

Read: Mark 13:5-11

Bold Witnesses

Mark 13:9-11

You must be on your guard. You will be handed over to the local councils and flogged in the synagogues. On account of me you will stand before governors and kings as witnesses to them. And the gospel must first be preached to all nations. Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

“Church?! Why would you go to church?” Damien asked in disbelief. Aiden froze for a second. He didn’t know what to say. The two soccer teammates had been talking about their practice coming up on Sunday morning. Damien said he might be late to practice because he wanted to sleep in. Aiden chimed in and said he might be late too—but not because of sleep. Aiden said that he would be a little late to practice because he would be coming after church. That’s when Damien asked the tough question, “Church?! Why would you go to church?”

But after freezing for a second because he was afraid of what to say, Aiden suddenly had words come to mind. Very simply and yet confidently, Aiden said, “Our family goes to church to hear about Jesus’ love for us and to thank and praise him for that. Our pastor always has a great message, and our family never misses a service on Sunday.”

“Oh,” said Damien. (Now *he* was the one who didn’t know what to say.) But Aiden jumped in again. “Maybe your family should come to church with us some time. I think you would like it.” Damien thought for a moment and replied, “Maybe we will.”

In today’s Gospel, Jesus warned his disciples that following him would not always be easy. In fact, sometimes they would be put in difficult situations and have to be his witnesses before important and powerful people like rulers and kings. However, Jesus said that in those tough moments, the Holy Spirit would give them courage, strength, and the right words to talk about him. Sure enough, just as Jesus had foretold, the disciples did in fact become bold witnesses about the amazing news of Jesus’ death and resurrection for us.

Since the time of Jesus, many Christians have been in situations where it was difficult or even scary to talk about Jesus. This week we celebrate the Reformation of the Church. We remember that one of those many, many brave witnesses was Martin Luther. The Holy Spirit gave Martin Luther courage, strength, and the right words to stand before world leaders and speak the truth of being saved by God’s grace alone.

Just like Jesus' disciples, just like Martin Luther, and just like Aiden, you can be a witness, too! Whether you are talking to a neighbor, a friend, a classmate, or a soccer teammate, be confident! God will give you courage, strength, and the right words to speak as a witness for Jesus!

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- Who did Jesus promise would help us share his Word with other people?
- What is the good news that we should share with others?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- What does the word *witness* mean?
- What are real, practical ways that you can be a witness for the Lord?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- What do you think are the most challenging situations for young people to share their faith? Why?
- What do you think are the most challenging situations for adults to share their faith? Why?

Closing Prayer:

Dear Lord, you have promised to send your Holy Spirit to help us be bold witnesses to tell others about you. Give us courage and strength to share with all people your good news. Amen.