

Title: THE WITNESS OF WORD, WORTH, AND WATER, LUKE 3:15-22.  
(Chatham, NJ; 01/10/10, AM) [E – Topical Points; Cause and Effect Presentation]

Theme: Elements of John's experience with Christ provide his witness to Christ and comprise part of the testimony that brings people to belief.

Purpose: To explain that verbal witness combined with the proper attitude and baptism demonstrate in our lives the same witness to Christ that John had, and to encourage us to maintain such a witness.

Introduction:

1. Remember the narrative scheme we discussed last week: creation, fall, and redemption.
2. There is a bridge between the second two items which moves us from one segment to the next: the testimony about Christ.
3. This consists of the word, a spoken testimony.
4. It is further exhibited in John's recognition that he is not worthy of Christ, and so his attitude toward Christ plays a significant role in his witness.
5. And finally baptism serves as a witness; by submission to baptism witness is made concrete, an action that speaks louder than words.
6. We see the interplay of word, worth, and water in Luke 3:15-22.
7. Let's see how these relate to one another and link the fall with redemption.

I. Word – John's testimony, Luke 3:16-18.

A. John.

1. Don't look to me; look to the one coming after me.
2. The focus of John's witness was to point to Christ.
3. From birth John lived for this purpose.
4. In John 3:28-30 he describes himself as merely a friend, not the bridegroom.

B. The Father's witness.

1. The voice from heaven (22) is a word to the crowd.
2. That this is passed on to us demonstrates how important this voice was to the early church.
3. Because we believe them, this becomes another word of testimony.

C. Our word of testimony.

1. We set apart Christ as Lord, 1 Peter 3:15; we regard him as holy.
2. This is a word in our hearts from which our audible words flow.
3. With that in place, Peter has determined that we can now offer a witness to hope.
4. As John pointed to him, so our belief gives us a word of witness.
5. We aren't called to be lawyers for Christ—defending him and providing the perfect answer and most logical defense for our faith—rather we are called to provide testimony.
6. Don't be too concerned that you haven't given the perfect answer in every conversation. Your word of testimony is enough.

II. Worth – John's relationship to Christ, verse 16.

A. John under Jesus' Lordship.

1. Remember John 1:15 – Jesus ranks before him.

2. In Luke John recognizes that he relates to Christ by being in submission to him.
3. He is unworthy to untie his sandals. (Isaiah was deeply moved by the presence of God.)
4. John exhibits the perfect attitude of worship.
5. The hierarchy of the created order is preserved.

B. The witness of our attitude.

1. Christ is Lord, see 1 Peter 1:15 again.
2. When Jesus washes the feet of the disciples, John 13:13, he affirms his Lordship.
3. Our submission to him issues in honorable conduct (1 Peter 2:12) and gracious speech (Col. 4:6) among believers and non-believers alike.
4. The way we conduct ourselves must reflect reverent submission to Christ.
5. Someone has said, "The best answer to self-consciousness is God-consciousness." (Doan, *Sourcebook*, p. 26.)
6. A humble relationship with God breeds humility toward others.
7. Thus when we see ourselves as under the Lordship and guidance of Christ as John does, our witness is framed with appropriate attitudes toward others.
8. Because we worship, we witness well.

III. Water – Jesus is baptized, Luke 3:21.

A. A witness to follow.

1. This is extraordinary! Jesus was baptized.
2. His trailblazing begins with the simple act that symbolizes new birth.
3. That the early church saw fit to include his baptism tells us how important they considered baptism.
4. It is God chosen instrument by which a person enters into the new life in Christ; in the language used by John the Apostle, we are given the right to become children of God.

B. For us baptism functions as part of our witness.

1. By all legitimate understandings of the teachings of the early church, it is something we must do for our salvation.
2. It is a public testimony that we have changed course and have entered the pilgrim journey.
3. It says that we have rejected the life of sin.
4. It is also a personal plea to God for a clean conscience, 1 Peter 3:21.
5. It is a witness to others and to God.
6. We must not underestimate what a powerful witness it is.

Conclusion:

1. We have demonstrated here the witness of word, worth, and water.
2. They function to witness to the link between the fall and redemption.
3. God's witness legitimizes Christ and our words witness to God's truth.
4. Our worth is found only when we worship God.
5. And the water of baptism provides another signpost directing people to the Gospel of redemption.
6. Let your witness be audible and visible.