

**THE DIVINE SUBPOENA**  
**TESTIFYING AND WITNESSING FOR JESUS**  
**By Dr. Steve Daily**

The story is told of an older Jewish couple who had been blessed with a son, who was their only child, when they were in their fifties. When their boy was seven they moved from Israel to the U.S. and found it very difficult to assimilate into American culture. So when it came time to prepare for their son's BarMitzva party they asked him what he would like for a present and he told them he wanted a Kawasaki. They were both embarrassed that they did not know what a Kawasaki was, but didn't ask him to explain, because they didn't want to appear more out of touch than he already considered them to be. So they went to their Orthodox Rabbi and asked him what a Kawasaki was. But, he explained that he purposely kept himself separate from wicked western culture and was unable to help them. But, he was sure that the Reformed Rabbi down the street would know. So they asked the reformed Rabbi, but he too had just arrived from the old country and apologized that he was not yet up on American culture and did not know what a Kawasaki was. But, he guaranteed that the Liberal Rabbi around the corner would be able to help them.

So they went to the synagogue of the liberal Rabbi who wasn't in, but his secretary said, "Maybe our youth pastor can help you." So they went to his office, and found him wearing blue jeans, with long hair down on his shoulders, and racing pictures all over his office walls. When the couple told him that their 12 year old son wanted a Kawasaki for his BarMitzva and they did not know what a Kawasaki was, he laughed and said, of course I can help you. A Kawasaki is a Japanese motorcycle and your son no doubt wants one for a dirt bike. Then he showed them a picture on his wall of a Kawasaki in a dirt bike race. So they thanked him and were about to leave when he said, it was a pleasure meeting you, but could you answer one question for me before you go? Sure they said, if we can, so shaking his head, he said, "What in the world, is a BarMitzva?"

This story illustrates what can occur when a religion or faith goes in two opposite directions at the same time. Almost every denomination has seen this happen to some degree. Today we can find Catholics, Lutherans, Methodists, Baptists, and even Adventists who belong to the same denomination, but hold views that are polar opposite in their belief systems. I know Adventists who still believe that every word that Ellen White ever

wrote came directly from God, and I know other members of the Adventist Church who teach in some of our universities who do not believe that Jesus is God or that God is even a personal Being. This is what we call pluralism – radically diverse beliefs that exist within the same subculture. Obviously this phenomenon makes witnessing a more challenging endeavor. What form of a religion do you try to convert people to? And are you going to be embarrassed if you bring them to church and they hear something very different than what you yourself believe?

Today we look at the eighth fruit on our kingdom tree, and my wife wants me to clarify, again, what these fruits are all about. We are not talking about the fruit of the Spirit, there are nine of those found over in Galatians 5:22-23. We are not talking about our basic beliefs here at kingdom Life Fellowship, those can be found on our web site and are similar to other full gospel churches. The 12 different varieties of fruit on our kingdom tree represent 12 themes that I believe God has called us to emphasize and live out here at KLF that are part of the unique calling and destiny that He has given us. Every church should have its own unique identity or distinctive purpose for existing, even though it shares or subscribes to general Christian beliefs that other churches share. So the 12 fruits on our kingdom tree make us unique as a church, no other congregation will have these 12 same themes emphasized the way that we do. I hope that is helpful.

Anyway, the eighth fruit on our tree is testimony and witness. He gives us each a testimony and calls us each to be His witnesses. But, I don't have the gift of evangelism pastor. Oh that's right, I forgot, Jesus said, Go ye, all ye who have the gift of evangelism, and teach all peoples, right! No, Jesus said, You – talking about all His followers – are my witnesses. And He equips each of us through the Holy Spirit to be His witnesses. He says, in His Word, "Be ready, at all times, to give an answer to anyone who wonders about the hope that lies within you" (1 Peter 3:15). He doesn't say, be ready to give proof texts. He doesn't say, be ready to teach Bible studies you've prepared, but to share the hope within you. Our primary way of witnessing is sharing our own testimony. Sharing what He has done, and is doing, for us. My son has started a testimony site on the internet where friends and other people he gets to know can share their testimony, and I have already been very inspired reading it.

My first point this morning is **1) That God has as many different ways for us to witness as He has people in His kingdom.** When Rodney Howard

Brown's Great Awakening tour was with us about a year ago, they had a particular style of witnessing that was very effective, but that was also very different than what most of us were used to. They went out on the street to complete strangers and read them a gospel script and prayer. It is remarkable to me that in just 15 days we sent out 357 trained volunteers from our church and saw 21,618 make decisions for Christ, many of those in convalescent homes. But, we only saw a few baptized into our local church as a result of those meetings, so many considered them to be a failure. What I will never forget is meeting with their leaders each morning up by my office and joining hands with them (there were about 15 of us) and just praying in tongues for about 20 minutes until the presence and power of God was so great that we could hardly wait to get downstairs and out on the streets.

Was their method in my comfort zone, absolutely not! Did I learn a great deal from them that I will never forget? Absolutely! The one thing I don't want to do this morning is to tell you how to witness, but I do want to emphasize that God has called all of us to be His witnesses. So it is up to each of us to discover the unique way that God is calling us individually and corporately to be His witnesses. Last week we asked you to think about what your passion or dream is, as a puzzle piece in this church. This morning I want you to think about how that passion or dream connects with inviting others to be part of our spiritual family. All of us are called to witness in different ways. If you like the more traditional approaches, I recommend Bill Bright's excellent book, *Witnessing Without Fear*. It has a lot of practical suggestions and helpful illustrations that I have found valuable. It contains the four spiritual laws and other step-by-step methods that Bill himself developed. His approaches have led more people to Christ than those of any other single person that I know of, so they are good to be aware of whether you use them or not. If you prefer a more relational approach, Bill Hybels has written a tremendous book entitled, *Becoming a Contagious Christian*, that demonstrates how relational approaches are often more effective than doctrinal approaches.

I think I've mentioned how when we do our street ministry on Thursday nights we often find ourselves right across the street from a booth which has a huge sign that reads "ARE YOU GOING TO HEAVEN OR HELL?" So one evening before our group arrived, I went up to their booth to see where I was going. But, every time they asked me a theological question, I asked them a relational one, and before we finished I had convinced them to invite

their pastor to our weekly ministerial meeting, I haven't seen the guy yet, but at least I tried. A third approach is to get into the heads of people who have become disillusioned with church and who are put off by traditional types of Christian witness. There are a ton of good books that can help us better understand such people, but I am going to recommend just three that I have found to be particularly helpful. The first is entitled, *Unchristian*, by David Kinnaman, who is out of the Barna Institute and has provided a wealth of research in this book that is extremely valuable for every kingdom Christian to know. I highly recommend it.

If you're not a person who likes to read about facts and research studies, but prefers stories or a narrative approach, I recommend a book called, *So You Don't Want to Go To Church Anymore*, by Jacobsen and Coleman. It is extremely thought provoking and takes you on a journey that will change the way you think about church and witnessing for the rest of your life. Another book that shows what happens when churches lose their passion for witnessing is Thomas Reeves well written volume entitled, *The Empty Church: Does Organized Religion Matter Anymore?* I'm going to talk about a fourth approach to witnessing, which I believe is closest to the method of Jesus, when I make my last point this morning. But, for now, I want to stress again, that God has as many different ways for us to witness as He has people in His kingdom, and He may well have a unique, creative custom made approach just for you. Our job is to listen, learn and obey.

**2) If we don't have a personal testimony ready to jump out of us, we definitely need to pursue more of Jesus.** Every week before I begin our School of Ministry class, I ask if anyone has a praise report or a testimony from the past week to share. And we always have some volunteers who speak up. But, some time ago an attendee privately said, I never feel like I have a testimony to share, I just feel like I am struggling with too many things. And after we talked and prayed, the person was about to leave my office and saw a copy of my book, *The Heresies of Jesus*. "That's a strange title, what's it about?" I said, "you are welcome to borrow it and to give me your feedback." A few weeks later the person came back to my office and said, "that book changed my life. I found it all very interesting, but the one part that most changed my life was the only section you didn't write." "Really," I said, "What was that?" "It was the illustration you used on page 128. You have to share this with the entire church because it made such a difference in my life." So here goes.

In that place between wakefulness and dreams, I found myself in the room. There were no distinguishing features save for the one wall covered with small index-card files. They were like the ones in libraries that list titles by author or subjects in alphabetical order. But these files, which stretched from floor to ceiling and seemingly endlessly in either direction, had very different headings. As I drew near the wall of files, the first to catch my attention was one that read, "People I have liked." I opened it and began flipping through the cards. I quickly shut it, shocked to realize that I recognized the names written on each one. And then without being told I knew exactly where I was. This lifeless room with its small files was a crude catalogue system for my life.

Here were written the actions of my every moment, big and small, in a detail my memory couldn't match. A sense of wonder and curiosity, coupled with horror, stirred within me as I began randomly opening files and exploring their content. Some brought joy and sweet memories; others a sense of shame and regret so intense that I would look over my shoulder to see if anyone was watching. A file named "Friends" was next to one marked "Friends I have betrayed." The titles ranged from the mundane to the outright weird. "Books I have read," "Lies I have told," "Comfort I have given," "Jokes I have laughed at." Some were almost hilarious in their exactness: "Things I've yelled at my brothers." Others I couldn't laugh at, "Things I have done in my anger," "Things I have muttered under my breath at my parents." I never ceased to be surprised at the contents. Often there were many more cards than I expected. Sometimes fewer than I hoped. I was overwhelmed by the sheer volume of the life I had lived. Could it be possible that I had the time in my twenty-five years to write each of these many hundred thousand or even millions of cards. But each card confirmed this truth. Each was written in my own handwriting. Each signed with my signature.

When I pulled out the file marked "Songs I have listened to," I realized the files grew to contain their contents. The cards were packed tightly, and yet after two or three yards, I hadn't found the end of the file. I shut it, shamed, not just by the quality of the music, but even more by the vast amount of time I knew that file represented. When I came to a file marked "Lustful thoughts," I felt a chill run through my body. I pulled the file out only an inch, not willing to test its size, and drew out a card. I shuddered at its detailed content. I felt sick to think that such a moment had been recorded. An almost animal rage broke on me. One thought dominated my mind: "No must ever see these cards! No one must ever see this room! I have to destroy them!" In an insane frenzy I yanked the file out. Its size didn't matter now. I had to empty it and burn the cards. But as I took it at one end and began pounding it on the floor, I could not dislodge a single card. I became desperate and pulled out a card, only to find it as strong as steel when I tried to tear it.

Defeated and utterly helpless, I returned the file to its slot. Leaning my forehead against the wall, I let out a long self-pitying cry. And then I saw it. The title read "People I have shared the gospel with." The handle was brighter than those around

it, newer, almost unused. I pulled on its handle and a small box not more than three inches long fell into my hands. I could count the cards it contained in one hand. And then the tears came. I began to weep, sobs so deep that the hurt started in my stomach and shook through me. I fell on my knees and cried. I cried out of shame, from the overwhelming shame of it all. The rows of file shelves swirled in my tear-filled eyes. No one must ever, ever know of this room. I must lock it up and hide the key. But then as I pushed away the tears I saw Him. No, please not Him, not here. Oh, anyone but Jesus. I watched helplessly as He began to open the files and read the cards. I couldn't bear to watch His response. And in the moments I could bring myself to look at His face, I saw a sorrow deeper than my own. He seemed to intuitively go to the worst boxes. Why did He have to read every one? Finally, He turned and looked at me from across the room. He looked at me with pity in His eyes. But this was a pity that didn't anger me.

I dropped my head, covered my face with my hands and began to cry again. He walked over and put His arm around me. He could have said so many things. But He didn't say a word. He just cried with me. Then He got up and walked back to the wall of files. Starting at one end of the room, He took out a file and, one by one, began to sign His name over mine on each card. "No!" I shouted rushing to Him. All I could find to say was "No! no," as I pulled the card from Him. His name shouldn't be on these cards. But there it was, written in red so rich, so dark, so alive. The name of Jesus covered mine. It was written with His blood. He gently took the card back. He smiled a sad smile and continued to sign the cards. I don't think I'll ever understand how He did it so quickly, but the next instant it seemed like I heard Him close the last file and walk back to my side. He placed His hand on my shoulder and said, "It is finished." I stood up and He led me out of the room. There was no lock on its door. There were still many more cards to be written.

I don't share this illustration to produce, or to play on guilt, that is not the kingdom way. But, we all need to be reminded from time to time of the words in 2 Corinthians 13:5. "Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? – unless indeed you are disqualified." That is why I keep asking the question, are we growing in ever increasing hunger for Him? Are we growing in ever increasing humility before Him? And are we growing in ever increasing faith in Him? Growth means change. It means becoming more like Him and less like the world. A few months ago when we were on vacation in Denver, my son introduced me to a web site called cent sports which seemed like innocent fun and gave us some friendly competition. But, it became a distraction and I had to give it up, even though I enjoyed it. After, I read the illustration I just shared again for the first time in several years, I heard the Lord direct me to Ephesians 4:29, "Don't let any unwholesome word come out of your mouth." Yikes! "That's a tough one Lord and I have a long ways to go to get there." If any of you don't, I need

your secret. Because the tongue is such an amazing force, it contains both the power of life and death (Proverbs 18:21) as we often talk about in prayer meeting. And I want to speak life all the time, but find that very difficult.

The devil has many distractions for us these days. Some that seem innocent, but still waste our time, and others that are clearly destructive. The more we are committed to kingdom living the more he will try to hook us with his tempting bait. The more we are involved with ministry, the more he targets us. I read some interesting research out of Fuller recently which found that ministers are more prone to addictions than people in the general population. I know of a group of intercessors who just focus on praying for those in ministry. They give out hangers like this to those involved in doing ministry as they commit to praying for whatever temptations you struggle with. Their motto is, no matter what your hang ups, give them to Jesus and He will carry you through. Our testimony is about what He has done for us, and if we don't have one on the tip of our tongues we are probably not spending enough time with Him.

**3) The primary witness of Jesus was a supernatural witness that flowed out of His love and compassion for people.** As we finish off this last point this morning, I want you to remember the letters CSI. They stand for **compassion, supernatural impartation, and infectious discipleship.** This was the primary way that Jesus witnessed. Again and again, we read in the Scriptures that Jesus was moved by compassion. He had compassion on the masses before He ministered to them (Matthew 9:36). He had compassion on the demoniacs before He healed them (Mark 5:19). He had compassion on the widow of Nain before He raised her son from death (Luke 7:13). Everywhere He went Jesus took the compassion of God with Him first. And it was this compassion that then released the supernatural impartation of God – the miracles, signs and wonders that continually accompanied His ministry. Every miracle was birthed out of compassion for people, whether it was His words of knowledge to the woman at the well or His turning water into wine to save the embarrassment of the wedding hosts.

People saw His love, they then experienced His supernatural impartation, and finally they were infected with the desire to follow Him. We lead people into infectious discipleship, first by flowing in His love and compassion, and secondly, consequently, by moving in His supernatural power. An emphasis on moving in the gifts or bringing heaven to earth in faith by calling forth His supernatural power, that does not focus first and

foremost on love, will ultimately fail. For as Paul put it, I can manifest the most mighty miracles, speak with the greatest tongues, demonstrate the most amazing gifts, move forth in the most fabulous faith, but if I do not major in compassion and love I am nothing more than a noisy gong and clanging symbol. I can remember the first day I went out to do street ministry, I was pretty petrified, even though I tried not to show it. What if I don't get anything for these people, I'm going to look like a fool. And if the pastor looks like a fool what are the others going to think. But, that kind of thinking isn't love, it is self-consciousness and fear.

It was only when the Lord convicted me to "Let My love for these people fill your heart, that His words began to flow through me." That is why it is better to witness in love and compassion, than in supernatural power. Yes, God is raising up a powerful bride, but she will be worthless to Him until she learns to love. Loving people into our midst is more important than demonstrating God's power to them. I believe He is going to do both through us, but loving people must come first. That is why Kip's idea of just inviting people to dinner can be so powerful. During the last month I've been going door to door in different neighborhoods and re-visiting some convalescent homes, just asking people if I can pray for them and inviting them to join in our 24/7 interdenominational prayer clock. Most people are pretty receptive when they see you are not trying to sell them anything or trying to get them to join any particular group or church. Sometimes they even ask for my card. I know I don't want to walk into "the room" and see that my smallest file is "people I have told about Jesus." Our Lord doesn't say, "You are my witnesses – if you have the gift of evangelism," for He has called us all, with His, Divine Subpeona.