

8.

The Church Covenant



The Pledge To Seek The Salvation Of Others

The third paragraph of the **Church Covenant** states in addition to maintaining spiritual life individually and in the home, that we pledge;

“to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances”

This is necessary in order for the church to be what it ought to be, and it is necessary for the church to do what it ought to do! No church is fulfilling God’s purpose that is not actively seeking the salvation of souls. It is the **duty**, the **responsibility**, the **obligation**, the **pledge** of each **church** member to actively seek the salvation of others, and to be a **witness** for **God** in the **place** and **circumstances** where God has placed them.

I. GOD’S PEOPLE ARE PLACED IN THE WORLD FOR THIS PURPOSE

A. God’s People Are To Be Witnesses:

The **Lord** said to Israel in **Isaiah 43:10** *“Ye are My witnesses”* and in **Isaiah 43:12** *“Ye are My witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God”* He told His **church** in **Acts 1:8** *“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth”* He told them in the commission *“Go ye therefore and teach all nations”* and *“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature”* He told them in **John 15:27** *“And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning”* From what **Jesus** said in **Matthew 5:13-16** it is obvious that **God’s** people are to bear public testimony! Paul instructed Timothy in **2 Timothy 1:8** *“Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord”* and it is declared in **1 Peter 3:15** *“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear”* GOD HAS ALWAYS HAD A WITNESS UPON THE EARTH! Israel was God’s primary witness during **Old Testament** times. The **church of the Lord Jesus Christ** is **God’s** primary witness in the world today! In order for the **church** to be the primary witness that they ought to be, THE MEMBERS THAT MAKE UP THE CHURCH MUST BEAR WITNESS AND TESTIMONY! In order for the **church** to be missionary-minded the individual members must be missionary-minded! In order for the **church** to be *“the light of the world”* and a *“city set on a hill”* the individual members must manifest a witness and testimony for the **Lord!** EVERY CHILD OF GOD IS A WITNESS! A **“witness”** is *“one who testifies for another, telling what he knows, telling what he has seen, telling what he has heard, telling what he has experienced”* Every

saved individual is left here, and put in different places to tell of the Lord! According to **Ephesians 1:6** every saved individual is to be *“to the praise of the glory of His grace”* To those who have been saved and added to one of the **Lord’s churches**-YOU HAVE BEEN SAVED TO BE A WITNESS OF GOD! YOU HAVE BEEN ADDED TO BE A WITNESS! The **church** of which you are member is to be **missionary**, and each one is added by the **Lord** to enable the **church** to be such! Again, a *“witness” “testifies for another”* ARE WE ACTIVELY TESTIFYING FRO GOD? A *“witness” “tells what he knows”* ARE WE ACTIVELY TELLING WHAT WE KNOW OF THE LORD? A *“witness” “tells what he has seen, heard, and experienced”* ARE WE ACTIVELY TELLING WHAT WE HAVE SEEN, HEARD, AND EXPERIENCED FROM THE LORD? ARE WE A FAITHFUL WITNESS OF THE LORD? ARE WE CONTRIBUTING TO THE MISSIONARY ENDEAVORS OF THE CHURCH? Or are we content to keep what we know of the Lord, what we have seen of the Lord, what we have heard of the Lord, and what we have experienced of the Lord within the four walls of a church building?

B. God’s People Are Placed By God For The Purpose Of Being A Witness:

God places His people in the lives of other people, and **God** places other people in the lives of His people for the purpose of His people bearing witness of Him! **God** causes the paths of people to cross for the very same reason! THERE ARE NO ACCIDENTS IN A WORLD GOVERNED BY GOD! An example of such is Namaan’s maid in **2 Kings 5:1-4**. A troop of **Syrians** one day march into Israel and this girl is taken captive and carried away by the soldiers. Something in her appearance commended her to the general and he selected her as a part of his household and she became a maid to Namaan’s wife. IT WAS NO ACCIDENT THAT THIS LITTLE MAID WAS IN THE HOUSE OF NAMAAN! God placed her in that house to be a witness and a testimony before Namaan and his family! YOU AND I ARE PLACED IN THE MIDST OF SPIRITUAL LEPERS FOR THE SAME REASON! Though she was a captive, an exile among the enemies of her God and her nation, and though she often yearned for her home, she did not sit still feeling sorry for herself, but determined that she would glorify God and be a witness of His grace! We as God’s children are placed in specific places, as the Hebrew maiden was in the house of Namaan, that we might be messengers of healing life, and salvation! She was full of love and a burden, and though she had been torn from her home and country by Namaan and his men, there seems to be no anger or revenge. She could see the greatness of Namaan, but she also knew that *“he was a leper”* and she manifested a loving and generous spirit toward the enemy of her country, she said *“Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! For he would recover him of his leprosy”* [verse 3]. SHE KNEW THAT THERE WAS HOPE! SHE KNEW OF ONE WHO COULD HELP NAMAAN! It was her simple testimony that sent Namaan on his way seeking for a cure! SHE HAD ACTED AS A SIGNPOST POINTING TO NAMAAN’S ONLY HOPE! We are to seek such opportunities where God has placed us! The people we meet, the people that cross our paths NEED TO BE VIEWED AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE FURTHERANCE OF THE GOSPEL!

C. God's People Are Placed In Certain Circumstances And Situations For The Purpose Of Being A Witness:

Paul was often placed in such circumstances and situations, and he referred to the purpose of such as *"the furtherance of the gospel"* [**Philippians 1:12-18**]. Paul assures the *Philippians* that God was working and blessing in the midst of what appeared to be dire circumstances. He tells them *"But I would ye should understand brethren that the things which have happened unto me (this has reference to the accusations against him, his arrest, and imprisonment at Rome **Acts 25-28**) have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel"* Paul was aware that nothing happens by chance or accident or apart from God's purposes, and knowledge! He says here that what happened to him simply gave him new and different opportunities to bear witness and testimony! He speaks of the **triumphant results** of his imprisonment. He mentions in **verse 13** that *Christ* was manifest *"in the palace, and in all other places"* He states in **verse 14** that many of the brethren had a greater **boldness** *"to speak the word"* and in **verse 18** he says that *"Christ is preached"* We need to view all happenings in our life (whether we like what has happened or not) AS OPPORTUNITIES TO BEAR WITNESS AND TESTIMONY! EVERY CIRCUMSTANCE THAT GOD BRINGS INTO OUR LIVES NEEDS TO BE VIEWED AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO MANIFEST CHRIST!

II. WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THIS PLEDGE

A. This Pledge Involves A Burden For Souls:

This pledge *"to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances"* involves a **burden**, a **care**, and an **interest** concerning the souls of men. Such is exemplified in the life of Paul [**Acts 17:16; Romans 9:1-3; 10:1-3**]. This **burden** and **concern** for souls involves much **prayer** for the salvation of souls, and an earnest desire for souls to be saved

B. This Pledge Involves Realizing Our Position In The World:

We must always be conscious and aware, no matter what our situation or circumstances, that we are here as the **witnesses** of *God*, as the **representatives** of *God*. Paul recognized himself as an *"ambassador for Christ"* [**II Corinthians 5:20**]. An *"ambassador"* is a *"representative of a sovereign"* If one is going to consistently *"seek the salvation of kindred and acquaintance"* there must be the constant realization of one's **purpose** and **position** in this life.

C. This Pledge Involves The Realization That Declaring The Word Of God Is The Ordained Means That God Uses To Save Sinners:

This is emphasized in **Romans 10:17**; and in **II Thessalonians 2:13-14**.

D. This Pledge Involves A Vivid Realization Of Christ's Love For Us:

Paul said in **II Corinthians 5:14** *"the love of Christ constraineth (compels, presses, and preoccupies) us"* The more that one realizes *Christ's* love for them, and the more that one realizes and is aware of what *Christ* has done for them, the more one will *"seek the salvation of kindred and acquaintances"*

E. This Pledge Involves A Realization Of What Awaits The Unsaved Sinner:

Paul stated that he was moved to “*persuade (reason with) men*” because of “*the terror of the Lord*” [II Corinthians 5:11].

F. This Pledge Involves Telling Others:

There are many biblical examples of people bearing witness and testimony before others. These examples are for our encouragement and for our instruction! Jeremiah said in **Jeremiah 20:9** “*His word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay*” (refrain). Peter and John had a similar experience, they said in **Acts 4:20** “*For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard*” THEY COULD NOT REFRAIN! Oh, to be a people who cannot refrain from telling what we know of the Lord! To be a people who cannot refrain from telling what we have seen, and heard, and experienced of the Lord! In **Acts 5:28** the *Jerusalem church* was charged “*ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine*” OH, FOR SUCH A CHARGE TO BE LAID AGAINST US! We read of the members of that first *church* in **Acts 8:4** “*They that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word*” OH, FOR EACH AND EVERY MEMBER OF THE LORD’S CHURCHES TO DECLARE THE GOSPEL EVERYWHERE THEY GO! We read of a *leper* that had been healed by *Christ* that went and told what he had experienced [**Mark 1:45**]. We read of the *demon-possessed man of Gadara* after he had been miraculously delivered by *Christ* that he went home and told what he had experienced [**Mark 5:19-20**]. We read of the first *disciples* telling others [**John 1:35-45**]. We read of the *woman at the well* telling other [**John 4:28-29**]. We read of the *crippled man of Bethesda* in **John 5** that the Lord healed and that he could not wait to tell the *Pharisees* that it was *Jesus* who had healed him [**John 5:15**]. EACH OF THESE INDIVIDUALS HAD A STORY TO TELL! And each one saved by the grace of God has a story to tell! It is a story about the **greatness of God**, about the **love of God**, about the **grace of God**, about the **kindness of God**, about the **faithfulness of God**, and about the **works of God!** It is a story about a **Saviour!** It is a story about **remission of sins in Christ!** It is a story about **life in Christ!** It is a story about **redemption in Christ!** It is a story about **peace and rest in Christ!** It is a story about **Christ as the only escape** from the curse of the law, from the guilt and punishment of sin, and the only escape from the damnation of hell! IT IS A STORY THAT EVERY PERSON NEEDS TO HEAR! Race does not matter! THEY NEED TO HEAR THE STORY THAT THE SAVED CAN TELL! Gender does not matter! THEY NEED TO HEAR THE STORY THAT EVERY SAVED PERSON CAN TELL! Education does not matter, both the learned and the unlearned THEY NEED TO HEAR! Position does not matter, kings and beggars THEY NEED TO HEAR! Those who live in palaces, and those who live in cardboard boxes THEY ALL NEED TO HEAR THE MOST WONDERFUL STORY OF ALL! If you are saved you know what every unsaved sinner needs to know DON’T KEEP IT A SECRET! If you are saved you have seen and heard what every sinner needs to see and hear! If you are saved you have what every sinner needs and you have experienced what every sinner so desperately needs to experience! Not to be telling the story is an act of irresponsibility [**Ezekiel 3:17-19**].

G. This Pledge Involves Living A Life Of Holiness:

One should never underestimate the power of a holy and separated life, and one should never underestimate the destructive influence of one who professes *Christ* and lives contrary to what they profess. The *Sanhedrin* could not help but notice the life that *Peter* and *John* were living [**Acts 4:13**]. The *demon possessed man* of *Gadara* went and told his family and friends what the Lord had done for him, AND HE DID SO AS AN OUTWARDLY CHANGED MAN! *Lot*, on the other hand, lived a worldly life before his family, and the result was that when he did testify of the Lord, they thought he was joking [**Genesis 19:14**].

We pledge “*to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances*” and this pledge is to be carried out to whoever God places and brings into our lives by His wise providence and in whatever circumstances God causes to come about in our lives by His wise providence! This is a pledge to be actively concerned, to be praying for the salvation of others, and to be actively telling others of the *Lord*. The church of *Thessalonica* serves as an example [**I Thessalonians 1:8-9**].