As I prepare to serve a mission, I am preparing to be a witness of Jesus Christ in a very obvious and public way. But you don't have to be a full-time missionary to be a witness of Christ. In fact, we are asked to stand as a witness "at all times, and in all things, and in all places." (Mosiah 18:9) Why do we need to be witness of Christ? It says in 2 Nephi 25:26:
"...we talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ, and we write according to our prophecies, that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins."
We are to be a witness of Christ because God wants all His children to return to Him and the atonement allows us to repent and be clean from sin so that we can dwell in God's presence. Also, the knowledge of Christ's ministry and gospel gives us hope and direction in our life and we can be comforted by His love because He bore all pain and knows exactly what our struggles are like. So, how can we be a witnesses of Christ?

A synonym for witness is: testimony. To be His witness, we must have a testimony of Him, that He lives and that He is our Redeemer. To gain a testimony of something, you must first learn about it. We learn of Christ through the testimonies and writings of prophets, leaders and peers.
Paul of the New Testament, is an example of someone who gained a testimony of Christ. Before his conversion, he was known as Saul. He grew up as a Jew, and became a Pharisee. He made it his duty to tear down Christianity because it was considered a heretical sect of Judaism. The followers of Christ were arrested, tried and martyred under the direction of Saul. One day, he was on the road to Damascus and had a vision that turned his life right around. In his own words as found in Acts 26:
"...At midday,...I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me."

Saul took no time at all to change his ways. He continued on to Damascus and began to preach repentance to the people despite death threats and ridicule. He was a stalwart witness of Christ to the end.

Now, Paul, as well as several other people, actually saw Christ but we do not have see Him physically to be His witness. After Jesus was resurrected, he visited His apostles who were gathered together. Thomas was not there at the time so when they told him what had happened he said, "*Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe."* Eight days later, Jesus visited them again *"Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach*

hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." (John 20)

Modern day apostles and prophets can help us begin and strengthen that belief. In January of 2000, the Brethren of the church released an official document titled "The Living Christ". It is their testimony and witness of Jesus Christ. It reads:
As we commemorate the birth of Jesus Christ two millennia ago, we offer our testimony of the reality of His matchless life and the infinite virtue of His great atoning sacrifice. None other has had so profound an influence upon all who have lived and will yet live upon the earth.
He was the Great Jehovah of the Old Testament, the Messiah of the New. Under the direction of His Father, He was the creator of the earth. "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:3). Though sinless, He was baptized to fulfill all righteousness. He "went about doing good" (Acts 10:38), yet was despised for it. His gospel was a message of peace and goodwill. He entreated all to follow His example. He walked the roads of Palestine, healing the sick, causing the blind to see, and raising the dead. He taught the truths of eternity, the reality of our premortal existence, the purpose of our life on earth, and the potential for the sons and daughters of God in the life to come.
He instituted the sacrament as a reminder of His great atoning sacrifice. He was arrested and condemned on spurious charges, convicted to satisfy a mob, and sentenced to die on Calvary's cross. He gave His life to atone for the sins of all mankind. His was a great vicarious gift in behalf of all who would ever live upon the earth.
We solemnly testify that His life, which is central to all human history, neither began in Bethlehem nor concluded on Calvary. He was the Firstborn of the Father, the Only Begotten Son in the flesh, the Redeemer of the world.
He rose from the grave to "become the firstfruits of them that slept" (1 Corinthians 15:20). As Risen Lord, He visited among those He had loved in life. He also ministered among His "other sheep" (John 10:16) in ancient America. In the modern world, He and His Father appeared to the boy Joseph Smith, ushering in the long-promised "dispensation of the fulness of times" (Ephesians 1:10).
Of the Living Christ, the Prophet Joseph wrote: "His eyes were as a flame of fire; the hair of his head was white like the pure snow; his countenance shone above the brightness of the sun; and his voice was as the sound of the rushing of great waters, even the voice of Jehovah, saying:
"I am the first and the last; I am he who liveth, I am he who was slain; I am your advocate with the Father" (D&C 110:3–4).
Of Him the Prophet also declared: "And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives!
"For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father—
"That by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God" (D&C 76:22–24).

We declare in words of solemnity that His priesthood and His Church have been restored upon the earth— “built upon the foundation of . . . apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone” (Ephesians 2:20).
We testify that He will someday return to earth. “And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together” (Isaiah 40:5). He will rule as King of Kings and reign as Lord of Lords, and every knee shall bend and every tongue shall speak in worship before Him. Each of us will stand to be judged of Him according to our works and the desires of our hearts.
We bear testimony, as His duly ordained Apostles— that Jesus is the Living Christ, the immortal Son of God. He is the great King Immanuel, who stands today on the right hand of His Father. He is the light, the life, and the hope of the world. His way is the path that leads to happiness in this life and eternal life in the world to come. God be thanked for the matchless gift of His divine Son.

We are a witness when we act the way Christ would. We simply need to look at the records of his life to get an idea of how we should act. I just read as statement that covers it all but in summary, he went about his life always doing service, especially for those considered of a lower class, taught gospel principles to all those who would listen and gathered little children to bless them. He was kind, loving, charitable, and patient with all the people he met despite being hated, rejected and ridiculed by many of those people.

The Book of Mormon missionary, Ammon, is a great example of being a witness of Christ through his actions. He walked into enemy territory hoping to teach the gospel to the people but knowing very well that he could be imprisoned or even killed. He was bound and taken before the king to be questioned. When asked what he wanted, he simply said he wanted to be a servant of the king. The king was surprised but didn’t see why not so he put Ammon to work. It didn’t take long before the king saw that Ammon was one of his most faithful and hardworking servants. One day, Ammon single handedly protected the king’s flocks of sheep from a band of robbers. At this point the king was very intrigued by this man’s strength and loyalty. He asked Ammon if he was The Great Spirit to which Ammon replied that he was only a servant of his God. This opened the doors to the king’s heart and Ammon was about to teach the king and eventually his whole kingdom the gospel. We learn for him that we can show that we are followers of Christ simply by being Christ-like and serving everyone, even those who are considered enemies.

In the March 2008 Ensign (Becoming a Witness of Christ), D. Todd Christofferson tells a personal story about being Christ-like to those who may have hurt us. He says:
I recall the example of a Catholic priest I came to know as we worked together in community service activities in Nashville, Tennessee. Father Charles Strobel developed a project to bring homeless men off the street a few at a time into a training program that provided life skills and vocational opportunities for them. He devoted untold hours to helping these men make permanent changes for the better and become self-reliant. I was surprised to learn that his mother had been killed by a homeless man not many years earlier. Father Strobel’s Christlike

love extended even to men among whom was found one who had violently taken his precious mother's life.

The last point I would like to talk about is that **we are a witness when we help others learn of Him.** This is the main purpose of a full time mission. I am setting aside a year and a half of my life to do nothing but be a witness of Christ, help people learn why the gospel is so important to me and why it would be beneficial to them. I've wanted to go on a mission for as long as I can remember. It's just something that has always been important to me but for many years I didn't have much of a reason except that it sounded like an exciting adventure. In the last few years I have strengthened my witness and have seen the positive impacts it has in people's lives. I have gone with the sister missionaries to help teach lessons to people who are interested in learning and have seen, first hand, the changes in their lives as they come to accept Christ and the gospel. I now have a solid reason to give these 18 months up. It doesn't come without challenges and heartache but it is and will be worth it to see lives changed and improved. For those of you who may not be familiar with the mission schedule; here is a basic outline:
6:30 a.m. Arise, pray, exercise for 30 minutes, and prepare for the day.
7:30 Eat breakfast.
8:00 Personal study of scriptures and other gospel study material.
9:00 Companion study where share what you have learned during personal study, prepare to teach, and practice teaching.
10:00 Begin proselyting which includes teaching and service. An hour for lunch and additional study and an hour for dinner.
9:00 p.m. Return to living quarters (unless teaching a lesson; then return by 9:30), and plan the next day's activities (30 minutes), get ready for bed and pray.
10:30 Retire to bed.

A missionary's time in the mission field is spent doing all three of the points I've talked about. Nearly every waking hour of a full-time missionary is either spent studying and learning of Christ, doing Christ-like service or teaching people of Christ. I'm excited for this special opportunity to share my witness of Christ.

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