

Sunday School Anniversary (Quality: Good)

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[0 : 0 0] though not by any means confining myself to this particular portion by way of a text I will read the first part of verse 2 in Ruth chapter 4 and the first part of verse 11 Ruth chapter 4 the first part of verse 2 reads and he took ten men of the elders of the city in the first part of verse 11 and all the people that were in the gate and the elders said we are witnesses I expect most of you older children at least notice that the number that was mentioned in the 18th of Genesis and mentioned in Ruth was the number 10 and the word or description of people mentioned in Ruth that was mentioned in John was the word witnesses our friend this afternoon your pastor mentioned the number 7 as a complete number which it is of course 7 days in the week 7 colors in the rainbow a 7 branch candlestick and many other things but the number 10 is also a complete number but especially with respect to witnesses but just a few thoughts concerning 10 before we turn to the word of God we count in 10s because counting using our thumbs we count them as 10 fingers when we were in the infant class at school we added our columns of figures units, tens, hundreds and when we were doing an addition when we reached the number 9 and added one more we put a 1 in the 10 column and a 0 in the units we may perhaps think this is the only way the counting can be done but some tribes in Africa count in 5s using the fingers of one hand they would head their columns if they wrote them down units, 5s, 25s, 125s some count in 20 using their toes as well and computers for all their cleverness only count in 2s using binary arithmetic and if in their internal calculations of which they do thousands in a second they would head the columns they would head them units, 2s, 4s, 8s, 16s and so on well we leave those things interesting though they might be in another setting but in the word of God this number 10 especially sets forth the full number of witnesses and while I'll say a few remarks concerning this book of Ruth

I want to go through as the Lord brings them to one's thoughts some of the many tens that are mentioned in the scriptures but then I want to come to this are you and am I whether at school at college in our employment in our retirement in our neighbourhood are we faithful witnesses and then especially concerning the witnessing of Jesus Christ but to explain especially to our younger friends this fourth chapter of Ruth Ruth had of course been married to Marlon there is of course much spiritual teaching here had her first husband lived she could never have been married to Boaz the type of Christ as we read in Romans the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth but if her husband be dead she is no adulteress though she be married to another man wherefore my brethren ye are become dead to the law that ye should be married married to Christ married to Marlon she had no children she brought forth no frill married to Boaz she had at least one son but now

Boaz was not the nearest relation there was another kinsman as it is described here closer related but though he was willing to buy the field he did not want to have Ruth for his wife and said I cannot redeem it for myself lest I mar mine own inheritance redeem thou my right to thyself for I cannot redeem it now in those days there were not the frequent writings that we have in our generation we have what are called deeds that say who owns a certain field or a certain house in those days there were not and yet and this comes to my mind only the other day

I had to sign an important document and I had to sign it in the presence of a witness and that person also signed to say that he had seen me sign that that it wasn't someone else's signature well in those days there was not this but what they did concerning redeeming or changing a man took off his shoe in the front of ten witnesses and gave it to the other and so the kinsman said unto Boaz buy it for thee so he drew off his shoe and Boaz said unto the elders and unto all the people ye are witnesses that I have bought all that was

Elimelech's and all that was Chilean's and Marlin's of the hand of Naomi and moreover the Ruth the Moabite is the wife of Marlon have I purchased to be my wife a beautiful type of Christ redeeming his people purchasing them paying the debt that they shall be his bride the church ye are witnesses this day and all the people that were in the gate and the ten elders said we are witnesses we are witnesses witnesses now a witness is a person who has seen but not only has seen but testifies that is speaks to other people of what he has seen to see something naturally four things are essential those of you that are older can consider them in a spiritual life we must be living the dead cannot see we must have our eyes open we must be awake and how close that comes spiritually but especially in connection with our friends remarks this afternoon and I thought both how your pastor and Mr.

[9 : 06] Dawson not knowing of what was upon my mind mentioned many things that connect as we may see later also though we are living though our eyes are open though we are awake we shall not see unless we have light we must have light and so these men had all those four things and they were witnesses they could speak if there were any doubt later on whose wife is this woman Ruth they could say we were witness we saw it we testify of what we have seen well let us leave this case of Ruth as I want to look at a number of other scriptures and first of all concerning what we read in the book of Genesis how Abraham concerned for his nephew

Lot pleaded for the righteous that were in Sodom and he started at the number 50 but he stopped at the number 10 and I can remember when I was a child in chapel at Oakleton the age of some of you dear children thinking in my heart I do wish Abraham had gone down to 5 or 4 or 3 or even to 1 to satisfy my idle curiosity how many righteous there really were but he didn't he stopped at 10 and the Lord said he would spare Sodom if there were 10 righteous in it now Sodom was not spared so there were not 10 righteous now if you read the following chapter carefully you will find that Lot's family consisted of at least 10

Lot and his wife two unmarried daughters it speaks of his sons so there were at least two sons that makes six it speaks of his sons in law so there were at least two married daughters and at least two sons in law there were at least 10 but there were not 10 righteous indeed only four Lot his wife and two daughters came out of Sodom and from what would appear that Lot was the only righteous one he stopped I say at the number 10 well as we move on through scriptures and I'll try to keep them in the order in which they appear in scriptures as they come to one's memory moving on to that chapter in which

Abraham sent his faithful servant to bring a wife back for Isaac his son and in that chapter we have the word 10 mentioned three times if it were not necessary for us to know how many camels Abraham servant took it wouldn't be in the scriptures it would just say he took camels but it tells us specifically he took 10 camels of his masts now he made those camels kneel down now don't think you dear children that animals pray they don't but Abraham's faithful servant prayed but he made the camels kneel down first by their kneeling down they could not wander off while he was praying and so his thoughts were not distracted while he was praying he was very concerned some little time ago when someone said to me they had visited some that attend one of our courses and he said they didn't even turn the radio off while I said grace you see we are to remove distracting thought but then we read

Abraham's servant took bracelets of ten shekels white and put them upon the hands of Rebekah a shekel for you younger ones is about the weight of half an ounce so the bracelets were of about five ounces each or about a quarter of a kilogram if you think in metric measurements upon each hand have you and I bracelets of ten shekels white the full number of witnesses upon our hands our hands as it were those ten witnesses do they witness our searching the scriptures as we read in the book of John do they witness us helping parents or those afflicted and ill illness or on the other hand do those ten witnesses see us stealing from the checkout in the shop do they see us clenching our hands to strike someone else you see those ten can be a good witness or they can be witnessing our evil acts she had bracelets of ten shekels weight upon her hands and then later in that chapter we find how Laban said let the damsel remain a few days at the least ten now

[15 : 36] Laban worshipped idols we know that because Rachel later on hid the idols that were her fathers you see Abraham's faithful servant would not allow Laban to delay him and if he had stayed those ten days they would have been a witness against that servant of his lack of diligence in obedience to Abraham but he would not hinder me not he said seeing the Lord hath prospered my way but then moving on rapidly through the scriptures coming to the book of Exodus there were ten plagues of Egypt and you will remember that after the plague of lice of frogs of the hail and so on while the plague was still there

Pharaoh said I will let the people go ask the Lord to remove the plague and when Moses prayed and the plague was removed Pharaoh hardened his heart and would not let the people go so it went for nine plagues until the tenth and then that plague was that the eldest son from Pharaoh upon his throne to the captive in the dungeon was slain in every house where there was not blood upon the lintel and side posts it was the tenth witness our friend this afternoon Mr.

Dawson mentioned the ten commandments now I won't dwell upon those other than to say this that even in our unregeneracy we may try and keep those ten commandments but it will be through fear of punishment but when the Lord has quickened us into spiritual life when we have a love to the Lord we shall have a love to his commandments and a hatred of sin though the child of God is no longer under the law but under grace he will now endeavor to keep God's commands loving one another and so on through love how much better in a family when the children desire to do those things their parents command because of love rather than through fear of punishment we read of the tabernacle of the ten pillars the ten sockets the ten curtains and so on then moving on coming to this aspect in the

Psalms I think you will find in three Psalms we find the Psalmist will say upon an instrument of ten strings will I praise them now few of you will have seen a harp but I expect most of you children have looked in a piano and seen the different lengths of the wires the short wires vibrate quickly when they are struck and give a high note a joyous note the long wires when struck give a deep note a mournful note and the Psalmist says upon an instrument of ten strings will I praise them it is comparatively easy to praise

God when we are in good health favorable circumstances journeying mercies and so on but we should also praise him upon the deep the mournful strengths when we are in ill health when we are in poverty when we are being teased and tempted at school when we are perhaps in hospital in great pain I don't want to dwell upon myself but our friend mentioned it this afternoon last August I had a operation for cancer and I have to admit I had never felt so ill in my life but few times in my soul's experience which is almost 60 years have I ever been so spiritually favored and one of the first texts

[21 : 02] I preached from afterwards was this giving thanks to God at all times for all things and I really felt I could thank him for that trial not just for the trial in itself but for the spiritual peace and blessings and his felt presence indeed my first text afterwards was that which was on my mind as I was wheeled into the operating theater though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil for thou art with me so may you and I young and old praise God on an instrument of ten strings well we must move on to the

New Testament I remind you there were ten lepers the full number but only one returned to give thanks and the Lord said where are the nine but especially concerning that which we read in the twenty-fifth of Matthew of the ten virgins all as it were living pure and upright lives but five were wise and five were foolish they that were wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps but the foolish took no oil and when the cry was made behold the bridegroom cometh they all arose and trimmed their lamps lamps this afternoon they would be oil lamps with a wick and those of us that remember oil lamps in our youth the wicks had to be trimmed that the light should shine clearly they trimmed their lamps they examined them and the foolish said our lamps had gone out they'd never been a light but they'd never before examined them and then they went to buy they thought they had something of their own to purchase that oil which sets forth the oil of grace in the harp and while they went to buy the bridegroom came and they that were ready the five that were made wise unto salvation went in with him to the marriage you know when we sign a document we're told to look closely at the small print when you read the word of

God look at the small print they did not go in to him they went in with him to the marriage the bridegroom of course sets forth Christ now if I was in this chapel and you came in from outside we would say you came in to me but we were both outside in the yard and came through the doorway together we would say you came in with me for you were in my company the other side of the door so it is with those made wise unto salvation they are in the company of the Lord in this life this side of the door which sets forth the end of life death and when the Lord's people go into heaven they go in with him not to him with him to the marriage there were ten virgins are you and am I young or are made wise unto salvation then there is a another ten

I would mention in the book of revelation we read the word to the church at Smyrna fear thou none of the things which thou shalt suffer you see the certainty of suffering not may suffer thou shalt suffer behold the devil shall cast some of you into prison and ye shall have tribulation ten days be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee the crown of life ye shall have tribulation ten days now many things in our path last time I was here I spoke from that text in Nehima for how long shall thy journey be and when wilt thou return each day of our life's pilgrimage is a new day we have not passed that day heretofore we do not know the details of what lies before us in our life but we do know with certainty certain things the

Lord said to his disciples in the world ye shall have tribulation but he also said that which is just as certain in me ye shall have peace so we know that tribulation lies before us all that were left godly in Christ Jesus as we want to come to in a moment shall suffer persecution so ten days and it means the full number appointed for you appointed for me and you won't make it nine and a half but neither can the devil make it ten and a half it will be so many and no more we sometimes see our sorrows in the scales he weighs and measures out our pains the wildest storm his word obeys his voice its rage restrained it will be so many and no more he doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of man we read in

[28 : 30] Malachi of the Lord's people being tried as silver is tried he shall sit before the fire as a refiner of silver as the dross rose upon silver he skimmed it off as more dross rose he skimmed that off until he could see his own reflection then the dross had ceased to rise the fire had done its work the silver was removed from the fire so it is with the Lord's people ten days tribulation be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee the crown of life well there are many other tens that might be mentioned but I want to move on to another aspect especially concerning witnessing are you and

I faithful witnesses at school college occupations in the shop without honesty if we're given too much change I know one person recently given too much change and they took it back and the shop assistant with most surprise they brought it back don't expect that sort of thing these days do they did you see an answer of a good conscience our friend spoke this afternoon of conscience the apostles Paul speaks of the witness of a good conscience are you and I faithful witnesses before our fellow children or men and women and the world is ever watching one of our hymns

I remember giving it out after the minister had spoken from the book of Esther from that text Mordecai sat in the king's game Mordecai I remind you would not rise up and bow down to wicked Haman he still sat in his seat when others bowed down to Haman he sat in the king's game do you and I sit in king Jesus game not bowing down to the world and their idols but being faithful witnesses and the hymn I gave out was 955 watched by the world with jealous eye that fain would see our sin and shame as servants of the

Lord most holy as zealous for his glorious name may we in all his footsteps move with holy fear and humble love that wisdom Lord on us bestow from every evil to depart to stop the mouth of every foe by upright walk and lowly heart the proofs of godly fear to give and show the world how Christians live you dear children as you come to the service with the girls with their hats on the boys with their suits and so on are bearing a witness to the world by our presence here this afternoon we are outwardly at least and I hope inwardly being faithful witnesses and as

I have said before a witness is one who has seen and speaks of what he has seen now in this connection and perhaps this may fasten it upon your minds remembering you dear children that the Old Testament was almost entirely written in Hebrew the book of Daniel written in Chaldean and one or two other portions but mostly in Hebrew but all the New Testament was written in Greek and the Greek word for witness is martyr which is where we get the word martyr one of you children this afternoon was given that book Foxy's book of martyrs now a martyr is one who has witness to the things that he has known speaking and testifying by word and action to others and suffers for what he has done suffers from what he has done and I have little doubt that whether young or old if we are faithful witnesses to the word of

[34 : 18] God and what we hope he has done for our souls to his commandments we shall be martyrs too we may through the Lord's mercy be spared from being burnt at the stake but we shall know the world's ridicule and scorn we shall know the devil's temptation in our hearts and his opposition but what a mercy if we are faithful witnesses and in that connection I'll remind you of what we read in the 19th chapter of Deuteronomy where we are told concerning witnesses one witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity or for any sin in any sin that he sinned at the mouth of two witnesses or at the mouth of three witnesses shall the matter be established

God sent as we read in the 19th chapter of Genesis two men or it would appear angels to Sodom to witness what they saw now if a false witness one who does not speak the truth rise up against any man to testify against him that which is wrong then they shall bring him to the judge and so on and if it be found that he have testified falsely against his brother then shall ye do unto him as he had thought to have done unto his brother so you see the one that would bear false witness was to be punished with the same punishment that he perhaps through jealousy or spite gave false witness against another but now our friend this afternoon mentioned

John the Baptist how he said concerning Christ I am not that lion but he went on to say I am come to bear witness of that life to bear witness of that life and John the Baptist was a faithful witness and he was a martyr John the Baptist faithfully reprov'd heron remember in those days a king had life and death palled over his subjects and through the suggestion of that wicked Salome and Herod's foolishness in promising her whatever she asked she asked the head of John the Baptist in a charger that is on a large plank and

John the Baptist was beheaded in prison a faithful witness and a martyr but he witnessed of Christ and I want to come to that if you love someone you want to speak about them don't you and if you ever love to Christ you'll want to speak about him as well have you ever compared John the Baptist witness of Christ with Pilate Pilate looked upon Jesus he marveled he was surprised that a person could suffer so much with scourging buffeting spitting upon and so on uncomplaining as a sheep before a shear as his tongue but what was Pilate's witness though he marveled he said behold the man behold the man but what did dear

John the Baptist witness he looked upon Jesus as he walked and said behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world well might John Newton in 1146 write what think ye of Christ is the test to try both your state and your scheme ye cannot be right in the rest unless ye think rightly of him are you and I able to witness of what he has done in our souls we can all witness what a beautiful day we've had we can witness what a lovely tree we've had through the kindness of friends and

[39 : 47] God enabling them to provide those things but soon life even with the youngest will pass along are we able to witness of what he has done in our souls the psalmist puts it like this come all ye that fear God and I will declare what what I have done for the Lord no what he has done for me in providence in restoring me to health in giving me a good home and loving family no none of those things come all ye that fear God and I will declare what he has done for my soul are you and I able to witness that now we must be very brief upon this last aspect the

Lord said concerning in the fifth chapter of John there is another that bear witness of me and I know that the witness which he witnessed of me is true we read of these in the last chapter of the first epistle of John and I have greater witness than that of John though John the Baptist was a great witness and a faithful witness the works which my father hath given me to finish the same works that I do bear witness of me that the father hath sent me and the father himself which hath sent me hath borne witness this on me the father bore witness at his baptism this is my beloved son in whom

I am well pleased similarly on the mount of transfiguration again this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased but also in his sin atoning sacrifice when he suffered all the punishment his people sins deserve through a never ending eternity and he was able to cry it is finished father into thy hands I commend we cannot enter now indeed one feels never can we fully enter into it in this life the sufferings of Christ when he was first upon the cross he still felt a union to his father and said father forgive them for they know not what they do but as his sufferings reached a crescent that union in it was felt to be broken and he did not cry my father my father but my

God my God why hast thou forsaken me the answer is because his people deserve to be forsaken forever and ever in hell and he bore that separation in their room and place but he did not die in that felt separation it is finished father into thy hands I commend my spirit the father himself beareth witness of me well may you and I in our generation as children at school others in occupations others of us in retirement in the house of God in our streets in our neighbourhood may we be faithful witnesses may we show whose we are and whom we serve his servants ye are to whom ye yield obedience last night at

Okington I touched upon many times we read Moses the servant of God his servant ye are to whom ye yield obedience he that hath my commandments and keepeth him he it is that loveth men well we leave these thoughts may the Lord seal his truth to our hearts so we may not be speakers but hear us only but also doers and may he forgive anything we've said of this Amen