

January 18th, 2026

“Called to Testify”

Isaiah 49:1–7; Psalm 40:1–11;

1 Corinthians 1:1–9; John 1:29–42

Today the Word of God is calling us—both individually and as a congregation—to reclaim one of the simplest, most powerful practices of the Christian life:
Testifying to Jesus Christ.

You and I are living in a world full of voices.

Voices of anger.

Voices of fear.

Voices of division.

Voices promising meaning, identity, and hope,
but never able to deliver.

And into this loud and crowded world, God calls God’s people to lift one clear, steady, holy voice; a voice that says, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”

The Scriptures today from Isaiah, the Psalms, Paul, and John’s gospel about John the Baptist form one unified message:

God has called you.

God has formed you.

God has gifted you.

God has sent you to testify to Jesus Christ.

Let us walk through each passage and hear how God shapes witnesses for God’s glory.

Isaiah opens with a breathtaking statement:

“The Lord called me before I was born; while I was in my mother’s womb God named me.”

Friends, hear this:

Your testimony does not begin with your strength; it begins with God’s calling.

God knew you.

God chose you.

God named you.

God set you apart.

God says, “I have named you. I have chosen you. I have prepared you... before you were born.”

Your testimony is not an accident. Your calling is not random. Your purpose is not small.

Isaiah then expands the calling to: “*I will give you as a light to the nations.*”

Not a light to your comfort zone.

Not a light only to people like you.

A light to the *nations*, to neighborhoods, workplaces, relatives, strangers, skeptics, those far from God.

Some of us feel too small to testify. Some feel too wounded. Some feel too shy or too busy. Some feel too unworthy.

But Isaiah says: God began your calling before you had fears, failures, or excuses. Your testimony begins with God's "Yes" over your life.

Psalm 40 moves us from calling to lived reality.

The psalmist says:

"I waited patiently for the Lord...

He inclined to me...

He lifted me from the pit...

He set my feet upon a rock...

He put a new song in my mouth."

This is testimony. Not polished. Not perfect. But real.

The pit is not poetic; it's honest.

Maybe your pit was: Fear, Depression, Addiction, Financial strain, Grief Loneliness, A health crisis, A broken relationship. The pit is the place where you could not rescue yourself.

The Psalmist says: "He inclined His ear..." God leaned down. God heard. God cared. God acted. God *always* hears the cry from the pit.

"He put a new song in my mouth."

Your rescue story—big or small—becomes the sermon someone else needs.

I've seen it in God's people: The woman who said, "I battled anxiety every night—but God sent me peace like a warm blanket."

The man who said, “I lost my job, but God’s people carried me until God opened a new door.”

The child who said, “I prayed for a friend at school because I was lonely, and God sent one the next day.”

The widow who said, “Grief comes in waves, but Jesus sits with me in every wave.”

Testimony isn’t just “God saved me.” Sometimes testimony is, “God is sustaining me today.”

Why does testimony matter?

The psalmist says: “Many will see and fear and put their trust in the Lord.”

Your testimony becomes someone else’s courage.

Your story becomes someone else’s hope.

Your song becomes someone else’s invitation to believe.

Paul writes to a church full of flaws—divisions, immaturity, arguments.

Yet he begins with this incredible declaration: “You are not lacking in any spiritual gift.” And: “The testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you.”

What a comfort: God does not wait for perfect believers to create powerful testimony. Corinth was messy... but gifted

They had drama—but they also had grace.

They had conflict—but they also had calling.

They had immaturity—but they also had spiritual gifts.

And so do we. Grace equips us.

Paul says God has enriched you “in speech and knowledge.”

In other words:

God gives courage to the shy.

God gives words to the tongue-tied.

God gives compassion to the overwhelmed.

God gives wisdom to the inexperienced.

God gives strength to the weary.

There are quiet testimonies happening all around us:

The person who writes notes of encouragement that God uses to soften hearts.

The neighbor who keeps an open table—one dinner at a time becoming an invitation to Jesus.

The teenager who prays with a friend at school, trembling but faithful.

The elder who visits the sick, carrying Christ’s presence into hospital rooms.

The member who fixes a broken furnace or bakes a casserole or opens their car to drive someone to treatment.

All of it is testimony.

All of it is grace.

All of it is God shining through His people.

Here we reach the heart of our calling.

John the Baptist sees Jesus and cries out: “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”

This is the center of all Christian witness. We do not point to ourselves; our goodness, our success, our moral victories, our righteousness.

We point to Jesus.

To His mercy.

To His cross.

To His resurrection.

To His saving love.

John had a following. Crowds came to him. People admired him. Yet when Jesus walked by, John said:

“Don’t look at me. Look at Him. He is the Lamb of God.”

John’s testimony leads Andrew to Jesus. Andrew then finds his brother Peter and says: “We have found the Messiah!”

And that testimony, just a few words, sets in motion a chain reaction that changes history.

The moon has no light of its own.

It only reflects the sun.

Our testimony is like that.

Any goodness others see in us—
any light, any kindness, any hope—
is borrowed light from Jesus.

We simply reflect Him.

Your role is not to save anyone.

Your role is not to convince or pressure or coerce.

Your role is simply to say: “Come and see Jesus.”

Isaiah tells us: *You are called.*

Psalm 40 tells us: *You have a story to tell.*

1 Corinthians tells us: *You are gifted by grace.*

John the Baptist tells us: *Point people to Jesus.*

This is who we are: A people who testify.

This week, ask God to place one person on your heart.
Just one. Pray for them. Love them well. Share your story.
Invite them: "Come and see."

Trust that the God who called you will speak through you
for the salvation of another.

Amen.