

4. Verse 7 says that God sent John the Baptist to bear witness about the light (Jesus). According to this verse, what is the purpose of John's witness?

5. John the Baptist was not the light; and that the One who came after him "ranks before me" (v. 15). What does this tell us about a witness? About whom does a witness testify?

Content of the Witness

Read John 1:29–34.

6. What is the content of the message that a witness gives (vv. 29, 34)?

7. Why did the Holy Spirit, who descended as a dove at Jesus' Baptism, remain on Jesus (vv. 32–34)?

8. Read Romans 10:14–15. Why are witnesses to Jesus important?

Our Need for Witness

Some think that only those who have never heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ should receive the Church's witness. However, people in the Church *and* people in the world need the Church's witness! What is the chief content of that witness? God's gracious and free forgiveness of our sins for Jesus' sake.

1 John 5:7–8 says that the Spirit, the water, and the blood testify, or bear witness, to Jesus. This passage refers to the preaching of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments. For the sake of Jesus, God forgives our sins through the Word, both preached and in Holy Absolution; and through the water of Holy Baptism and the body and blood of Jesus in the Lord's Supper. In order to witness what the Lord has done for us, we Christians need first to be fed by God's Word and be forgiven of our sins through these Means of Grace.

9. Why do we Christians need to receive the Church's witness as much as non-Christians?

10. List the ways we receive the Church's witness in the Divine Service before we witness to our neighbors (those near us in their vocations) in the world.

Pray: Almighty God, You have called Your Church to witness that in Christ You have reconciled us to Yourself. Grant that by Your Holy Spirit we may proclaim the Good News of Your salvation, so that all who hear it may receive the gift of salvation; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen (*LSB*, p. 305).

—WITNESS

—MERCY

—LIFE TOGETHER

Sept. 18

Sept. 25

Oct. 2



Trinity Lutheran Church 9-18-16
 Norman, OK. www.tlcnorman.org
 “One Family –
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Lesson 1

WITNESS



Emphasis	Greek	Hebrew	Latin
 WITNESS	μαρτυρία <i>(martyría)</i>	תְּעוּדָה	testimonium
 MERCY	διακονία <i>(diakonía)</i>	קְהָלִים	ministerium
 LIFE TOGETHER	κοινωνία <i>(koinōnía)</i>	קָהִלָּה	communio, societas

WITNESS

MERCY

LIFE TOGETHER



IN CHRIST,

FOR THE CHURCH

AND THE WORLD

In his 1872 Synodical Conference sermon, C. F. W. Walther emphasized that “the chief object of [our] joint labor” in the kingdom of Christ is “the salvation of souls” (*At Home in the House of My Fathers*, p. 197). The Lord saves souls, but He locates His saving Gospel in the Church, and He uses people within the Church as His instruments to proclaim the Gospel. The Holy Spirit creates and sustains saving faith through the witness (*martyría*) of the Gospel by others. The specific focus of the Church’s witness is the person and work of Jesus Christ, who through His life, sufferings, death, and resurrection earned for us the forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

The Greek word *martyría* is a term taken from the courtroom; it originally meant something similar to “eyewitness testimony.” In the New Testament, *martyría* describes the eyewitness testimony made by the apostles and others who saw and heard Jesus preach, teach, and heal. At His ascension, Jesus told His apostles, “You will be My witnesses” (Acts 1:8; see also Isaiah 43:12). The testimony about Jesus and His Gospel began with His eyewitnesses and expanded to include those who came to faith through their preaching and teaching. We Christians today are beneficiaries of their witness! As the Body of Christ, the Church continually bears witness to Jesus. Likewise, every Christian bears witness and testifies about Jesus in the vocations to which God has called him or her. Further, in the Early Church, those who gave their lives for the sake of the Gospel, that is, bore witness about Jesus through their deaths, were called martyrs, derived from the Greek word *martyría*.

1. How were the apostles Jesus’ witnesses?

2. List some examples of how the corporate Church, as well as individual Christians, bear witness to Jesus today.

Sent as a Witness

Read John 1:1–18.

3. “There was a man sent from God” (v. 6). In what way or ways is “being sent” different from “going on one’s own”?