

A Witness-y Pistle to My Grandchildren

John Faber

Dear Grandchildren:

As I write this letter to you we have just celebrated Easter Sunday. What we were celebrating was the fact that Christ rose from the dead on that glorious morning. But you know, nobody saw Him come out of that tomb! That's right; just nobody saw Him arise from the grave. And still the whole Christian world celebrated that event which nobody witnessed. The Gospels tell us what people were doing in that interval after the burial and before the resurrection of our Lord, but nobody was in that Garden when He arose. No one saw Him come out. That was quite different when Lazarus came out of his grave. Many people witnessed that! They saw that he was still wrapped in his grave clothes, and had to be helped out of them. But when Jesus rose from His grave no one had to help Him out of His wrappings. Those collapsed wrappings He left as a mute witness of His exalted state. No one even knew about it when it happened. How do we really know that He did arise from the dead? Witnesses, witnesses, witnesses and more witnesses; that's how.

You know what a witness it, don't you? If one sees an auto accident, and the police ask the bystanders, "Who saw what happened?" Then if you step forward and say, "I saw the whole thing. That blue car ran a red light and struck the green car"; the police then say to you, "We will call you to be a witness if and when this case comes to court." Then you will be a witness. That word, witness, is a noun, but the same spelling of that word can also be a verb, and then it means the story you will tell the court. So then, a witness may witness what he saw and heard.

Were there very many who witnessed that Jesus rose from the dead? Would you settle for a number like ten million? No? I wonder how many there were. First, there were two angels all dressed in white garments who spoke to the women visitors at the gravesite. They said, "He is not here, He is risen, as He said." Those three women quickly ran to tell the Disciples. That made five witnesses. Then the ten disciples told other people; that makes fifteen. Not having seen Him, they yet testified (witnessed) to His resurrection.

Let's see now how many witnesses can we count? Fifteen; now add the two men traveling to Emmaus and we get seventeen. We haven't reached ten million yet, but don't be in a hurry, we are coming to it. We are also told that Jesus showed Himself to over five hundred at one time. Let's say an exact five hundred; that makes five hundred seventeen. Later, on the way to Damascus, our Lord showed Himself to Paul in an eye-blinding vision. That counts up to five hundred nineteen. And we know that Paul became a witness to many, many people who became converts and subsequently witnesses. In Acts 1:8 we read that our risen Lord, in a time span of forty days revealed His resurrection with infallible proofs. And He said to His disciples, "Ye shall be witnesses of me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth."

Now if you can imagine how many people were converted through the preaching of the apostles (some three thousand at one time) and through the preaching of the following ministers of the Gospel to this day, and all of those converts becoming witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus, it almost makes one's head to swim. You see, don't you, that each Christian is a witness of the resurrection of Christ because we are risen with Him. If He had not risen we would still be in our sins. We confess that Christ is in our hearts, that His resurrected life is in us, like the song

says, "I know He lives for He lives within my heart".

Now the number of witnesses has leaped to an astronomical figure. I had suggested ten million, but the Book of Revelation speaks of the host of the redeemed to be such that no man can number. That leaves the number ten million in oblivion.

Now that it has been established that each and every Christian is a witness that we have the new, resurrected life of our risen Lord within us, what does that mean for us? It means that we, in all our life, in all our actions, in all our speaking must bear witness to that glorious New Life! The question which faces you, each one of my grandchildren is, "What kind of witness am I?" and, "What kind of witness should I be? ". The answer to that last question is not hard to find. It is found in detail in the third chapter of the letter to the Colossians, which begins with, "If ye then be risen with Christ . . . (and that identifies us) there follows a list of things we must do and must not do, if we are to be good witnesses. Will you please lay this letter down for a minute and sit down and read that chapter?

After having read it can you fit into that picture the viewing of normal TV? fare? In fact the fifth and eighth verses read as though the Apostle Paul had devoted an evening in front of that tube. All of the Ten Commands of God are violated in our watching, and enjoying that fare. Dare you place your words and deeds alongside this chapter? Hebrews twelve speaks of "a cloud of witnesses"; and you know that a cloud is composed of millions of droplets of vapor. Well, children, we are a part of that cloud, and you should now be ready for my final question before I sign off: "What kind of witness were you today?"

With love, Gramp.

P.S. I want to sneak in one more question: "What kind of witness do you resolve to be tomorrow? G.

Originally Published:
Vol 41 No 5 May 1982