

▼ **Be a Witness For Jesus: Tell Everyone What You've Seen and Heard - Part 2**
Rocklyn Clarke Sr. - Sunday November 14, 2021

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<http://www.LifeChurchBoston.org/>

- **Read the Passage: Acts 21:37 - 22:29**

▼ **Sermon's Purpose (what listeners should do)**

- Understand the context:
- Embrace a witnessing community
- Understand the components of a testimony.
- Learn how to give your own testimony.
- Use your resources tactically.
- Commit your life

▼ **Understand the context:**

- ▼ Paul is bringing gifts for the poor among the Jerusalem churches.

- Romans 15:25-27
- 2 Corinthians 8 - 9

- ▼ After delivering the gifts to Jerusalem, Paul planned to have the Romans aid him in getting to Spain.

- Romans 15:23-33

- ▼ Paul is ready to die to complete his mission even though the Holy Spirit has warned him in every city that prison and hardship await him.

- Acts 20:22-24

- ▼ Paul is committed to the Whole Will of God.

- Acts 20:25-31

▼ **Embrace a Witnessing Community**

- ▼ The first witnessing community

- Jesus formed a community before his crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection.

- ▼ After his resurrection:

- Jesus appeared to faithful members of his initial community.
- Jesus also appeared to others who would become part of his witnessing community.

- Jesus appeared to Paul, but sent Ananias, a member of a witnessing community, to initiate him into the community.
- ▼ What kind of witnessing community did Paul have?
 - Paul was a part of several communities over the years.
 - ▼ Paul is consistently interacting with communities of believers (i.e. churches)
 - ▼ Ephesian Elders - Acts 20:17-38
 - Paul shares parting teaching.
 - He has proclaimed to them the whole will of God.
 - He informs them that he will never see them again.
 - ▼ Disciples in Tyre - Acts 21:3-6
 - Paul and his team seek out the disciples.
 - Through the Spirit, they urge Paul not to go to Jerusalem (vs. 6).
 - ▼ Disciples in Ptolemais - Acts 21:7
 - Paul greets and stays with the disciples.
 - ▼ Disciples in Caesarea - Acts 21:8-14
 - Paul stays with Phillip the evangelist.
 - Agabus predicts that Paul will be bound and handed over to the Gentiles.
 - The disciples implore Paul not to go to Jerusalem.
 - Home of Mnason - Acts 21:15-16
 - ▼ The Jerusalem Church - Acts 21:17-26
 - Paul reports on the results of his ministry to the Gentiles.
 - James and the Jerusalem elders celebrate what God has done in Paul's ministry.
 - They urge Paul to join in the purification rites of four local Jewish believers.
 - Paul submits to their request.
 - Paul sought out the community of believers wherever he went.
 - Paul is committed to the community of believers even when it's inconvenient and despite their imperfections!
 - ▼ At this point in his story, Paul is not alone. He is traveling with a witnessing community:
 - This is the end of a trip that begins in Acts 18:23.
 - Luke appears to have joined Paul during his 2nd missionary journey - Acts 16.
 - ▼ Acts makes several references to Paul's team:
 - Timothy and Erastus - Acts 19:22.

- Gaius and Aristarchus - Acts 19:29
 - Sopater, Pyrrhus, Aristarchus, Secundus, Gaius, Timothy, Tychicus, Trophimus - Acts 20:1-6
 - Trophimus is still with Paul in Acts 21:29.
- ▼ What kind of witnessing community do you have?
- We will use our Life Group time to explore this further.
 - What has your past experience with witnessing communities been?
 - What shape is your current community in? How effective a witnessing community is it?
 - What will it take for your group to become the witnessing community God wants it to be?
- ▼ What responsibilities do you bear in all of this?
- Children in a household start out having everything done for them.
 - Eventually, children are given household responsibilities.
 - Mature believers (i.e. disciples) take responsibility for ministry.
- ▼ **Understand the Components of a Testimony**
- ▼ Four Components:
- Life before following Christ.
 - Realizing the need to follow Christ.
 - Deciding to follow Christ.
 - Life now.
- ▼ Paul's life before Christ
- Paul was (and is) a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia.
 - Paul was brought up in Jerusalem.
 - Paul studied under Gamaliel and was thoroughly trained in the Jewish law/tradition.
 - Zealous for God.
 - Persecuted Christians to their death, arrested others and threw them into prison.
 - Paul got permission to go to Damascus to bring Christians back to Jerusalem for trial.
- ▼ How Paul realized he needed to follow Christ.
- At noon, as he approached Damascus, Paul saw a bright light and fell to the ground.
 - Jesus appeared to him and said: "Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me?"
 - Jesus told Paul to go to Jerusalem and wait for further instructions.
- ▼ How Paul began following Jesus.

- Saul has been blinded by the light and is led back to Jerusalem by his companions.
- Ananias lays hands on Saul to restore his sight, passes along Jesus' instructions for Saul, and baptizes Saul.
- ▼ What Paul's life is like now (from Acts 20)
 - ▼ Acts 20:18-21
 - Serves the Lord with humility and tears despite persecution from fellow Jews.
 - Doesn't hesitate to preach anything that would be helpful.
 - Taught publicly and from house to house.
 - Declared to Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.
 - ▼ Acts 20:22-24
 - Paul is facing prison and hardship but he considers his life worth nothing to himself.
 - He wants to finish the race and complete the task the Lord has given him of testifying to the good news of God's grace.
 - ▼ Acts 20:25-31
 - Paul has not hesitated to proclaim the whole will God.
 - Warned them night and day with tears for three years.
 - ▼ Acts 20:32-35
 - Has not coveted anyone's silver or gold or clothing.
 - He has worked for everything he and his companions needed.
 - Taught by example that we must help the weak
- ▼ **Learn how to give your own testimony:**
 - ▼ Content
 - Introduction (e.g. "May I tell you the greatest thing that ever happened in my life?")
 - Your life before Christ
 - How you realized that you needed to follow Jesus.
 - How you began following Jesus.
 - Your life now:
 - Conclusion
 - ▼ Your life before Christ
 - What was your basis for deciding right or wrong?
 - What were your most important goals?

- What did you believe about Jesus? About God?
- ▼ How you realized that you needed to follow Jesus.
 - ▼ Followers are characterized by whom they follow and the determination with which they follow. Motivation is a typical characteristic in movies.
 - In “The Wizard of Oz” - What does Dorothy want?
 - In “Star Wars” - What does Luke want?
 - In “Black Panther” - What does T’Challa want?
 - In “Die Hard” - What does John McClane want?
 - A follower of Jesus wants to understand and pursue Jesus’ agenda! The “energy” for this comes from Jesus through them - NOT from you! Merely enjoying church does not make someone a follower of Jesus.
 - When and how did the concept of following Jesus become real for you?
- ▼ How you began following Jesus.
 - Not everyone comes to Jesus the same way.
 - ▼ Can you confidently say that you are a follower of Jesus?
 - If not, stick around - keep coming!
 - ▼ If so, do you remember a distinct point in time when you began following Jesus?
 - If so, tell it!
 - If not, describe the earliest time that you can recall realizing that you have become a follower of Jesus.
- ▼ Your life now:
 - What is following Jesus like for you?
 - How much of your agenda does Jesus occupy?
- ▼ Conclusion
 - Say: “Perhaps this has also happened to you?”
 - Don’t say: “Would you like to have this happen to you?”
- ▼ Proficiency
 - Practice with other brothers and sisters.
 - Learn to share your testimony in 1 minute. Otherwise you may be in danger of preaching instead of witnessing.
 - Shave down the details.
 - Get rid of religious jargon.

▼ **Followup**

▼ **Life Group Meeting**

No pressure! Let's start getting familiar with this meeting format:

▼ Welcome (5 minutes)

- [Icebreaker](#)
- Worship (optional for life group meetings during Sunday service)

▼ Word

- Use passages and discussion questions below.

▼ Witness (10 minutes)

- Pray for God to make your life group what he wants it to be.
- Pray for 1 or 2 people that you want to become followers of Jesus.

▼ **Discussion Questions**

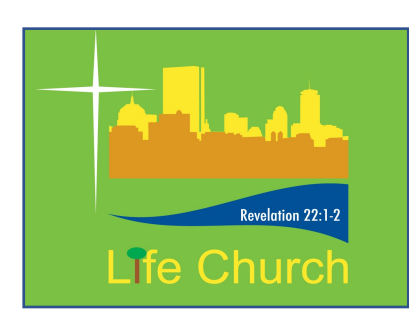
Reflect on Paul's journey so far and his engagement with Christian community. For each question, spend 1 – 2 minutes in silence before you begin to respond.

- 1 How frequently do you need to connect with people in order to feel comfortable sharing transparently with them? How frequently do you think other people need to connect with you to feel comfortable sharing transparently with you? How might this apply to your life group attendance?
- 2 Are you a follower of Jesus? If not, feel free to share any questions you have or obstacles that you think stand in the way of you becoming one. May we pray for you?
- ▼ 3 If you are a follower of Jesus, discuss the following:
 - What was your life like before you became a follower?
 - How did you realize that you needed to follow Jesus?
 - How did you begin following Jesus?
 - What is your life like now?



Be a Witness For Jesus: Tell Everyone What You've Seen and Heard

Part 2 – Sunday November 14, 2021



Our Passage – Acts 21:37 – 22:29 (1 of 4)

As the soldiers were about to take Paul into the barracks, he asked the commander, “May I say something to you?”

“Do you speak Greek?” he replied. “Aren’t you the Egyptian who started a revolt and led four thousand terrorists out into the desert some time ago?”

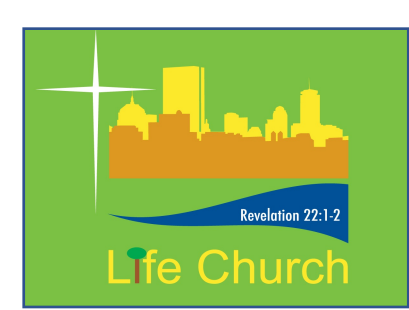
Paul answered, “I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no ordinary city. Please let me speak to the people.”

Having received the commander’s permission, Paul stood on the steps and motioned to the crowd. When they were all silent, he said to them in Aramaic:

“Brothers and fathers, listen now to my defense.”

When they heard him speak to them in Aramaic, they became very quiet.

Then Paul said: “I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city. Under Gamaliel I was thoroughly trained in the law of our fathers and was just as zealous for God as any of you are today. I persecuted the followers of this Way to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing them into prison, as also the high priest and all the Council can testify. I even obtained letters from them to their brothers in Damascus, and went there to bring these people as prisoners to Jerusalem to be punished.



Our Passage – Acts 21:37 – 22:29 (2 of 4)

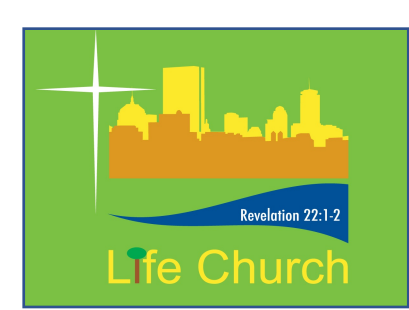
“About noon as I came near Damascus, suddenly a bright light from heaven flashed around me. I fell to the ground and heard a voice say to me, ‘Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me?’

“‘Who are you, Lord?’ I asked.

“‘I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting,’ he replied. My companions saw the light, but they did not understand the voice of him who was speaking to me.

“‘What shall I do, Lord?’ I asked.

“‘Get up,’ the Lord said, ‘and go into Damascus. There you will be told all that you have been assigned to do.’ My companions led me by the hand into Damascus, because the brilliance of the light had blinded me.



Our Passage – Acts 21:37 – 22:29 (3 of 4)

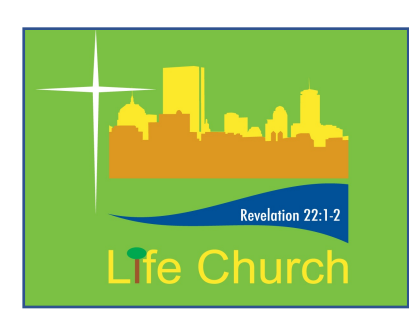
“A man named Ananias came to see me. He was a devout observer of the law and highly respected by all the Jews living there. He stood beside me and said, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight!’ And at that very moment I was able to see him.

“Then he said: ‘The God of our fathers has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth. You will be his witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.’

“When I returned to Jerusalem and was praying at the temple, I fell into a trance and saw the Lord speaking. ‘Quick!’ he said to me. ‘Leave Jerusalem immediately, because they will not accept your testimony about me.’

“‘Lord,’ I replied, ‘these men know that I went from one synagogue to another to imprison and beat those who believe in you. And when the blood of your martyr Stephen was shed, I stood there giving my approval and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.’

“Then the Lord said to me, ‘Go; I will send you far away to the Gentiles.’”



Our Passage – Acts 21:37 – 22:29 (4 of 4)

The crowd listened to Paul until he said this. Then they raised their voices and shouted, “Rid the earth of him! He’s not fit to live!”

As they were shouting and throwing off their cloaks and flinging dust into the air, the commander ordered Paul to be taken into the barracks. He directed that he be flogged and questioned in order to find out why the people were shouting at him like this. As they stretched him out to flog him, Paul said to the centurion standing there, “Is it legal for you to flog a Roman citizen who hasn’t even been found guilty?”

When the centurion heard this, he went to the commander and reported it. “What are you going to do?” he asked. “This man is a Roman citizen.”

The commander went to Paul and asked, “Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?”

“Yes, I am,” he answered.

Then the commander said, “I had to pay a big price for my citizenship.”

“But I was born a citizen,” Paul replied.

Those who were about to question him withdrew immediately. The commander himself was alarmed when he realized that he had put Paul, a Roman citizen, in chains.



Sermon's Purpose (what you should do)

Understand the context:

Embrace a witnessing community

Understand the components of a testimony.

Learn how to give your own testimony.

Use your resources tactically.

Commit your life



Understand the Context:

Paul is bringing gifts for the poor among the Jerusalem churches.

- Romans 15:25-27
- 2 Corinthians 8 - 9

After delivering the gifts to Jerusalem, Paul planned to have the Romans aid him in getting to Spain.

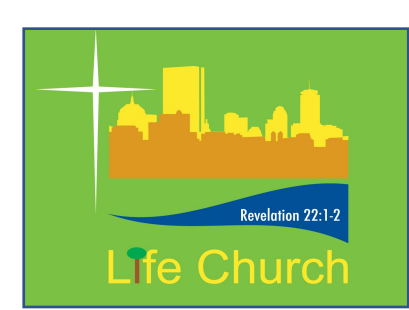
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Paul is ready to die to complete his mission even though the Holy Spirit has warned him in every city that prison and hardship await him.

- Acts 20:22-24

Paul is committed to the Whole Will of God.

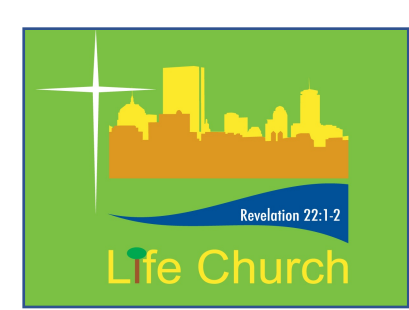
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Embrace a Witnessing Community 1 of 5

The first witnessing community

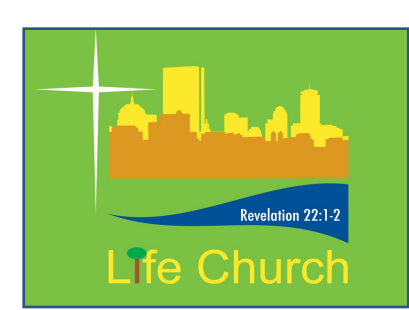
- Jesus formed a community before his crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection.
- After his resurrection:
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- Jesus appeared to Paul, but sent Ananias, a member of a witnessing community, to initiate him into the community.



Embrace a Witnessing Community 2 of 5

What kind of witnessing community did Paul have?

- Paul was a part of several communities over the years.
- Paul is consistently interacting with communities of believers (i.e. churches)
 - Ephesian Elders - Acts 20:17-38
 - Paul shares parting teaching.
 - He has proclaimed to them the whole will of God.
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 - Disciples in Tyre - Acts 21:3-6
 - Paul and his team seek out the disciples.
 - Through the Spirit, they urge Paul not to go to Jerusalem (vs. 6).
 - Disciples in Ptolemais - Acts 21:7
 - Paul greets and stays with the disciples.



Embrace a Witnessing Community 3 of 5

Paul consistently interacts with communities of believers (continued)

- Disciples in Caesarea - Acts 20:8-14
 - Paul stays with Phillip the evangelist.
 - Agabus predicts that Paul will be bound and handed over to the Gentiles.
 - The disciples implore Paul not to go to Jerusalem.
- Home of Mnason - Acts 20:15-16
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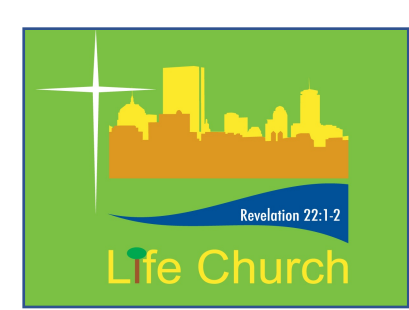
Embrace a Witnessing Community 4 of 5

Paul sought out the community of believers wherever he went.

Paul is committed to the community of believers even when it's inconvenient and despite their imperfections!

At this point in his story, Paul is not alone. He is traveling with a witnessing community:

- This is the end of a trip that begins in Acts 18:23.
- Luke appears to have joined Paul during his 2nd missionary journey - Acts 16.
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Embrace a Witnessing Community 5 of 5

What kind of witnessing community do you have?

- We will use our Life Group time to explore this further.
- What has your past experience with witnessing communities been?
- What shape is your current community in? How effective a witnessing community is it?
- What will it take for your group to become the witnessing community God wants it to be?
- What responsibilities do you bear in all of this?
 - Children in a household start out having everything done for them.
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 - Mature believers (i.e. disciples) take responsibility for ministry.



The Components of a Testimony

Four Components:

- Life before following Christ.
- Realizing the need to follow Christ.
- Deciding to follow Christ.
- Life now.



Testimony Components (1 of 5)

Paul's life before Christ

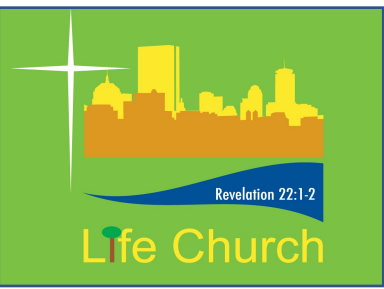
- Paul was (and is) a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia.
- Paul was brought up in Jerusalem.
- Paul studied under Gamaliel and was thoroughly trained in the Jewish law/tradition.
- Zealous for God.
- Persecuted Christians to their death after arresting and imprisoning them.
- Paul got permission to go to Damascus to bring Christians back to Jerusalem for trial.



Testimony Components (2 of 5)

How Paul realized he needed to follow Christ.

- At noon, as he approached Damascus, Paul saw a bright light and fell to the ground.
- Jesus appeared to him and said: “Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me?”
- Jesus told Paul to go to Jerusalem and wait for further instructions.
- How Paul began following Jesus.
- Saul has been blinded by the light and is led back to Jerusalem by his companions.
- Ananias lays hands on Saul to restore his sight, passes along Jesus’ instructions for Saul, and baptizes Saul.



Testimony Components (3 of 5)

What Paul's life is like now (Acts 20:18-21):

- Serves the Lord with humility and tears despite persecution from fellow Jews.
- Doesn't hesitate to preach anything that would be helpful.
- Taught publicly and from house to house.
- Declared to Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.



Testimony Components (4 of 5)

What Paul's life is like now (Acts 20:22-24):

- Paul is facing prison and hardship but he considers his life worth nothing to himself.
- He wants to finish the race and complete the task the Lord has given him of testifying to the good news of God's grace.

What Paul's life is like now (Acts 20:25-31):

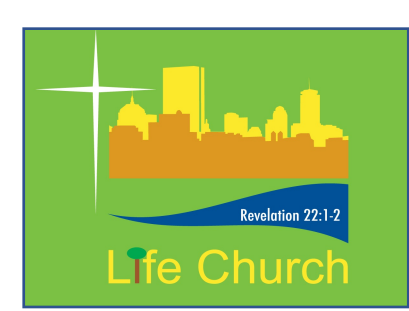
- Paul has not hesitated to proclaim the whole will of God.
- Warned them night and day with tears for three years.



Testimony Components (5 of 5)

What Paul's life is like now (Acts 20:32-35):

- Has not coveted anyone's silver or gold or clothing.
- He has worked for everything he and his companions needed.
- Taught by example that we must help the weak



Learn How To Give Your Own Testimony

Content

- Introduction (e.g. “May I tell you the greatest thing that ever happened in my life?”)
- Your life before Christ
- How you realized that you needed to follow Jesus.
- How you began following Jesus.
- Your life now:
- Conclusion



Terminology

Consider these terms from “[Following Jesus: Introduction](https://lfechurchboston.org/activities/classes-programs/following-jesus/introduction/)” Lesson 2
(<https://lfechurchboston.org/activities/classes-programs/following-jesus/introduction/>)

Believer – someone who believes in or has faith in Jesus and therefore follows him. In the Bible, the term “believer” refers to much more than simply agreeing with an idea. It implies a level of commitment such that, when given a chance, you will act on the belief. For example, you demonstrate your belief that a chair will support your weight by sitting in it; you demonstrate your belief that an airplane will take you safely to your destination by flying in it.

[John 4:39-41; Acts 2:44-47; Acts 4:31-32; Galatians 6:9-10; James 2:1](#)

Born again – those who believe in Jesus are born again from God’s Spirit. You must be born again to see or enter the Kingdom of God.

[John 3:1-21; 1Peter 1:22-23](#)

Brother – those who follow Jesus are part of a new family and become brothers and sisters to one another.

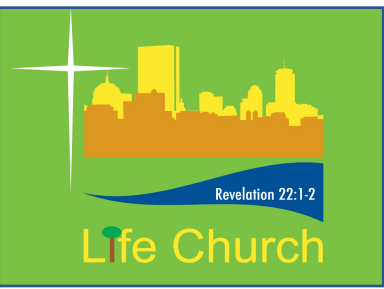
Matthew 12:46-50; Matthew 23:8; Acts 6:3; Acts 9:28-30; Acts 11:1; Acts 11:29; Acts 15

Christian – means “belonging to Christ” “The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch” – [Acts 11:19-26](#)



Terminology

- **Disciples** – those who are trained by the one they are following.
[Matthew 5:1-2; Acts 6:1-7; Acts 9:1-31; Acts 11:19-26; Acts 18:23](#)
- **Follower of Jesus** – Someone who follows and organizes his/her life around the life of Jesus as revealed in the Bible, especially the four gospels (i.e. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) and as revealed by the Holy Spirit.
[Matthew 4:19; Matthew 8:19-22; Matthew 9:9; Matthew 10:37-39; Matthew 16:24-26; Matthew 19:21-22; Matthew 19:27-30; John 1:43; John 12:26; John 21:19-22](#)
- **Saints** – those who are “sanctified”, or set apart for God’s use.
[Romans 1:1-8; Ephesians 1:1-2; Philippians 1:1-2](#)
- **Saved** – those who by following Jesus have been rescued from this world and from God’s wrath.
[Luke 8:12; Luke 8:4-15; John 10:1-9; Acts 2:17-21; Acts 4:8-12; Romans 10:1-13](#)



Picturing Salvation

This is what salvation looks like.

- People who
 - have been captivated by Jesus.
 - follow him in order to learn from him.
 - abandon their past teachers in favor of learning directly from Jesus.
- Jesus
 - Welcomes them regardless of their past social status or degree of spiritual achievement.
 - Considers them to be disciples from the beginning.
 - Treats them with an expectation of success.
- Their attention is focused on Jesus and they are not at all anxious about whether they are “in” or “out”.



Picturing Salvation

With salvation we receive a “superpower” - the ability to distinguish between Jesus and other sources and to pay attention to Jesus.

“I tell you the truth, the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of his sheep. The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger’s voice.” - John 10:1-5 (NIV)

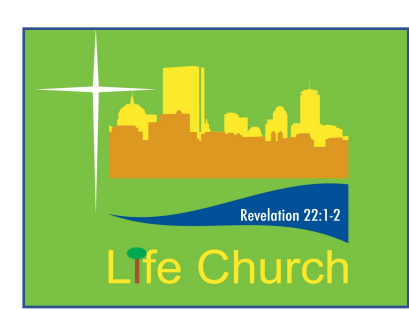
- This is the flip side of the “faith” that is the evidence of salvation.
- What we do with this “superpower” will determine the course of our spiritual life.



Learn How To Give Your Own Testimony

Your life before Christ

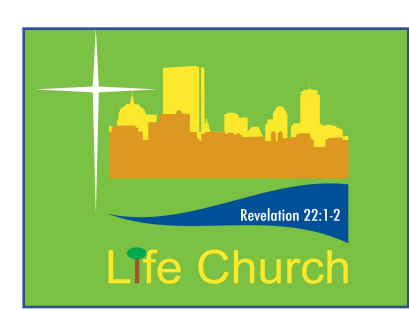
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How you realized that you needed to follow Jesus.

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- When and how did the concept of following Jesus become real for you?



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How you began following Jesus.

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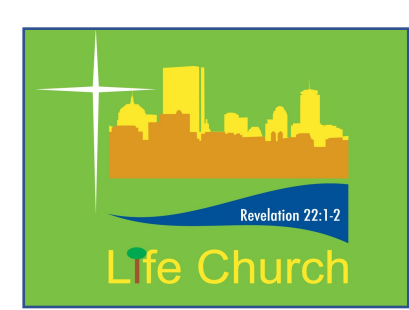
Learn How To Give Your Own Testimony

Your life now:

- What is following Jesus like for you?
- How much of your agenda does Jesus occupy?

Conclusion

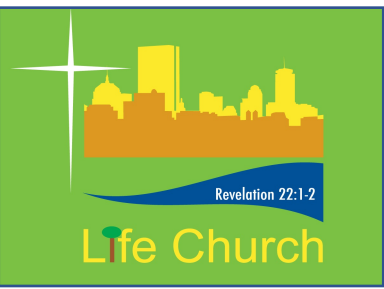
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Life Group Meeting

Let's start getting familiar with this meeting format:

Welcome (5-10 minutes)

- [Icebreaker](#)

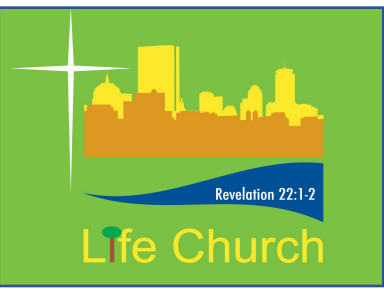
Worship (optional for life group meetings during Sunday service)

Word

- Use passages and discussion questions below.

Witness (5-10 minutes)

- Pray for God to make your life group what he wants it to be.
- Pray for 1 or 2 people that you want to become followers of Jesus.



Discussion Questions

For each question, spend 1 – 2 minutes in silence before you begin to respond.

1. How frequently do you need to connect with people in order to feel comfortable sharing transparently with them? How frequently do you think other people need to connect with you to feel comfortable sharing transparently with you? How might this apply to your life group attendance?
2. Are you a follower of Jesus? If not, feel free to share any questions you have or obstacles that you think stand in the way of you becoming one. May we pray for you?
3. If you are a follower of Jesus, discuss the following:
 - What was your life like before you became a follower?
 - How did you realize that you needed to follow Jesus?
 - How did you begin following Jesus?
 - What is your life like now?