and faith. We are also a testimony of the salvation we have in Christ to them and the righteousness of Christ as we take a stand with Him and show no fear of them, not being intimidated into shying away from that stand.

We are also a testimony to the angelic powers and the powers of darkness of the wonderful grace of God, *"so that now to the rulers and powers in the heavenlies might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord"* (Ephesians 3:10-11).

Our witnessing to a lost world would be so much more effective, then, if we were first to become His witness...and only as we *"do all things without murmurings and disputings, so that you may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation. Among these you shine as lights in the world"* (Philippians 2:14-15). How important it is then to BECOME His witness, rather than just to GO witnessing. Both are important, and one should not be without the other.

Father in Heaven, may we put on Christ in our daily lives, every day, at home, at work, or at church, to be lights in a dark world, unadulterated by the world. Work in our hearts to bring us closer and closer to that which You call us to each day. In Jesus name, amen.

To Die Is to Gain

By Bob Larsen

It was May 1978. My wife and I had a 20-month-old son, and I found I had a sore left arm that had become swollen. I was 29 years old and not much on going to doctors, so I just figured that it would get better by itself. My wife, our son, and I went on a trip to a wedding and were gone for about five days, but when I got home, my arm was still swollen. I went back to work, and when my boss saw the swelling, he called his doctor. My boss handed me the phone, and the doctor told me to get to the ER right away. They checked me out and called my doctor, who came to the hospital. My doctor said that I had a blood clot in my chest. He also made it clear to me that I could die if it broke loose. He called my wife and told her the same thing. I was admitted to the hospital, and they put in an IV to receive blood thinner.

When I realized that I might die soon, I had mixed feelings. I did not like the idea of leaving my family, but I also had a feeling of excitement, thinking that I may see the Lord face—to face in a short time. A pastor came to visit the next day, and when I told him about those feelings, he said, "That's what the Christian life is, to know you have just 24 hours left to live, and you don't have to change anything."

The next day, I was brought to a room where they ran dye through my system so they could see what was going on. After that test, I was told that there was no danger of death, because the blood clot was so firmly embedded, that it couldn't go anywhere. I had to stay in the hospital for a total of about eight days to be treated with blood thinner in an IV that would thin my blood and work on eroding the clot. On the third day, the nurse woke me in the middle of the night. I was covered with blood from one end to the other. The nurse said that in my sleep, I had pulled the IV out of my arm. She took my temperature and said that it was down to 92 degrees. She then said to me, "I

made my rounds early. I don't know why." If she had waited much longer, I probably would have been dead.

I saw so clearly, once again, how fragile life is and how God was working in my life and taking care of me. This entire experience was a great lesson to me. I learned what it is like to be staring death in the face, and I was reminded of how God is taking care of every detail in my life. What about you? What if, at this moment, you found out that you were going to die in 24 hours? Would you have to change anything?

Social Witnessing

By Bob Larsen

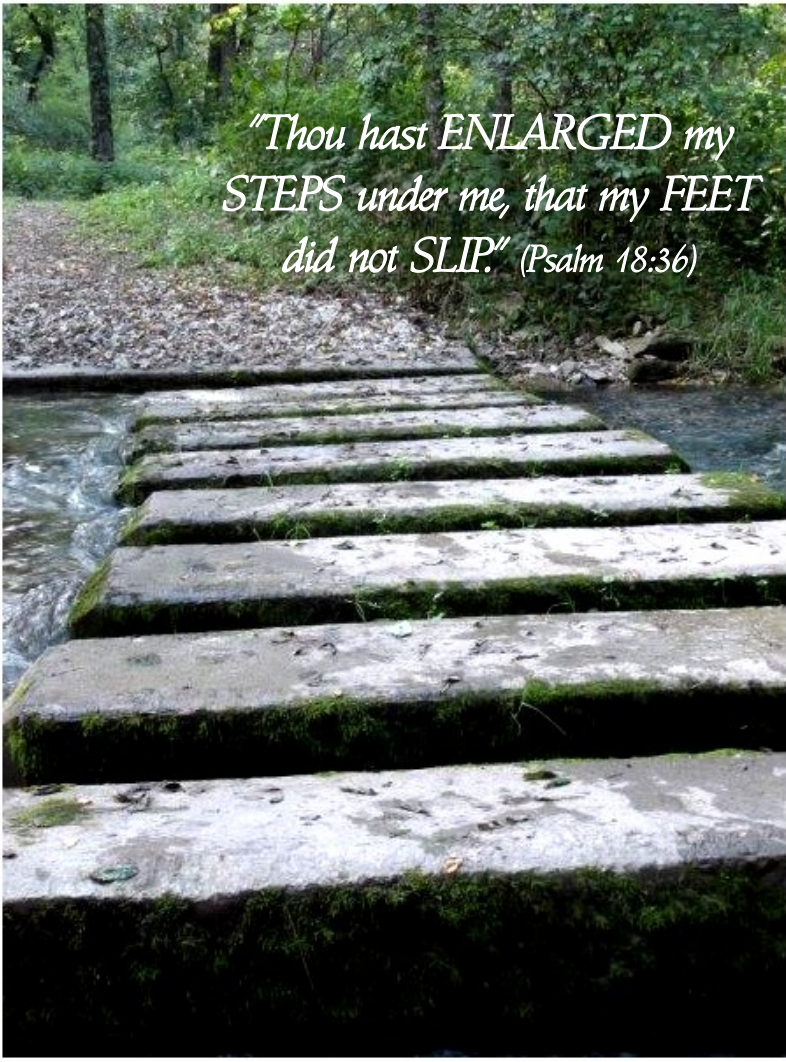
Some people like to use social media and networking sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, etc. Many of them are Believers. I am among them. If you are also among those who like to interact with people through social media, it can be a tremendous opportunity for fellowship and for sharing the Gospel. These sites are used by millions and millions of people all around the world and are used for making connections, keeping up with

friends and relatives, making new friends, and "meeting" people. Many people share their values on these sites as well as what they're doing every day. They share what's on their minds or what's troubling them, and Believers can witness to them.

Most young people use social media, and they really need Believers to witness to them and share the one true Gospel.

These opportunities are not limited to sites like Facebook. There are many forums for specific topics, some of which you may have experience with, such as crafts, sports, etc. For example, I have had the opportunity to share my testimony on two cell phone forums. Forums will usually have a section for general discussions about anything and everything. In addition to Christian things, what are you interested in? There is probably a forum for it, and there are people on forums who are receptive to the Gospel. You may see a response or maybe you won't, but you can

have the joy of sharing the Gospel, knowing that God will use your words as He sees fit.



*"Thou hast ENLARGED my
STEPS under me, that my FEET
did not SLIP." (Psalm 18:36)*

By Shelley Tvedt



By Shelley Tvedt



Are You Present?

By Lynn Warner

To witness is to be known by personal presence, to testify, to attest. For example, when someone sees a car run a red light and cause an accident, that person is a witness because he was present at the scene and saw what happened. God Himself is a witness of our lives. He is present to know us – both our actions and our inner heart motivations. Even more, He gives those who believe in the Gospel grace to know ourselves as He knows us and to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. God gives us grace to testify to our Brethren of His sovereignty, providence, and goodness, just as He also gives us power through the Spirit to testify to the world that its works are wicked, judgment is coming, and belief in the Gospel is necessary for forgiveness and life in Christ.

In John 4:29, the woman at the well testified, *“Come see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?”* Jesus had met her at the well, talked to her face-to-face, and revealed *her* heart to her. *“Many of the Samaritans believed in Him because of the woman’s testimony, ‘He told me all I ever did’”* (John 4:39). But many more believed when He stayed with them for two days, saying, *“It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world”* (John 4:42b). Jesus met people face-to-face, enjoyed their companionship, and shared Himself in person.

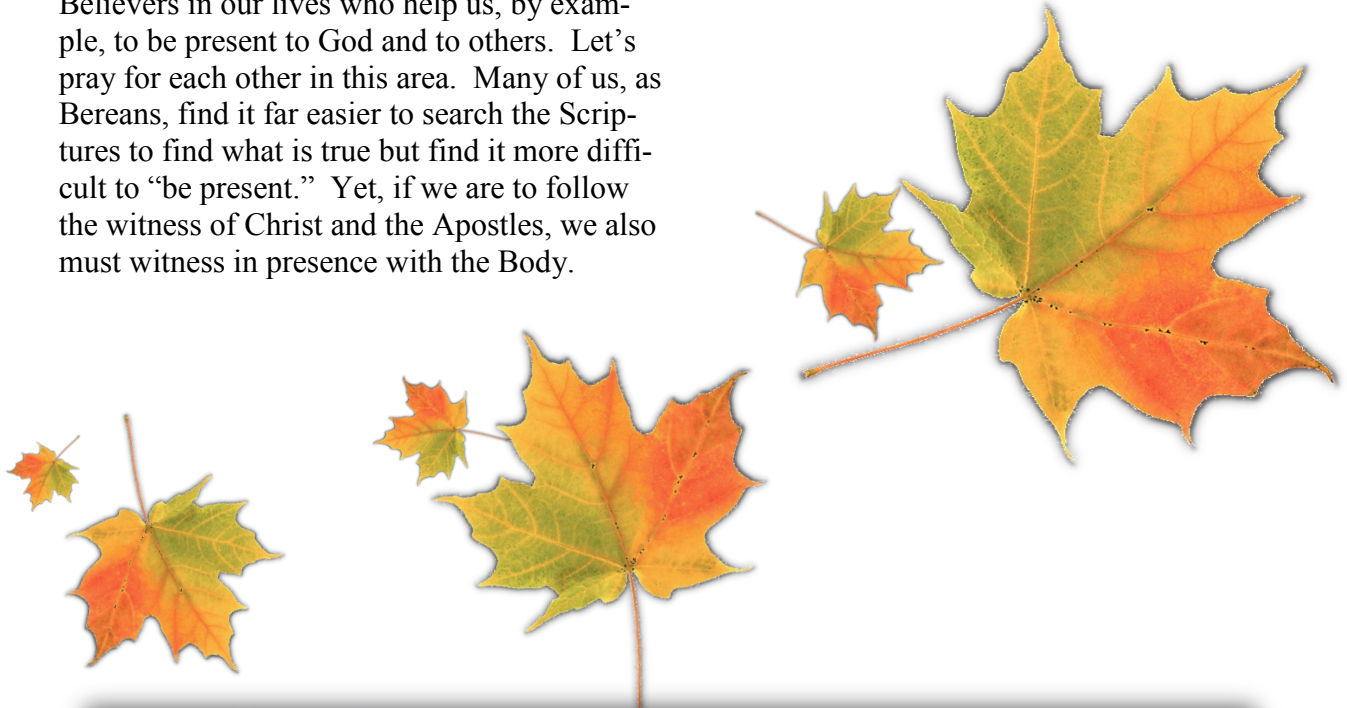
In Scripture, we see references to an open heart and a closed heart. The closed heart is not interested in sharing presence: *“if anyone has the world’s goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God’s love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or talk, but in deed or truth”* (1 John 3:17-18). We have even more than the world’s goods – we have the treasures of Christ to share with one another. The love we have is directly from the Father: *“See what*

kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God, and so we are” (1 John 3:1a).

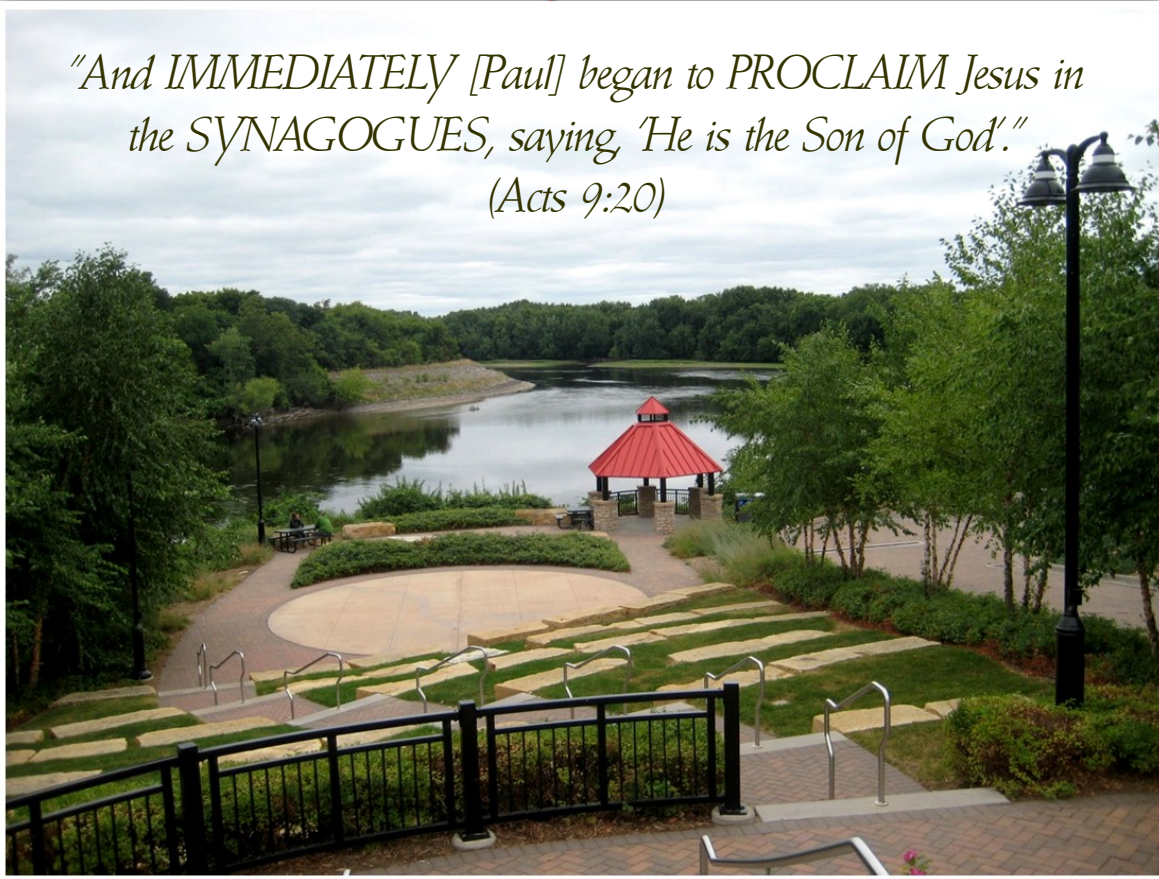
Paul also talks about an open heart and a closed heart: *“We have spoken freely to you, Corinthians, our heart is wide open. You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted in your own affections. In return (I speak as to little children) widen your hearts also”* (2 Corinthians 6:11-13). The Corinthians were not “present” or open to Paul. Pride, a wounded spirit, and other causes may shut down our hearts. Bitterness and unforgiveness grieves the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is not able to flow freely when we are bitter; corrupting talk comes from our heart. *“Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to the hearers”* (Ephesians 4:29).

In conclusion, we become witnesses by seeing or knowing something through personal presence. Our witness is a ministry to others and includes us being present to others. We witness to others by sharing ourselves to encourage and build up our brethren in the Faith. We do this because we have learned by personal example from God. He Himself is personally present with us. He sees us and His heart is open to us. If we are present to Him and if our hearts are open to Him, we learn to know Him as we walk through the tribulations and joys of life. God Himself gives us grace to see ourselves as He sees us and to be conformed to the image of His Son. Through His Spirit, He gives us power to testify of the truth to the world that its deeds are evil, judgment is coming, and belief in the Gospel of Jesus Christ is necessary for life. God sent His Son to engage with people “face-to-face” to be physically present. Paul followed Jesus’ example and yearned to be present to each church, as seen by his letters. Paul urged the brothers to follow his example. As Bereans, we are well acquainted with searching the Scriptures *“to see if these things were so”* (Acts 17:11), but it does not end here. We begin asking God to continue teaching us, and follow the example of Jesus, Paul, and other


Believers in our lives who help us, by example, to be present to God and to others. Let's pray for each other in this area. Many of us, as Bereans, find it far easier to search the Scriptures to find what is true but find it more difficult to "be present." Yet, if we are to follow the witness of Christ and the Apostles, we also must witness in presence with the Body.




"And IMMEDIATELY [Paul] began to PROCLAIM Jesus in the SYNAGOGUES, saying, 'He is the Son of God'."
(Acts 9:20)



By Betty Harstad



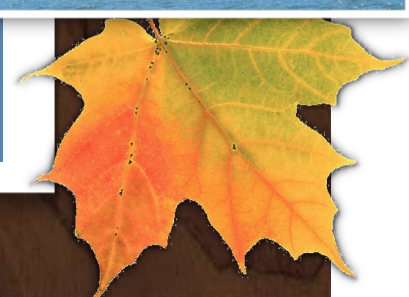
"Jesus also SUFFERED outside the GATE in order to SANCTIFY the PEOPLE through His own BLOOD. Therefore let us go to Him OUTSIDE the camp and BEAR the reproach He ENDURED. For here we have no LASTING city, but WE seek the CITY that is to come...."



"...Through Him THEN let us CONTINUALLY offer up a SACRIFICE of PRAISE to God, that is, the FRUIT of lips that ACKNOWLEDGE His NAME." (Hebrews 13:12-15)



By
Nathan
Warner



By
Ginny
Larsen

Do nothing that you would not like
God to see.

Say nothing that you would not like
God to hear.

Write nothing that you would not
like God to read.

Go no place, where you would not
like God to find you.

Read no book, of which you would
not like God to say, "Show it to
Me!"

Never spend your time in such a
way that you would not like to have
God say, "What are you doing?"
(J.C. Ryle)

©Ginny Larsen

By
Kelly
Madsen

*"ONLY let your CONDUCT be as BECOMES the
GOSPEL of Christ." (Philippians 1:27a)*

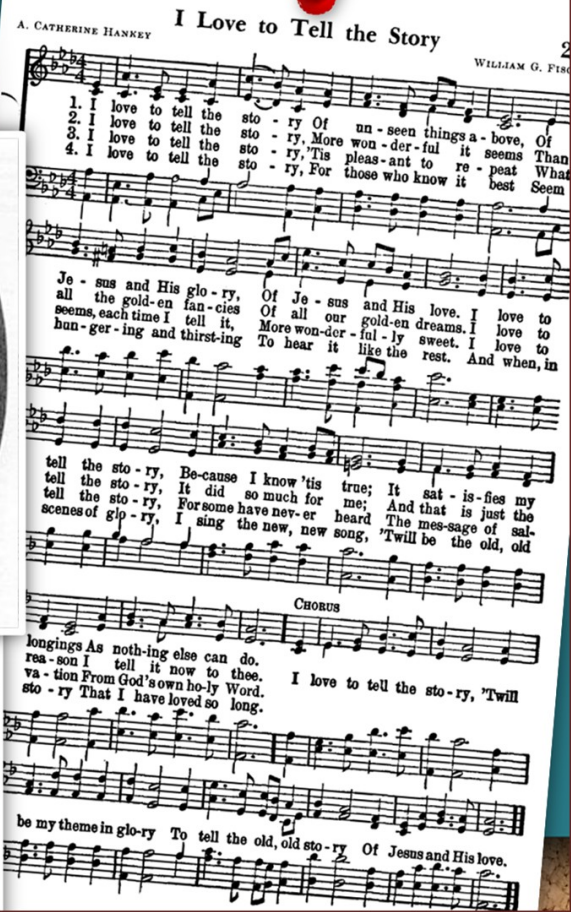
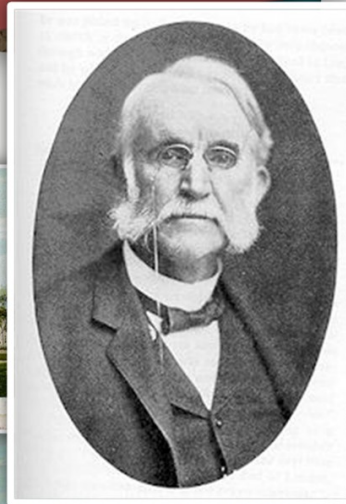


Sing A New Song

Words by **Arabella Hankey**

Music by **William Fischer**

"'Twill be my theme in glory."



I Love to Tell the Story

By Maggie Moller

"I love to tell the story, for some have never heard / The message of salvation from God's own holy Word" - Arabella Hankey

"You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

(Matthew 5:14-16)

"Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation. Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky as you hold firmly to the word of life."

(Philippians 2:14-16a)

With the theme of "Witness" this month, I could think of no better hymn to write about than "I Love to Tell the Story." In my opinion, this hymn perfectly describes how we as Christians should feel about telling others about the good news of the Gospel! As Christians, I believe we are often not open enough with sharing our faith to a lost world. I know I personally need to greatly improve in this area of my faith. However, I think we need to be careful to not assume the approach to witnessing must be generalized across all Christians. It is true

that some are called to lives of full-time ministry such as being pastors or missionaries. Some people would argue these occupations are the only ministries that witness and evangelize, but I would argue that are we not all called to lives of full-time ministry once we have accepted Christ into our hearts? It is my firm belief that we can be effective witnesses for Christ our Lord in whatever life He has called us into. By simply living as examples of Christ and demonstrating His love to an unlovable world, we will be presented with numerous opportunities to share His Gospel to the lost. Do not be fooled: we are witnesses each and every day we wake up. Every time you step into the grocery store or gas station you are presented with the chance to be a witness. Something as simple as being cheerful to your cashier can make all the difference in showing Christ's love through your actions. I feel I cannot reiterate this thought enough that no matter what God has called you to in your life, whether it be ministry, teaching, business, or any other career, you are called to be a witness for Him. And regardless of the path you are called to, you will encounter many opportunities to share God's love and the good news of His saving grace.

The Lyrist: Arabella Katherine "Kate" Hankey

Kate Hankey was born into a wealthy English family on January 12, 1834. Her family belonged to an evangelical group called the Clapham Sect which was led by William Wilberforce. Under Mr. Wilberforce's teaching, the group was widely known for its stand on anti-slavery and pro-missionary views. When she entered her teenage years, Kate began volunteering as a girls Sunday school teacher for the Clapham Sect meetings. When she reached her adult years, Kate became convicted to travel to South Africa to serve as a nurse. Her brother, who was an invalid, was already living in South Africa. When she was in her early thirties, Kate became seriously ill and was greatly weakened. During her lengthy recovery period, she penned an extensive

two-part poem telling the story of Jesus and His life. Two of our most widely known hymns come from this poem: "I Love to Tell the Story" and "Tell Me the Old, Old Story." Kate died on May 9, 1911, in London, England, at the age of seventy-seven.

The Composer: William Gustavus Fischer

William Fischer was born to German immigrant parents on October 14, 1835, in Baltimore, Maryland. Early on in his life, he began showing strong musical aptitude. When he was only eight years old, he started singing at his German church in Baltimore. From this experience, he was taught to read music as well as how to play the piano and organ. When he was old enough to take on an apprenticeship, he went to Philadelphia to work under a bookbinder. Despite his busy days working at his apprenticeship, he did not lose his love for music. Each evening, after his work was completed for the day, he would study and practice his music. Soon his musical talents became known all over Philadelphia, and he was greatly sought after to lead sacred choirs throughout the city. In addition to leading choirs, he also began teaching singing, piano, and general music theory classes. When he was only twenty-three years old, he began teaching music as a professor at Girard College in Philadelphia. He taught music at Girard College for ten years until 1868 when he left to enter the piano business. He worked in the piano industry until his retirement in 1898. Fischer passed away on August 13, 1912, in Philadelphia at the age of seventy-seven.



By Shelley Tvedt



*"PONDER the PATH of thy FEET, and let all THY ways
be ESTABLISHED." (Proverbs 4:26)*

*"THROUGH Him then LET us CONTINUALLY offer up
a SACRIFICE of praise to God, that is, the FRUIT of lips
that ACKNOWLEDGE His name." (Hebrews 13:15)*

*"So that NOW to
the RULERS and
POWERS in the
heavenlies might be
KNOWN by the
church the
MANIFOLD
wisdom of God,
ACCORDING to
the eternal
PURPOSE which
He PURPOSED in
Christ JESUS
our Lord."
(Ephesians 3:10-11)*

By Shelley Tvedt



*"That your FAITH should not STAND in the
WISDOM of men, but in the POWER of God."
(1Corinthians 2:5)*

November/December Newsletter Theme—Idolatry

Submission Deadline: November 30

Publish Date: December 9

Idolatry...

- What does idolatry mean?
- Why is God against it?
- Are there any idols in the world today?
- What are some modern idols?
- Do we worship idols without knowing it?
- Are there idols in your heart?
- How does one worship an idol?
- How can we tell if there are idols in our lives?

Verses on Idolatry (from the NASB version)

Deuteronomy 6:4-6 — *"Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart."*

Deuteronomy 13:1-3 — *"If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes true, concerning which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let us go after other gods (whom you have not known) and let us serve them,' you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the LORD your God is testing you to find out if you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul."*

1 Samuel 15:23a — *"For rebellion is as the sin of divination, And insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry."*

1 Corinthians 10:13-14 — *"No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it. Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry."*

Galatians 5:19-21 — *"Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God."*

Colossians 3:4-6 — *"When Christ, who is your life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory. Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience."*