

## The Witness of John

### John 1: 15

**Joh 1:15 John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me.**

Q. What is a witness?

Dict:

“One who can give a firsthand account of something seen, heard, or experienced”

Of the GK word – μαρτυρέω martureo 

Thayer says:

“to be a witness, to bear witness, i.e. to affirm that one has seen or heard or experienced something, or that he knows it because taught by divine revelation or inspiration”

Such was John!

**1) He was sent from God to be a Witness!**

Joh 1:6 There was a man sent from God, whose name *was* John.

**2) He was sent from God to be a Witness of Christ!**

Joh 1:7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all *men* through him might believe.

Joh 1:8 He was not that Light, but *was sent* to bear witness of that Light.

**3) He remained faithful to his calling, even unto death!**

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Well, let us consider the witness of John under four headings:

Outline:

- 1) It was a Particular witness
- 2) It was a Passionate witness
- 3) It was a Plain witness
- 4) It was a Purposeful witness

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### **1) It was a Particular witness**

#### **“John bare witness of him”**

(Not as the ESV – “John bore witness about him”)

John’s whole ministry can be summarized in these words!

In fact, this is the whole point of the existence of scripture!

C. H. S.

“One of the most interesting points of the Scriptures is their constant tendency to display Christ”

(sermon on 1 Cor. 5:7)

On a sermon Col 3:11 “Christ is All” he states:

“Men have taken it into their heads to invent various systems of religion and if you look round the world, you will see scores of different sects; but it is a great fact that, while there is a multitude of false religions, there is but one that is true. While there are many falsehoods, there can be but one truth; real religion is, therefore, one. There is but one gospel—the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

This is why John bare witness of him!!

Col 2:3 In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Joh 1:34 And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.

## **2) It was a Passionate witness**

**“and cried”**

One of the things that stood out in the ministry of John was his passion in his message!

Someone has said that;

“Passion is the most genuine form of eloquence”

This true passion is missing in much of today’s church!

We see a wonderful example of this in Paul.

**Read Acts 26: 22-32 (Before Agrippa)**

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## **3) It was a Plain witness**

**“saying, This was he of whom I spake”**

John was a simple man with a simple message!

Just like the Apostle Paul!

**Read 2 Cor. 4: 1-13**

App:

We must remain committed to the simple methods that God has given us!

Spurgeon’s article, “Feeding Sheep or Amusing Goats”

An evil is in the professed camp of the Lord, so gross in its impudence, that the most shortsighted can hardly fail to notice it during the past few years. It has developed at an abnormal rate, even for evil. It has worked like leaven until the whole lump ferments. The devil has seldom done a cleverer thing than hinting to

the church that part of their mission is to provide entertainment for the people, with a view to winning them.

From speaking out as the Puritans did, the church has gradually toned down her testimony, then winked at and excused the frivolities of the day. Then she tolerated them in her borders. Now she has adopted them under the plea of reaching the masses.

My first contention is that providing amusement for the people is nowhere spoken of in the Scriptures as a function of the church. If it is a Christian work, why did not Christ speak of it? "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). That is clear enough. So it would have been if He had added, "and provide amusement for those who do not relish the gospel." No such words, however, are to be found. It did not seem to occur to him.

Then again, "He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers . . . for the work of the ministry" (Eph. 4:11-12). Where do entertainers come in? The Holy Spirit is silent concerning them. Were the prophets persecuted because they amused the people or because they refused? The concert has no martyr roll.

Again, providing amusement is in direct antagonism to the teaching and life of Christ and all his apostles. What was the attitude of the church to the world? Ye are the salt" (Matt. 5:13), not the sugar candy---something the world will spit out not swallow. Short and sharp was the utterance, "Let the dead bury their dead" (Matt. 8:22) He was in awful earnestness.

Had Christ introduced more of the bright and pleasant elements into his mission, he would have been more popular when they went back, because of the searching nature of His teaching. I do not hear him say, "Run after these people Peter and tell them we will have a different style of service tomorrow, something short and attractive with little preaching. We will have a pleasant evening for the people. Tell them they will be sure to enjoy it. Be quick Peter, we must get the people somehow." Jesus pitied sinners, sighed and wept over them, but never sought to amuse them.

In vain will the Epistles be searched to find any trace of this gospel of amusement! Their message is, "Come out, keep out, keep clean out!" Anything approaching amusement is conspicuous by its absence. They had boundless confidence in the gospel and employed no other weapon.

After Peter and John were locked up for preaching, the church had a prayer meeting but they did not pray, "Lord grant unto thy servants that by a wise and discriminating use of innocent recreation we may show these people how happy we are." If they ceased not from preaching Christ, they had not time for arranging entertainments. Scattered by persecution, they went everywhere preaching the gospel. They turned the world upside down (Acts 17:6). That is the only difference! Lord, clear the church of all the rot and rubbish the devil has imposed

on her, and bring us back to apostolic methods.

Lastly, the mission of amusement fails to effect the end desired. It works havoc among young converts. Let the careless and scoffers, who thank God because the church met them halfway, speak and testify. Let the heavy laden who found peace through the concert not keep silent! Let the drunkard to whom the dramatic entertainment has been God's link in the chain of the conversion, stand up! There are none to answer. The mission of amusement produces no converts.

**The need of the hour for today's ministry is believing scholarship joined with earnest spirituality, the one springing from the other as fruit from the root. The need is biblical doctrine, so understood and felt, that it sets men on fire.**

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#### **4) It was a Purposeful witness**

**“He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me”**

The Purpose of John was to exalt Christ.

Not because he was such an humble man. No!

But for two reasons!

##### **1) Because of the will of God!**

**“He that cometh after me is preferred before me”**

Mat 3:13 Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.

Mat 3:14 But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?

Mat 3:15 And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer *it to be so* now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.

Mat 3:16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

**Mat 3:17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.**

Peter comments on this:

2Pe 1:17 For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

On the preferment of Christ John Gill notes he was preferred:

1) by God, the Father, in setting him up as Mediator; constituting him the head of the church; causing a fulness of grace to dwell in him; appointing him the Saviour of his people; and ordaining him judge of quick and dead.

2) by the prophets, who spake much of him, and sparingly of John; and of him as the Messiah and Saviour, and of John only as his harbinger:

3) by John himself, who represents him as coming from above, and as above all; and himself as of the earth, earthly:

4) by all Gospel ministers, and every true believer; and good reason there is for it:"

Therefore John could say:

Joh 3:27 John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.

Joh 3:28 Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him.

Joh 3:29 He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.

Joh 3:30 He must increase, but I *must* decrease.

And:

Joh 3:35 The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.

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Not only did John state this preferment of Christ because he knew it was the will of God, but:

**2) Because he knew that Christ was worthy of this preferment in himself!**

**“for he was before me”**

Note, some live on reputation. Not so Christ!

Again, the words of John the Baptist:

Joh 3:31 He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all.

Also:

Luk 3:15 And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not;

Luk 3:16 John answered, saying unto *them* all, I indeed baptize you with water; **but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose:** he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:

Therefore he could say:

Joh 3:30 He must increase, but I *must* decrease.

Joh 3:31 He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all.

Closing Application:

- 1) Are you a faithful witness insofar as God has revealed his word and Son to you?
- 2) In your testifying, do you make it your business to speak of Christ?
- 3) Are you passionate in speaking of the things of God or is it all too often a dead letter?
- 4) Are you faithfully keeping the message simple and unadorned with the ideas of the world?
- 5) Is it your overwhelming purpose to exalt Christ so that men will be drawn to him that in all things he might have the pre-eminence?

May God bless his word to our souls.

Amen.

