

Apologetics

Today's message is about being star witnesses for Christ.

Setting:

The early church underwent severe persecution as recorded in Acts 7:54-8:3

They were secure in their faith because they were filled with hope.

Peter's letter was to bring encouragement to believers like these. (**1 Peter 3:13-17**)

- 13 Who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good?
 14 But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, *you are* blessed.
AND DO NOT FEAR THEIR INTIMIDATION, AND DO NOT BE TROUBLED,
 15 but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always *being* ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;
 16 and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame.
 17 For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong.

Outline:

1. Fear of suffering. v 13-14
2. Giving answers for our hope. v 15
3. Having a clear conscience. v 16-17

To Peter every believer is called to be an "apologist." (*One who gives answers*)
 When we are challenged to give answers for our faith in Christ, are we ready?
 What do people say about our lifestyle? (At work, school, with friends...)

Being an apologist isn't just having the right answers to skeptical challenges,
 but the right lifestyle that raises the right questions.

In the previous verses Peter highlights spiritual maturity. (v. 3:8-12)

- Like-minded unity
- Mutual interest
- True companionship
- Heartfelt compassion
- Humility
- Forgiving nature
- Controlled tongue
- Life of purity
- Peaceful disposition
- Fear of the Lord

Peter has encouraged us to do good to others, even when they do evil to us.

Lloyd Ogilvie writes,

“Christians have an incredible contribution to make to the society in which they live by breaking the cycle of people returning evil for evil. As we begin to do good, most people will return that good by doing good. What a marvelous ministry – with very immediate and measurable results. Just as people tend to return evil for evil, they usually return good for good. Indeed, when you do good, blessing comes to everyone involved. However, Peter also recognizes the reality of a sinful society. There are times when even as we do good and our motive is love, we will suffer for it.”¹

That’s exactly what happened to Jesus.

We too will suffer for doing good just as our Lord did. He told us this,

“A servant is not greater than his master. If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you” (John 15:20).

As we endure righteous suffering, we can rest in the assurance that God will bless us with our future inheritance.

Peter speaks of this hope:

“...to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” (vs 1:4-5)

How do we become fearless in our faith?

1. Confident Faith

Know what we believe, but be positive

I read about a debated that took place at Chicago Theological Seminary in the mid-sixties between a noted “God is dead” theologian and a leading evangelical scholar. In the opinion of the audience the evangelical theologian easily won the debate in terms of content and spiritual truth; but he lost in terms of conduct. The “God is dead” theologian was a gracious and an open spirited man, while the evangelical theologian was a critical, negative, unkind, and sarcastic man who fought, attacked and condemned.²

Anyone can suffer for holding a Biblical position on issues,
but do they respond in a loving manner?

¹ Lloyd J. Ogilvie, *The Communicator’s Commentary: 1 Peter*, (Waco, TX: Word Books, Publisher, 1984), p. 164.

² Ibid.

Peter asks a rhetorical question concerning righteous suffering:

“Who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good?
(v 13)

If we are being lovingly right, not too many people are going to be against us.

If your belief and behavior are consistent with the character of Christ,
who is going to attack or be against you?

“Who will harm you if you are good?”

Peter Answers the question:

But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, *you are* blessed.
AND DO NOT FEAR THEIR INTIMIDATION, AND DO NOT BE TROUBLED,
(v 14)

Sanchez writes,

“Perhaps the greatest threat to being able to endure righteous suffering is fear: fear of losing your family or friends, a boyfriend or girlfriend, a job or career, your health or even your life.”³

In these verses Peter prepares exiled Christians to face suffering by reminding them that because they are assured of the blessing of a future inheritance, there is nothing anyone can do to them;

In the final analysis, **they have nothing to fear.**

- Don't fear *people*
- Or be troubled over *circumstances*

Who can harm us if God blesses us?

In Romans 8 Paul says,

“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.” (Rom. 8:18)

Insecurity is the result of expecting from people and things
what only God can give.

We should be confident about what we believe, because the Lord is with us.
Peter then instructs us on how to defend our faith.

³ Juan R. Sanchez, *1 Peter For You*, (The Good Book Company, 2017), p. 126.

2. Defending the faith

¹⁵but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts,
 always *being* ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you
 to give an account for the hope that is in you,
 yet with gentleness and reverence;

to make a defense - Gk. 'apologia' – (Eng. Apologetics). – give answers

Jude adds this,

“I felt the necessity to write to you
 appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith
 which was once for all handed down to the saints.” (Jude 3)

Peter’s instructions: For defending the faith.

1) **Sanctify**: Is Christ Lord of all in your heart? Align yourself with Christ!

¹⁵but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts,

sanctify – hagiazo – to set apart, from the same word as word for holy
 Peter has written,

“...be holy, in all your conduct because it is written,
 ‘Be holy, for I am holy’” (1:15-16)

“To sanctify Christ as Lord in our hearts enables us to live the life of holiness. In the truest sense, it allows Christ to live His life of holiness in us and through us.”⁴

Samuel Wilberforce once said that lordship could be defined in four words: **admit, submit, commit, transmit**. Indeed we must **admit** our sin and need of a Savior; we must forsake sin and **submit** our lives to Christ as Lord; we must **commit** our way to the Lord day by day; and we must **transmit** or share His love and goodness with others.⁵

Having a growing relationship with Christ is more important than anything else.

All things grow out of this vital relationship with Jesus.

⁴ Ogilvie. P. 165.

⁵ Ibid.

2) **Study** - always *being* ready – state of readiness to give answers

always *being* ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you

What would it take for us to learn answers to tough questions?

- Diligent study

Questions are opportunities for us to learn and then help others in their quest.

3) **Security** – Do we have security in the presence and promises of God?

the hope that is in you

Outward circumstances Vs. inward hope.

Peter says:

We were born again to a living hope.

We have the hope of an eternal inheritance

– imperishable, undefiled and will not fade away-

Preserved in heaven for us

We are protected by the power of God

- future salvation.

- The trials we face purify our faith.

We hope in future grace when Christ returns.

“...fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you
at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” (V. 1:13)

Our faith and hope are in God... v. 21

Hope – a certain hope – rejoicing for what will be ours in the future.

Someone has written: Jesus is all we need,
but we will not know it until He is all we have.

When the early church was scattered in the first great persecution,

Luke writes,

“Therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching the word.”

(Acts 8:4)

“The eaglets would not learn to fly if the mother eagle did not tear up the nest. The early church at Jerusalem was thrown out of the nest by persecution to carry the Gospel in all directions. Some of us have known the tearing up of home, the loss of dear ones, that threw us out to fly or die. Then we learn that underneath are the everlasting arms. And how some smug, comfortable churches need their complacency wrecked, their comfortable indifferences shattered that they may mount up with wings as eagles!”

(Vance Havner).

We need doctrine that we may believe,
discipline that we may behave,
and dynamic that we may burn!