

God's Message from today's Scripture lessons

Witness through Hope and trust

(Job 19:23-27, Acts 3:1-10, Luke 24:26-43)

Writing to those believers who left Jerusalem because of the persecution and were scattered in Asia Minor Peter asked them to be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks them and to give the reason for the hope that they have with gentleness and respect (1Pet 3:15). The Bible also makes it very clear that the triune God wants His people to be His witnesses.

"You are my witnesses," declares the LORD (God the Father),
"that I am God (Is 43:11).

"You are witnesses of these things" said God the Son (Luke 24:48).

God the Holy Spirit is ready to make those who follow Jesus to be His witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8).

Everything in God's creation declares God's glory and so is a witness to His glory (Ps 19:1, Job 10:7-9). God created us for His glory in his glorious image (Is 43:7). When we all lost the glory because of our sin, Jesus came to suffer and die for us to bring us back to the glory we have lost and make us a new creation for the praise of His glory (Rom 3:23, Heb 2:10, Ep 1:12). He also gave us his glory (John 17:23) and asked us to be the lights of the world giving the light of the glory of the gospel (Mt 5:16, 2 Cor 4:4). Therefore Christian life is to be living witnesses of His glory. It begins with our response to His call to follow Him. Then He will make us and transform us according to His promise (Mk 1:17, 2 Cor 3:18).

The first thing He will do is, teach us about Him self like He is doing in today's gospel lesson. Then He will be coming with us as we go into the world obeying His great commission as he had done with Peter and John in today's epistle lesson. Some times God takes us into the furnace of trials to purify our faith like Gold which is refined in a furnace. This is today's Old Testament lesson. **But the point to take home is, Christian life is living**

in this world as witnesses of the Triune God. This is the message of today's Scripture lesson.

The Gospel lesson: Luke 24:28-43
The basis of our living hope is the Resurrection of Lord Jesus

The word **witness** is a Judiciary term. To **witness** is to tell in the court of law what one has seen with one's own eyes. The future i.e. the life or death of the convict depends on this. We are not aware of the fact that the lives of many people around us depend on our witness of the Lord. Luke wrote an elaborate letter to one man Theophilus **witnessing** the truth and certainty of the things about Jesus Christ that Theophilus was informed. Like wise many people around us are informed about the things concerning Jesus. Those things have to be confirmed by our **witness**. The faith, hope and love in us should kindle faith, hope and love in others. This is what is to live for Christ (2 Cor 5:15).

From the day we take up His yoke and begin to follow Him to learn from Him as His disciples (Mat 11:28, 29), he starts teaching us through His word. As we read Luke's gospel we find Jesus revealing Himself as the Son of the living God by his miracles, divine teaching and his death and resurrection. We also know from this Gospel how God gives eternal life to people, patiently waiting for them to return to Him, how he cares for weak people like women and those who are despised by the society. From the beginning it was always very difficult for people to believe the resurrection of Lord Jesus. But Lord Jesus who taught to those two on the road to Emmaus (with proofs from the Scriptures and His appearance to them) how His resurrection from the dead was the basis of our faith and hope, is also teaching us to day the same thing and also revealing himself to us so that we too can see the resurrected Lord in the scriptures and be **His witnesses**. All those whose inner eyes were opened by Jesus can see Him and understand this truth. Those who see Him will never keep quiet but will live for the rest of their lives **witnessing** to this fact like the early disciples Peter and John in today's epistle lesson. The point we have to note and learn from the gospel lesson is that the basis of our hope is Lord's resurrection. (Also read Rom 10:9).

The Epistle lesson: Acts 3:10
We are the witnesses of Lord's resurrection

Peter and John are among those twelve who were called as Apostles by our Lord and who went into the world with the anointing of the Holy Spirit in obedience to His great commission .We all know how they received the Holy Spirit as they were waiting in the upper room on the day of Pentecost

and how Peter boldly witnessed to the fact of the Lord's resurrection on that day. The church grew in number as many became disciples. In today's portion we find how a man born lame was healed by Peter and John on their way to the temple. The point is after that once again Peter proclaimed the resurrection of the Lord. We know the consequences after that were Peter and John's arrest, and the beating they received. In spite of the severe persecution the disciples went on to proclaim the resurrection and became martyrs. Note that the Greek word for witness is "***marturio***" from which the English word "martyr" has come. They were martyrs in the battle with Satan. But they won great victories in conquering the world for the Lord. In today's Old Testament lesson we find another soldier of God who fought with the enemy Satan who waged war against him invisibly with weapons which are invisible to us and won a great victory.

The Old Testament Lesson: Job 19:23-27 **The anchor of hope in trials is our Lord's Resurrection**

Those who want live for God will definitely face persecution. Job is the best example of how he witnessed to the goodness of the Lord by perfecting His hope (Heb 6:11, 12). He became the battle ground for God to fight the enemy and gave a great victory for God over Satan. In this process he faced such severe trials which nobody had ever faced. In this way Job's faith and hope were refined in the furnace of suffering. What Job uttered from that furnace had become prophetic utterance regarding Lord's resurrection. Yes our God is a living God. He is our redeemer whom we can see with our own eyes after we die. Because Jesus died and rose again it has become possible for us all to be born again into a living hope of eternal heavenly inheritance which can never perish, spoil or fade(1 Pet 1:3). Jesus was born as a witness to the truth of God and He wants to make us His witnesses if only we decide to follow Him. **Can God trust us like He trusted Job?** May God help us!

Life Application:

1. No body who is not born-again can ever witness to the hope Jesus gives to the mankind.
2. Many people around us are like the man born lame with out hope. Can we say like Peter and John, "silver and gold we do not have, but we have the powerful name of Jesus that gives hope"?
3. The hope in Jesus Christ is our anchor in our trials.
4. No body can be His witness with out following Him as His disciple.

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