

C. Be Prepared To Give An Answer For Your Hope. (3:15b)

- 1) "Hope" in 1 Peter is a term referring to the future aspect of salvation, for it is into a living hope that Christians have been reborn through the resurrection of Christ.
- 2) Christians are expected to be prepared to speak at any moment about God's salvation of his people through Jesus Christ and how that salvation will manifest itself at the end of history.
- 3) Practically speaking, this verse raises the question of how many Christians today could make an articulate statement of the reasons for their faith in Christ in terms that would be understood by modern society.

QUESTIONS: Do you feel prepared to share about the Hope you have in Christ? If not, why? What holds you back from being prepared? What action can you take in order to prepare yourself to share about your Hope in Christ?

D. Gentleness and Respect/Clear Conscience. (3:15c-16)

- 1) Even the best-intentioned testimony must be conducted in an appropriate manner. If offense is to be taken, it should be over the content of the gospel message, not because the message was offered in a manner that
- 2) An effective testimony also requires a clear conscience regarding one's personal integrity before the Lord. One cannot explain the hope we have in Christ while living in ways that contradict that hope.

QUESTIONS? How can you prepare yourself to respond appropriately to those who are hostile towards the Gospel? Are there areas of your life that are in contradiction to the "Hope" that you profess? What holds you back from giving those over to the Lord? What will it take to do so?

III. Why This Response?

A. It Is Better To Suffer For Good... Than For Evil. (3:17)

B. Because Of The Hope We Have In Christ. (3:18)

C. Because Our Lives Are A Testimony Of The Victory That Christ Has Won Over Sin And Death. (3:18-22)

A Victorious Testimony

Long Beach Alliance Church • January 20th, 2008 • Pastor Rob Zimmermann

**"IT IS BETTER, IF IT IS GOD'S WILL,
TO SUFFER FOR DOING GOOD THAN
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DIED FOR SINS ONCE FOR ALL, THE
RIGHTEOUS FOR THE UNRIGHTEOUS,
TO BRING YOU TO GOD."**

1 PETER 3:17-18A ~ (NIV)

I. A Reminder Of Where We Have Been.

A. Peter Is Writing To The Church In Northwestern Asia Minor That Is Suffering For Their Faith.

- 1) Peter intended this letter for those (Jewish and Gentile Christians) that were "scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia."
- 2) It is probable that the church was composed of Christians that had been displaced by Roman Colonization that landed them in Asia Minor. These people would have been considered "non-citizen residents." In the Roman empire these people occupied a special wrung on the social ladder--below citizens and above the slaves and foreigners.
- 3) Legally, such aliens were restricted in regard to whom they could marry, the holding of land and succession of property, voting, and participation in certain associations and were subjected to higher taxes and severer forms of civil punishment. Constant exposure to local fear and suspicion, ignorant slander, discrimination and manipulation was the regular lot of these social outsiders.

- 4) Although Peter's readers may in fact have been resident aliens and strangers in Asia Minor, the cause of their deeper alienation from society was their faith in Christ. They were experiencing various kinds of trials that were causing them varying degrees of grief and suffering.

B. Laying The Foundation For How Followers Of Christ Should Respond To Their Given Situation.

- 1) **The Living Stone (2:4)** - Peter presents Jesus Christ as the foundation of God's redemptive work.
- 2) **Living Stones/Spiritual House/A Chosen People (2:5&9)** - Peter assures his readers that they have become part of a much grander and everlasting community. It is by the values and convictions of this new community, with Christ as the cornerstone, that they must now understand themselves.

C. Practical Examples Of How To Respond To The Pressures Of Society.

- 1) **Submission To Rulers (2:13-17)** - In Peter's view, Christians must be subject to even pagan authorities. Not only must Christians be subordinate, but they must also "do good", for by doing so they will silence slander against Christians.
- 2) **Submission To Masters (2:18-25)** - Peter points to the slave, who was most vulnerable in Greco-Roman society, as a paradigm for the Christian believer who follows Jesus Christ.
- 3) **Instructions To Christian Wives And Husbands (3:1-7)** - Because the call to faith in Christ is a call for life-changing, personal realignment, the conversion of either spouse in the Greco-Roman marriage held the potential for serious problems both between the couple and between the couple and society.
- 4) **Inner Qualities Of Christian Living (3:8-12)** - Peter continues to list qualities that should be evident in relationships primarily between Christian believers in the wider community.

II. How To Respond To A World That Is Hostile Towards Christ And Those Who Follow Him?

A. Do Not Fear What They Fear, Do Not Be Frightened. (3:14)

- 1) Peter is quoting Isaiah 8:12, Isaiah's encouragement to the Southern Kingdom of Judah not to fear the allied kings of Israel and Syria or the great power of Assyria.
- 2) This would have reminded Peter's writers that the Lord exhorted Isaiah and his hearers not to fear the threat, for the Lord God is with them, and so it is the Lord they are to fear (Isa. 8:13)
- 3) Peter is reminding his readers that they are not the first of God's people to experience threat or suffering and that they need not fear because God is with them.

QUESTIONS: What fears do you face when it comes to living for Christ in a hostile world? What encouragement do you receive from Peter's Words?

B. Sanctify Christ As Lord In Your Heart. (3:15a)

- 1) Rather than fearing their adversaries, Peter encourages the Christians to revere the Lord.
- 2) Sanctify (hagiasate) means "to set apart", or "consecrate." But in this context it also connotes giving the primary place of adoration, exaltation, and worship to Christ.
- 3) Believers who sanctify Christ set Him apart from all others as the sole object of their love, reverence, loyalty, and obedience. They recognize His perfection, magnify His glory, extol His pre-eminence, and submit themselves to His will, with the understanding that sometimes that submission includes suffering. (*MacArthur - 1 Pet. 3:15*)
- 4) This honoring of Christ as Lord is not external, but in the hearts of true worshipers—even when they must face unjust suffering.

QUESTION: What steps are you taking or do you need to take in order to develop a heart that places Christ as the TRUE Lord of your life?