

Sermon Series: “I² – Living Lives of Irresistible Influence”—Lord of Life Lutheran, Westfield, IN—5/25/08

Title: “A Life of Witnessing”

Text: Isaiah 43: 1-13

Intro.: *Ills: Not a great man but a great message*

Theme: Our witness is not something that we do but rather is something which we are because our God and Savior’s action within our lives.

Do I have a witness? — You don’t have to look to far to find it

- His (God’s) story
 1. Fearfully and wonderfully made (*I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made .Psalm 139: 14*)
 - a. Created (made out of nothing-vs. 1) by God who alone could do it
 - b. Formed (individually crafted vs. 1) by God who uniquely made you and me for a purpose
 - i. *Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. Genesis 2:7*
 - ii. *For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother's womb. Ps 139:13*
 2. Redeemed and saved from us from our humanly hopeless situation
 - a. *“stop being afraid”--"Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom.Luke12:32*
 - b. No matter what your life (its fall/circumstance) — it is redeemable — go-el – blood avenger – paid debt
 - c. **Ills.: The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe (scene of Aslan and Edmund and forgiveness)**
 - d. God claims you (*summoned* – no one else has right to bring up your past — they must go through him/his Son)
- My story
 1. Not “if” but “when” we go through life’s trials (vs. 2-3)
 - a. Reference to O.T. Israelite historical moments of Red Sea, Jordan River, burning bush/slavery
 - b. Judah was now facing its gravest moment with the Babylonian armies at their back door ready to destory/deport
 - c. Do you feel under the wave – with illness, layoff, broken marriage, dispirited life - God has allowed to be there
 2. **“God is with you”** in the midst of that time of trial
 - a. *God is in the midst of her, she will not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns. Psalm 46:5*
 - b. *Indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead; 2 Cor. 1:9*
 - c. *God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?" Hebrews 13:5-6*
 - d. Not focused on the trial but on your God who stands with you in the midst of it which then gives us a story

Called to a life of witness

- God formed and transformed you for this purpose
 1. **Ills.: Oz Guinness – the problem with American Christians**
 2. God has called you to believe and be saved **“for his glory”**
 3. Your witness begins and ends with knowing **WHO YOU ARE** and **WHOSE YOU ARE**
 4. *For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body. 1 Cor. 6:20*
- God gives us the right to share the truth
 1. In a politically-correct world which promotes tolerance to all “truths” but shouts down Christian truth, we say, “I know the real God and I’m living proof that he lives and acts in me and others.”
 2. God tells Israel that even from among “heathen nations” he will gather a receptive audience
 3. *“Do not fear their intimidations--do not be troubled, but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence. 1Pet3:14-15*
- God convinces us of His salvation, which forms our witness
 1. **You are my witnesses (9, 10, 12)** — one who retells (**over and over**) what has happened to him or her
 2. Our witness is as a satisfied customer — one who has experienced, first hand, God’s deliverance (salvation)
 3. Not telling others what to believe but why **YOU** believe
 4. **Illus.: Simple witness**

Not a great man but a great message

Graeme Keith, treasurer of the Billy Graham Association and Billy's lifelong friend, says: I was on an elevator with Billy when another man in the elevator recognized him. He said, "You're Billy Graham, aren't you?" "Yes," Billy said. "Well," the man said, "you are truly a great man." Billy immediately responded, "No, I'm not a great man. I just have a great message." Harold Myra and Marshall Shelley, *The Leadership Secrets of Billy Graham* (Zondervan, 2005)

The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe

The movie *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* is based on the classic novel by C. S. Lewis about four London children who are sent to a professor's country home for protection during World War II. There they find a magic wardrobe that leads to a mystical land called Narnia. To defeat the White Witch, who holds the country under her wicked spell, the children must join forces with Aslan, the Lord of Narnia. Edmund (Skandar Keynes), one of the four children, has been seduced by the false promises of the Witch (Tilda Swinton). She promised Edmund a position in her kingdom if he would bring his siblings to her. Though he succumbed to her tempting offer, he failed to fulfill the Witch's request and was imprisoned in her palace. When Edmund is rescued from the Witch and is brought under the care of Aslan, the Witch comes to protest, demanding Edmund's blood. Aslan enters the tent, followed by the Witch. After a short time they return. Edmund and the entire village await the news. Aslan speaks: "She has renounced her claim on the son of Adam's blood." As the people begin to rejoice, the Witch asks Aslan, "How can I know your promise will be kept?" His response is a ferocious roar. Lucy (Georgie Henley), Edmund's sister, rejoices and smiles at Aslan. Then suddenly, as if she realizes something is amiss, her smile begins to fade. What Lucy doesn't know, at this moment, is the cost of Edmund's freedom. For it has been settled that Aslan will die on the stone table in Edmund's place. **The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe (Walt Disney Pictures, 2005), directed by Andrew Adamson Elapsed Time: DVD chapter 17, 01:32:00 – 01:35:15}**

The Problem with American Christians

The main problem with American Christians is not that they aren't where they should be but that they are not what they should be right where they are as doctors, housewives, lawyers, computer salesmen, or nurses. **Os Guinness, quoted by Howard Hendricks, "Beyond the Bottom Line," Preaching Today, Tape No. 101.**

Simple Witness

On a recent road trip, I stopped at a McDonald's drive-thru for lunch. After placing my order, I came to the drive-up window to pay. I noticed an attractive, hand-carved cross hanging from the woman's neck, so I commented, "I like your cross." Her reply was a lesson to me in how simple it is to share one's testimony. She said: "Thank you. And I like the person who died on it for my sins. And I love the person who rose from the grave after having died on the cross." She easily could have left it at "Thank you." But her faithful witness touched me and drew me even closer to the Lord that day. **Greg Huffer, Lebanon, Indiana**

Isaiah 43:1-13

¹But now, this is what the Lord says--he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine.

²When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.

³For I am the LORD, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior; I give Egypt for your ransom, Cush and Seba in your stead.

⁴Since you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you, I will give men in exchange for you, and people in exchange for your life.

⁵Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west.

⁶I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' and to the south, 'Do not hold them back.' Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth--

⁷everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."

⁸Lead out those who have eyes but are blind, who have ears but are deaf.

⁹All the nations gather together and the peoples assemble. Which of them foretold this and proclaimed to us the former things? Let them bring in their witnesses to prove they were right, so that others may hear and say, "It is true."

¹⁰"You are my witnesses," declares the LORD, "and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me.

¹¹I, even I, am the LORD, and apart from me there is no savior.

¹²I have revealed and saved and proclaimed-- I, and not some foreign god among you. You are my witnesses," declares the LORD, "that I am God.

¹³Yes, and from ancient days I am he. No one can deliver out of my hand. When I act, who can reverse it?"