



## SESSION FIFTEEN

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SENT FOR MISSION

The word "witness" probably makes you think of someone testifying in a courtroom. Or if you're in a religious context, perhaps you think of someone sharing their testimony or persuading others about their faith. These ideas are similar to what we find in the biblical text, but the word and theme of witness tell a much bigger story.

# CAN I GET A WITNESS?

In the Bible, a witness is someone who sees something amazing or important. If this person begins to share what they've seen, we call this "bearing witness." Between the Hebrew and Greek translations, the word witness has been used between 201 and 207 times.

## The basic meaning

**Noun**- when referring to a person, it means "someone who sees or experiences something." When they refer to something, it means "testimony" or "evidence".

**Verb** - most often meaning "to bear witness" or "share about what one has seen or experienced."

There are lots of ways that these terms were used throughout Bible history. Here are some examples.

## Witness as a legal word

Just like English, the Hebrew words for witness and to bear witness frequently occur in a legal setting, often in the context of transactions. See the following examples.

- Jeremiah buys land: "I signed the deed, sealed it, got witnesses, and weighed the money on scales" (Jeremiah 32:10).
- Two or three witnesses: "A single witness shall not suffice against a person for any crime or for any wrong in connection with any offense that he has committed. Only on the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses shall a charge be established" (Deuteronomy 19:15)

These words are also often used with reference to Jesus. We can also see that more than one witness is still the standard legal process

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- Two or three witnesses: "But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses" (Matthew 18:16).
- Witness against Jesus: "Now the chief priests and the whole council were seeking witness/testimony against Jesus to put him to death, but they found none" (Mark 14:55).
- False witnesses against Jesus: "And some stood up and bore false witness against him, saying..." (Mark 14:57).

## God as a witness

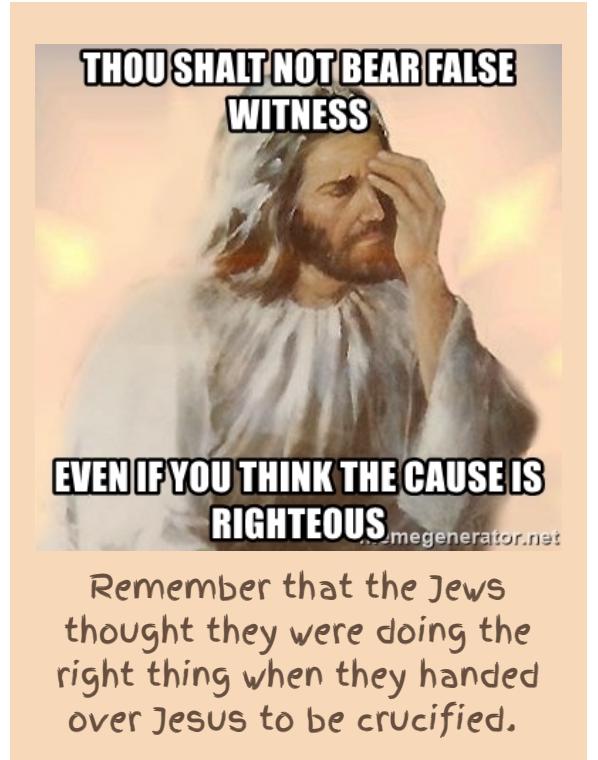
God can also be referred to as a witness for or against someone, as can the heavens and earth (the covenant witnesses). In these cases, the emphasis is that both the judging and the consequences will be fair and upheld. Here are some examples

- Job is certain that he is innocent before God: "Even now, behold, my witness is in heaven, and he who bears witness/testifies for me is on high" (Job 16:19).
- Heaven and earth as the covenant witnesses: "I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live" (Deuteronomy 30:19).

What's interesting about this designation of God as a witness is that in the New Testament, the Father, the Spirit, and Jesus are all referred to as witnesses to the truthful identity of Jesus:

- The Spirit bears witness: "But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me" (John 15:26).
- God as witness: "If we receive the witness/testimony of men, the witness/testimony of God is greater, for this is the witness/testimony of God that he has borne concerning his Son. Whoever believes in the Son of God has the witness/testimony in himself. Whoever does not believe God has made him a liar, because he has not believed in the witness/testimony that God has borne concerning his Son" (1 John 5:9-10). • The Spirit (and apostles) have witnessed Jesus' resurrection: "And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him" (Acts 5:32).

There are many ways that we can use and be witness. These are only a few examples that are found in your Bible.



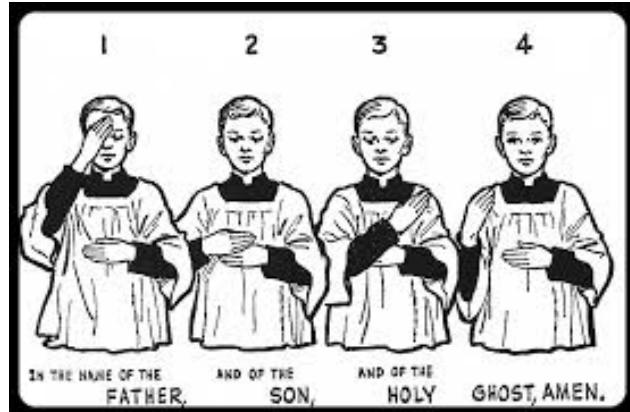
*So what does  
this have to do  
with me?*

**Answer: Everything**

Read Matthew 28:18-20

What did you hear in these couple of verses? This last verse from the Gospel of Matthew takes place after the Resurrection of Jesus and when he first appeared to the remaining eleven disciples. Three out of the four Gospels end with this same type of story we call "The Great Commission." The call to witness to the Good News is in all four Gospels, it is just more obscure.

In these short verses, Jesus first gives testimony to himself, reminding his disciples who He is and making that a stated solid fact, something that was not outright stated before in the scripture. That Jesus is the Son of God and nothing less than the Son of God. Next, we hear for the first time in all of scripture one of the most basic, fundamental prayers of our Catholic faith...



Jesus also asks that we make disciples of all nations and baptize with this formula, which is still the formula we use today, "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." And commanding us to teach each other all that Jesus has taught us. He also assure us that He will be with us always, until the end of the age.

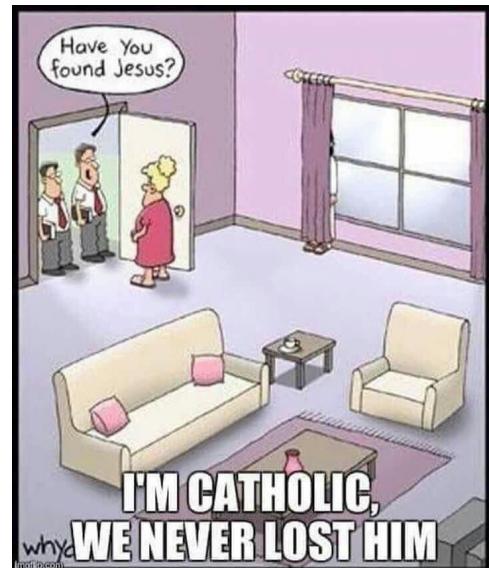
This Command by Jesus, it was never meant to sound or feel like a request. Like when your mom asks you to put away the laundry, it might sound polite, but it is not optional.

## **So what is "The Great Commission?"**

The Great Commission means that we are all called to be witnesses to the Good News of Christ! Through our Baptism and Confirmation we are all called to be sharers in the same mission as the Apostles to "go and make disciples of all nations."

**What is the first  
thing that comes  
to mind when you  
think of  
evangelization?**

**What prevents you  
from sharing the Good  
News?**



# What is the Good News?

Answer: That God loved us so much that He became one of us to reconcile us back to Him, through his life, his death, and his resurrection.

In our day to day busy life, we can be easy to forget the joy of knowing Jesus and to forget to share the Good News with others

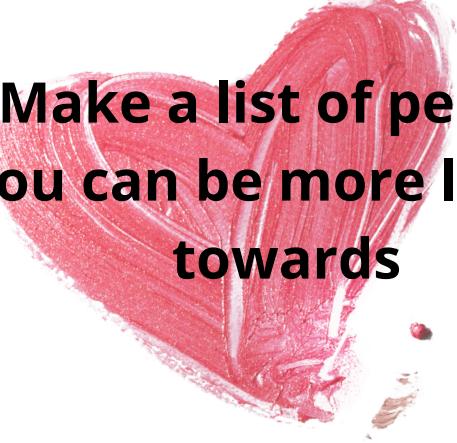
→ But also it can be difficult as sometimes we don't know how to bring up or share about Jesus in our everyday conversations.

Perhaps what is preventing us from sharing the Gospel is fear

- Fear of what others will think and say about us (rejection and persecution)
- fear that we will say something wrong (failure)
- fear that we won't be able to answer every question
- fear of not being taken seriously (b/c young, or a family member, etc.)

## Group Discussion

1. Have you ever shared the Gospel with someone else?
  - a. How did they react?
2. Who in your life is most difficult to share your faith with?
  - a. Why do you think that is the case?
3. What aspects of the faith do you feel comfortable explaining & sharing with others?
4. What aspects of the faith do you not feel comfortable explaining & sharing with others?



**Make a list of people  
you can be more loving  
towards**



**Brainstorm ways you can share  
the Gospel with people in your  
life**



**MY THOUGHTS**



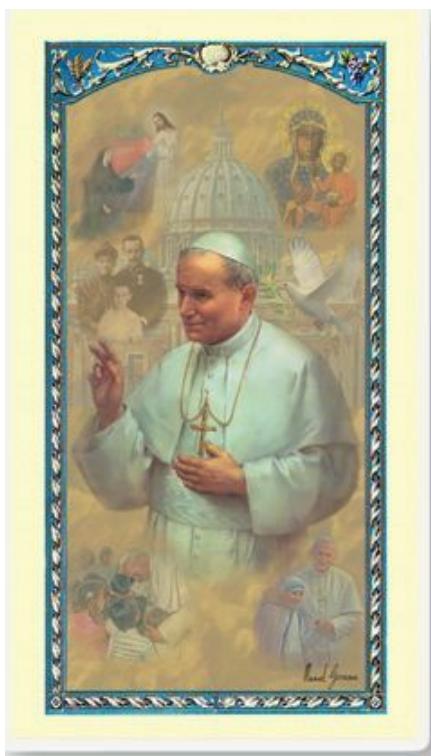
# MEET *John Paul II*

Karol J. Wojtyla, known as John Paul II since his October 1978 election to the papacy, was born in Wadowice, a small city 50 kilometers from Cracow, on May 18, 1920. He was the second of two sons born to Karol Wojtyla and Emilia Kaczorowska.

During the Nazi occupation, he was forced to work in a quarry (1940-1944) and then in the Solvay chemical factory to earn his living and to avoid being deported to Germany.

Throughout his life and his time as the Pope, St. John Paul II was the most public Pope the world had ever seen. He met with not only other clergy and world leaders, but also

made himself available to the everyday faithful. He made good use of the tools available to him to bring the Good News to the world. He especially appealed to the youth of the World for his personality, welcoming and warmth. He did not change the rules to suit the youth, he instructed the youth with a Christ-like love and compassion that inspired them to grow in their understanding of their faith.



St. John Paul II began World Youth Day in 1986 and the familiar chant would rise into the air as the crown would yell, "JP2, we love you!" or "John Paul 2, we love you!"

## Facts & Stats

**Feastday:** October 22

**Patron:** World Youth Day

**Birth:** 1920

**Death:** 2005

**Beatified:** May 1, 2011

**Canonized:** April 27, 2014