

WCCC 2001

Our Testimony 4

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Thank God He has brought us to the last session of this conference. You know so far as I am concerned, every time after the Lord's table, I find it very difficult to speak. I feel that as we come to the Lord Himself, He has already satisfied us and there is nothing that we need to add on. So I always feel it very difficult to speak after the Lord's table. And furthermore, this is the last session. I know brothers and sisters are anxious to return, so I will try to be as brief as I can. Now this time our theme is the testimony of God, the testimony of Jesus Christ and our testimony. Our brother Christian shared with us the testimony of God. The testimony of God is none other than what He testifies of Himself. There is none other who can testify of Him unless He testifies of Himself first because He is the beginning. It is by His revelation that we know Him. So the testimony of God is what He testifies of Himself. And His testimony is true. His testimony is eternal. His testimony never changes. His testimony sustains forever.

He gave the Ten Commandments to His own redeemed people Israel. And the Ten Commandments are called the testimony because by the Ten Commandments He revealed what He is. The first four commandments reveal that He is the holy God; He is the only one, unique, absolute, and supreme and there is none that can stand by Him. He is altogether by Himself. He is most holy. And then He reveals Himself as the God of righteousness to us in the last six commandments. So in giving the Ten Commandments to the children of Israel, He committed His testimony to His redeemed people. As our brother said, on God's side it is His testimony, but when it reaches us it becomes law because it is something that we need to keep in order to

please God. And our brother also mentioned that the ark is also called the ark of testimony. We know that when Moses was on the mountain receiving the Ten Commandments, He was there forty days and forty nights and the children of Israel were on the plain of Sinai desert. So after such a long time, the children of Israel said to Aaron, 'we do not know what happened to our leader, Moses; we need someone we can see to lead us. Now that Moses was gone, make us a God that we may have someone visible and tangible'. And Aaron made a golden calf. And when the people saw that golden calf, they said 'this is our God. This is the God who will lead us'. So Aaron proclaimed a festival that this golden calf was none other than Jehovah God. Even before the law reached the children of Israel they already sinned. When Moses came down and saw the situation, He was very indignant. He cast the two stone tablets of law and they were broken. In other words, they have already broken the law of God. They have already violated the testimony of God. Before the testimony could reach them, they already have broken the law. So brothers and sisters, none is able to keep the law. No one is able to maintain the testimony of God. Thank God He is a God who is gracious and merciful. He forgave them. And He asked Moses to make two stone tablets and go up to the mountain the second time and God said 'I will write the words on the stone tablets'. So Moses went up to the mountain again and there God wrote the Ten Commandments on the stone. God commanded Moses to make an ark to put the Ten Commandments, so that the Ten Commandments might be kept intact. Here you see the testimony of God was something that man could not keep. It could only be kept in the ark. And our brother mentioned that the ark stood for our Lord Jesus. So the testimony of God is kept in Christ Jesus. No one can keep the testimony of God; it can only be kept in Christ Jesus. In other words, the testimony of God is fully realized in Jesus Christ. So the ark is called the ark of the testimony.

Our brother Hosea shared with us the testimony of Jesus. What is the testimony of Jesus? We find the testimony of Jesus is what Jesus told of Himself. If we testify of ourselves, ours is not true because we do not know our heart. But the testimony of Jesus is different. He said 'even if I witness of Myself, My witness is true because I know where I come from and I know where I am going'. He knows He is the son of God. He knows that He is one with the Father. He knows He is from the beginning. And He knows where He is going to. He is going back to His father. He will return to His glory. He will be the King of kings and Lord of lords. He will receive everything as His inheritance. He knows where He is going and because of that He can witness of Himself. Nobody really knew Him. He said no one knows me except the Father. And no one knows the Father but Me. We find the Father testified of Him. Three times the heaven opened and a voice from heaven said, 'this is My beloved Son, in whom I found My delight'. The Father testified of Him and He testified of Himself and by their testimony we know Him. So our brother told us that through the Book of John, we know what the testimony of Jesus is. The testimony of Jesus is what He said of Himself. He said I am the great I am. You remember in the Old Testament time when God appeared to Moses in the burning bush, Moses asked what His name was: what can I tell the people of your name. And the angel in the burning bush said, 'I am that I am'. This is My memorable name. This is a very strange name. If some people ask you who you are, you said I am, and you have not finished saying it yet. But God said I am, because He is infinite. I am that I am. I am self-existent and I am everything. Whatever you need, that is what I am. That is what our Lord Jesus is. He is the great I am and we can come to Him and find that our all is in Him. Our brother told us that in the Book of John there are seven great 'I am'. I hope you will go to the Gospel of John and find out the seven great I am. What is the testimony of Jesus? Our brother said the testimony of Jesus is what He has done. There are

seven signs in the Gospel of John. You know the word miracle in the Gospel of John is sign. What is a sign? You know when we came to this university we looked for signs that would tell us the way to this conference. At a turn you got lost, but then you found a sign telling you to turn that way. So that was how we found the place. When we were in group fellowship time, there was no sign on the road. There was a sign in the place saying this is the brother's meeting. But on the way, there were no signs. And I was lost. Now that is what a sign is. All the miracles of our Lord Jesus were not just wonders but they were signs. Through these miracles, they pointed you to someone or somewhere. They all pointed you to the Lord Himself; how He is the resurrection and the life, how He is the light of the world and He is everything. And you find that these signs coincided with what He said. Now that is the testimony of Jesus.

Our testimony – we mention again and again we have nothing to talk about ourselves. If we talk about ourselves, it means we do not know ourselves. When God appeared to Job, you remember that Job talked a lot. And his friends talked a lot. Everybody was talking until God appeared. God said 'who used all these words of innocence to conceal my counsels'. And God appeared to Job. And Job said 'now I said once and no more. Formally I hear about you but now I see you. I repent in dust and ashes. I abhor myself'.

So brothers and sisters, our testimony does not mean we testify ourselves. What is our testimony? Our testimony is none other than the testimony of God and the testimony of Jesus. The testimony of God and of the Lord Jesus is entrusted to us. And that is what we need to bear testimony to. We live for that testimony. We speak for that testimony. The testimony is everything to us. Brothers and sisters, how we need the Lord to work in our lives if we are to bear this testimony. The apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 4 mentioned about this ministry. Now we can broaden it and say for this testimony by the mercy of God we faint not. You know whenever

you think of the testimony of God and the testimony of Jesus it is so tremendous that we will faint. How can we be the vessel of this testimony? There is no way; it is only by the mercy of God. Paul said otherwise we faint. But what do we do? We have to lay down everything that is contrary to the testimony. We will allow the Lord to work in our life that we may be one with the testimony we bear and that we may commend ourselves to the conscience of other people. When they hear our testimony, when we talk about the Lord Jesus, they can see that we are people under the lordship of Christ and that our life is one with the testimony. If ever the testimony of Christ is veiled, it is veiled in the heart of those unbelieving so that the radiance of the glory of our Lord Jesus may not be shone upon them. May the Lord help us that we may be one with the testimony we bear.

Now this is the last session. We will like to fellowship together of the conflict and conquest of the testimony. This testimony is a tremendous one. In the whole universe there is no testimony greater than this because it testifies of God and what He is. It testifies of our Lord Jesus, who and what He is. So in the whole universe, this is the greatest testimony. And it has the greatest effect because its effect is eternal. It is not something temporal. So brothers and sisters, because of the greatness of this testimony, you find there is the fiercest of conflicts. The conflict of the ages is over this matter of the testimony. It is not in things that are visible. These are just outward appearances and they are deceiving but behind this theme in this universe throughout the ages, there is a conflict going on and it centers upon this testimony – the testimony of God and the testimony of Jesus. And this is our testimony.

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. At that time everything was harmonious. The heaven declared the glory of God and the firmament His work. In Romans 1 we are told what we know of God is from the things visible. From the created things, from creation we

know the eternity and divinity of God. When you look at the stars, the mountains and all the created things, you can see the eternal power of God and how powerful He is. And you can realize from His divinity that He is different. He is divine. You can see all these things. So in the beginning when God created heaven and earth, it was so beautiful and harmonious. There you find the angels; they worshipped God, probably under the leadership of the archangel. There was peace. And there you find God is God. All creations worship the creator God. In Revelation 4 when God gave John a revelation of the glory of God in creation, you find the four creatures cry out, 'Holy, Holy, Holy. Glory be to God; for He has made all things, and by His will they were and they have been created'. Everything was created by Him. Everything was created by His will; everything was created to express Him in some way. So everything worshipped God. What a glorious time it was. The testimony of God was there. He was the creator, the maker of all things. And everything worshipped Him and acknowledged Him as God and gave Him the place that He should have.

But unfortunately one of the archangels, Lucifer, rebelled against the testimony of God. Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 opened up a window to look into what happened before this world. Now it tells us that there was an archangel called Lucifer, the brilliant star. Probably he was the highest created creature at that time. The bible said he was created perfect. He was given the highest position any created thing can ever had because he was the anointed cherub over the throne of God. He was beautiful. He was talented. And God gave him great power and position. When he was created, he was perfect. But gradually something happened. Gradually unrighteousness was found in him. Because of all his work, pride began to rise in him. He was above the other angels. Even Michael, the archangel had to acknowledge this one was higher than he was.

Lucifer began to be proud. He was not satisfied what God has given him. In Isaiah 14 he said, I

will, I will, I will, I will. He wanted to be equal with God. He wanted to be God. He wanted to be worshipped. The testimony of God was challenged for the first time. But the testimony of God stood. This archangel was cast out of heaven and all that was under his dominion entered into judgment. That archangel turned himself into Satan. People ask all the time whether God created Satan. No, God did not. God created an angel but that angel turned himself into Satan. We do not know how much time has passed. The earth became void, empty and covered with water. But God is love. As a hen He hovered over the waters and He restored this earth to be habitable. And on the sixth day God created man, you and me. It is in His own image.

According to His likeness He created man. Why? Angel failed. Now He created man to be the vessel of His testimony. But how our forefather again challenged the testimony of God. God's word is true. Whatever He said is true. 'The day you eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, you will surely die'. Adam and Eve ate the fruit of that tree because Satan deceived them and said they would not die. They listened to Satan instead of listening to God. And surely on that day, they died. Yes, their body lived on for hundreds of years, longer than any of us. And they begot many sons and daughters. They were so alive. They produced so many sons and daughters. So is the word of God wrong? No, on the day they ate they died. Their spirit died. The contact with God was gone. God is spirit and one has to worship Him in spirit. But now the spirit was dead and there was no communication with God. And they were driven out of the Garden of Eden.

Brothers and sisters, since that time you find the testimony of God suffered. But God never gave up His testimony. Not only creation testifies that God is God. We find human history is testifying that God is God. One day when the apostle Paul came to Athens, he saw an altar with an inscription that said 'to an unknown God'. So Paul used this as an excuse to introduce to

them the one and true God. This is in Acts 17. And Paul said, 'the God who created the heaven and the earth, He does not dwell in the temple made by hand nor does He need anyone to supply Him or help Him. Instead He gave life and breath to all. Everything comes from Him. Not only that but in one blood He made all nations'. We know all nations come from one blood even though today you find so many nations and so many different appearances. But they all come from one blood. With one blood God made all nations and by His determination, He determined the time and boundaries. Why is China in that place? Why is America in the continent of America? Why did this nation last thirty years and the other nation last five thousand years? It is God, He foreordained time and boundaries. He is the one who raised up people to the throne. He is the one who kept them down. He rules over all. You know all the changes in this world and all history are under His control. We said history is His story. That is true. Even human history, any change or any happening are His story. Nebuchadnezzar thought he was great. He thought he could do anything. He thought he did it all. And God said to him through Daniel, 'Remember the heaven still rules all'.

Brothers and sisters, Hitler or anybody else or any nations, no matter how and what they did, the testimony of God is there. God is God. He rules over all. Of course He is challenged but no matter how He is challenged, His testimony is still there. Look at our Lord Jesus. When He came to this earth He was the testimony. And how Satan hated it. At His birth Satan tried to kill him. Herod wanted to kill the child. When our Lord began His ministry, He went to His native place, Nazareth and you find His own people wanted to throw Him down the cliff. But He walked straight out. Brothers and sisters, you found at Calvary, the enemy thought that now they had gained an upper hand and they finally could get rid of Him. But before our Lord died, He shouted 'it is finished'. The work was done. The enemy was cast out. That enemy was

defeated. And then this testimony is entrusted to the church. We already mentioned how the church in the beginning bore this testimony in a glorious way. The enemy came in with persecution. But the more he persecuted the stronger and the wider the church spread. During the Roman Empire end times, they persecuted the Christians. They tried to wipe out Christians and the testimony of Jesus. But as our brother mentioned, it was the Roman Empire that was finished. The church, the vessel of God's testimony stood. So the enemy changed his tactics. He tried to use deception. He tried to slip in heresies. He had to corrupt the children of God. And again it seemed that he was successful. If you read church history, it seemed that he was so successful. When you come to the dark age, you find that even the simplest truth was gone. The bible was chained and the people thought they had to work their way to heaven by accumulating merits. But very few had enough merits to go to heaven when they died. And that was the reason after one died, one had to go to purgatory. And then Satan invented a way. How can you be delivered out of purgatory? And there was where mass comes in. One could be delivered by doing mass and by saying some rosaries; by praying to Mary and the saints because they were saints and they were canonized. They had more merits than they needed to go to heaven and so if you pray to them they would give you some and delivered you out of purgatory. And at the time of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, during the time of Martin Luther, they sold indulgencies. You know the pope wanted money. So they said 'here were those indulgencies. If you committed certain sins, you pay certain amount of money and then your sins will be forgiven and you will come out of purgatory. When the money was dropped into the box, the soul flies out from there'. So people bought into indulgencies.

Brothers and sisters, this was Christianity. The enemy seemed to succeed in destroying the testimony of God. And now, if you read the recent history of the church, you read the official

church history. But there is another hidden history of the church. You will find even from the first century onward, there was never a time that God did not raise up people for the testimony of Jesus. You find in church history when the church failed in the testimony, God raised up some people, a minority. They returned to the bible. They returned to Christ. They returned to the unity of the body of Christ. You find in church history they were hidden because they were persecuted by the official church. Their books were being destroyed. So people barely knew about them. And they were martyred so their history was hidden. But thank God their hidden history was gradually revealed. We now know more of their hidden history like the Novatians, the Waldenses etc. When you read their stories you will be moved. Their desire was to return to Christ and return to the bible. They met together in simplicity. They loved one another. But they were persecuted by the official church. Many were martyred yet they were faithful even until death. Throughout the generations you will find these people. The testimony of Jesus was always there but they had to pay with a great cost.

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the reformers Martin Luther, John Calvin, and all these people looked at the darkness of Christianity and they began to rise up and speak out. They maintained that we needed an open bible. Justification is by faith but it was not allowed by Christianity at that time. How they were persecuted! We all know about the reformation. Reformation was trying to return to God. But reformation did not go all the way. Why? Because during the reformation it was so difficult. The reformers received the help of those princes and they could not go all the way. Martin Luther knew very well the universal priesthood of believers. He knew very well how the church was. It is the body of Christ. It composes of none other but the true believers. And he really longed for that. He tried to make a church within the church. He saw many of them within the church were not believers. They were baptized. But they were non-believers.

How could they serve God? How could they be priests? It was impossible. How could they come together as one and worship God? He saw it but could not do it. Even during his time there were some people who saw that the revelation did not go far enough. They wanted to return to the bible. They wanted to return to Christ. But they were persecuted, not just by the Catholics, but by the so called protestants. They were put to death. They were called Anabaptists because they said infant baptism was wrong. That baptismal regeneration was wrong. You have to believe and then be baptized. So they were called Anabaptists. You know what the official church did to them? They said you want to baptize? Then the officials put a stone around their neck and threw them into the water and drowned them. Brothers and sisters, they paid the price for the testimony of God and the testimony of Jesus. Thank God throughout the centuries there were people who were moved by the love of God. They were not content with the outward appearance. They wanted to go back to Christ. They wanted to go back to the word of God. They wanted to follow the Lamb wherever He goes and they paid the price. The Moravians were persecuted by the official church. They had to flee for their lives. So finally Zinzendorf opened his estate. However, they could not agree with each other. Some emphasized this truth, others emphasized that truth. They just could not be one. But thank God, one day when they came together before the table, the Spirit of God moved them, the love of Christ met them and they were melted into one. And from the Moravians every one of four went out to preach the gospel. They went out with a profession to support themselves. In order to preach the gospel, some sold themselves to be slaves in order to share Christ with the slaves. Brothers and sisters, there were the Methodists, the Wesleyans, the Puritans; they were persecuted and they fled to this country for the freedom of worship. You can find this in the

history in every stage and every generation. Even though the testimony of God and of Jesus was challenged, and yet it always stands.

Even to this day it is still true. In the book of Revelation, you find the call for overcomers come from God. When the general is falling away from the testimony of Jesus, the Spirit of God is speaking to the church 'He who overcomes'. At the end of the first century, the call came out. You know John himself is an overcomer. He was exiled to the Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus. Now the call to overcome is to overcome the present falling condition. The call is to overcome falling away from the testimony of Jesus and to return to the testimony of Jesus. Thank God that in every generation and in every age there were overcomers who maintain the testimony of God and the testimony of Jesus. In Revelation 6 you find at the sound of the opening up of the fifth seal, there were souls under the altar. They were slain and martyred for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus. These are the martyrs throughout the centuries and they are under the altar. When God begins to make a new move; when God is going to change this age of grace to the age of judgment, He has to have some people to agree with Him. You know today is the age of grace. When our Lord was crucified, He said 'Father forgive them, for they know not what they are doing'. When the first martyr Stephen was stoned to death, he cried and said 'Lord, do not put the sins on them'. Throughout the ages and centuries, whenever one martyred for the Lord, they asked God to forgive the people. Why? It is because this is the age of grace.

But now God is going to change the age from grace to judgement. So you find it begins with the prayer of these souls. 'Lord when will you avenge yourself'? When you come to chapter 7, you have numerous people standing before the throne with white robes, with palm leaves, and there they glorify the Lord. Who are they? They are those who have gone through tribulations. They

have washed their robes. They are the overcomers of the ages. God will wipe away their tears because they shed much tears on earth and not for themselves but for the testimony of Jesus. Throughout the ages, there are those who maintained the testimony of Jesus – that Jesus is Lord and He is Lord of all. They paid their life for the testimony. You come to chapter 12, and you see that man child who is the overcomers in the last ages. They overcome the accusers by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony. And they love not their life even unto death. They maintain the testimony of Jesus. And when you come to chapter 14, you find the 144,000 standing with the Lamb on mount Zion. It is not the mount Zion on earth; it is the mount Zion in heaven. 144,000 is a whole number. Jehovah witness said the 144,000 has already been fulfilled. So if you are Jehovah witness you are second citizens. But the 144,000 is a numberless whole. It is a multiple of 12, it means whole. So you find that God has His overcomers, even though the call to overcome is individual and yet the overcomers bear the witness as one. They follow the Lamb wherever He goes. When you come to chapter 15, you find there were some who stand on the glass sea. And they sing the song of Moses and of the Lamb. They were those who were martyred during the great tribulations. When you come to chapter 19, you will find there was a shout in heaven. The marriage of the Lamb has come. And His bride made herself ready. He will be given the dress of white, shiny linen.

Dear brothers and sisters, who is the bride? She is ready. You know in a marriage, it is always the bridegroom anxiously waiting for the bride. I know only one occasion where the bride waited for the bridegroom and that was Hudson Taylor's grandfather. On the day of his marriage, he suddenly realized that was a great responsibility. So he went to the pew to pray. He prayed and prayed and forgot about the time. When he ended the prayer, it was already late. The bride was there waiting. So he hurried back to the chapel and got married. Our Lord is the

bridegroom. He is waiting for His bride. But the bride is not ready. You know I believe in the first century, if the bride was ready He would have come. But they were not ready. The bridegroom waited for them. Twenty centuries have passed. The bridegroom in heaven is still waiting. How anxious He must be. But we are not ready. Our wedding garment is not ready. That embroidered, white shining linen is not ready. The Holy Spirit patiently works needle by needle Christ into our life. What a slow work. But the Holy Spirit is so patient. He is embroidering Christ into our life so that we may have our wedding garment. But thank God, the day has come. The bride has made herself ready by grace. The overcomers of all the ages have maintained the testimony of Christ. They are one with Christ. They have grown into maturity. They are conformed into the image of Christ. How can Christ marry an immature woman? The church has to be mature. It will be mature first in the overcomers and then marriage of the Lamb will come. Oh, what a joyous time it will be. I believe the marriage feast lasts for a thousand years and then into eternity. And in eternity all who are the Lord's shall become the bride of the Lamb, the holy city, Jerusalem. So brothers and sisters, in spite of the fact that the testimony of God and the testimony of Jesus have been challenged, yet thank God, it always stands. In spite of the failure of the vessel, somehow by God's grace it will be restored to perfection. So brothers and sisters, let our prayer be, 'come Lord Jesus'.

Come Lord Jesus. Make us ready. That Thy heart may be satisfied. Once again we offered ourselves to Thee. Work in us until Thou can see Thyself in us; not only individually but corporately. Oh that Thou may come. Please, come Lord Jesus. We ask in Thy precious name.  
Amen.