

Witnesses

“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” (Isaiah 43:10).

Scripture: Isaiah 43:8-13

Song: “Ye Shall Be My Witnesses”

The federal Witness Security Program (or Witness Protection Program) provides new identities and relocation services to witnesses who are at risk of harm for giving testimony against people who have committed serious offenses. Since 1971, more than 19,000 witnesses and their families have entered the program. Bearing witness to the truth can entail serious risk.

God’s people are witnesses. He calls on us to testify to others about who He is and what He has done. The Israelites in Isaiah’s day were told to proclaim the truth of God’s nature as being vastly superior to all other idols and false gods in their surrounding world. This was not a message that others would accept peacefully; proclaiming that message could result in violent persecution.

Sharing the gospel message and truths contained in Scripture can bring as much opposition today as it did in Isaiah’s day. Some Christians around the world can face imprisonment or death for sharing their faith. Others face cultural ridicule and rejection for their Christian testimony. Yet, all believers have God’s strength to persist because God has chosen us and holds us in His hand.

Father, fill me with courage to share Your message with my family, friends, and neighbors. In Jesus’ name, amen.

May 27–31. **Troy D. Stuart** is married and has three sons. He works with a global Christian education organization and previously worked at a school in Thailand.

God's Treasures in the Trash

He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap; he seats them with princes, with the princes of his people (Psalm 113:7-8).

Scripture: Psalm 113

Song: "I Will Serve Thee"

There are Christian schools in Southeast Asia that began by providing education to children who were living in the city dump. Today there are schools in African nations that serve refugee and displaced families who dwell beside mounds of trash. The impact of these Christian schools has transformed the lives of thousands of children and families who were on the brink of despair.

No people, no sins, and no situations are beyond the reach of God's grace. Moving from the refuse heap to the royal palace is possible with God. Today's passage affirms the incredible majesty of God's glory and His concern for the well-being of those who are not well-off materially. Our Father loves to lift the lowliest person to a place of honor in His kingdom.

Today we can praise our Heavenly Father for His transformation in our own lives. Our souls were once in the garbage heap before Christ redeemed us. The idea that we could move from our dire spiritual situation into Christ's kingdom may have seemed as impossible to us as the idea of a child moving from a toxic wasteland to a mansion. All of us, from all stations of life, have reason to worship the name of the Lord wholeheartedly.

Father, I praise You for the hope You've given me for today and for eternity. I am truly grateful! In Jesus' name, amen.

I'm Free!

The law was our guardian until Christ came that we might be justified by faith (Galatians 3:24).

Scripture: Galatians 3:19-29

Song: "There Is Power in the Blood"

More than 2 million North Americans will go to bed in jail tonight. Laws are meant to protect our rights and to help make us safe. But when we are in violation of the law, it can bring guilt and punishment. Currently, over 1.3 million lawyers in the United States are ready to use the law to protect or condemn defendants as necessary.

The law had a place in God's plan of redemption. In his letter to the Galatians, Paul says that the law was like a guardian keeping those under it in custody. It was a necessary tool that God utilized for a time. The law teaches us about right and wrong, and it shows us our guilt because of sin. But, through Christ, we are freed from this system of law, much like a child who grows into adulthood is released from the oversight of a guardian. Because Jesus died for our sins and rose again, we can now walk by faith in Christ, who alone justifies us before the Father.

Justification by faith is a statement of freedom. As believers in Christ, we have been set free from the punishment we deserve because of sin. That faith also fills us with Christ's power by the Holy Spirit, bringing about transformation and the fruit of righteousness in our lives.

Father, I celebrate the freedom I have in Christ! Thank You for liberating me from the power of sin. In Jesus' name, amen.

Nourishing Words

The lips of the righteous nourish many, but fools die for lack of sense (Proverbs 10:21).

Scripture: Proverbs 10:19-25

Song: “Lord, Speak to Me That I May Speak”

Valentine’s Day and Easter are two times during the year when candy becomes a star attraction. From boxes of assorted chocolates and candy Sweethearts in February to chocolate bunnies and jelly-beans in the spring, North Americans love their sweets! Each year, the typical American consumes more than a pound a week of added sugar. It is all about the sweet taste on our tongues! If the focus were on nutrition instead of flavor, husbands would demonstrate their love by giving their wives boxes of broccoli on Valentine’s Day, and children would find eggplant and cauliflower in their Easter baskets.

The proverbs from today’s passage emphasize the impact of speech. Words spoken from the mouths of people who seek godly wisdom and righteousness offer listeners a nutritious buffet. The contrast between the wise and the foolish in this passage is stark. God bestows blessings upon the wise, which they then confer on others. The fool, however, is like a person who only ever eats and serves candy; they offer nothing of value and ultimately suffer a miserable fate.

God’s Word offers us the spiritual nutrition we need to thrive as His people. Giving Scripture a significant place in our daily lives will result in wisdom and the spiritual insight to offer life-giving counsel to the people God has placed in our sphere of influence.

Father, thank You for giving me the Bible. I want to feast on its wisdom so I can, in turn, bless others around me. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Lurking Danger

[Jesus said,] “Store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal” (Matthew 6:20).

Scripture: Matthew 6:19-24

Song: “Treasure in Heaven”

When I was a senior in high school, I was the first person in my family to arrive home one afternoon. When I walked through the house, I sensed something was wrong. Soon, I saw that a bathroom door was kicked in. It became apparent that someone had robbed our house. We later discovered that the thief had waited in a car for me to leave the house that morning. I am thankful that this man only wanted to steal material things and did not desire to harm me personally.

Jesus teaches us that there is danger lurking around us. This peril is not a threat to our physical bodies, however; it is hazardous to our souls. The risk does not come from bandits; it comes from the cravings within our own hearts. We are surrounded by the allure of material things offered by this world. Jesus instructs us to turn our hearts toward storing up the spiritual treasures that count in the Father’s kingdom.

Today, take time to praise God for His provision and ask Him to help you keep His material blessings in proper perspective. Think also about the relationships that matter most to you and ask the Lord to help you invest in these people in ways that will bless them for eternity.

Father, thank You for all the ways You bless me materially. Help me keep material treasures in proper perspective. In Jesus’ name, amen.