

INTRO: Season theme = Redeeming the Times as we see the end draw near.

First three weeks we studied from Apostle Paul. This evening it's from Apostle Peter. Both men gave up their lives testifying to the truth about Jesus the Messiah. I am going to narrow in on one phrase that Peter used in v.15, "always be ready to give a defense to every one who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you."

I. AN EXPLANATION OF 'CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS'

A. About the word itself, **apologian**

1. sounds/looks like 'apology'; compound 'from/point of origin' and 'word'
2. used only 7 times in NT: 6 by Paul, and once here by Peter
3. Acts 22:1 Paul at Jerusalem: "Men, brothers, fathers, hear now my defense..."
4. in court trial, 'defense', witnesses and reasoned arguments

B. About Christian apologetics

1. seminary branch of theology: exegesis; homiletics; systematics;
2. in my lifetime, best is John Warwick Montgomery; debater
3. Peter is **not** writing to pastors, however!
4. Peter and I will coach you so we can redeem the times, testifying to Christ

II. START WITH A GOOD ATTITUDE AND DEMEANOR

A. v.15 Meekness

1. not overbearing or intimidating your hearer
2. I do not wear a clerical collar on evangelism calls
3. also, meek toward God, like the tax collector in Jesus' parable

B. v.15 Fear

1. task is so important and I am so inadequate
2. fear and awe of Holy God I am representing
3. for me, not wanting to offend
4. yet not pussy-footing around what must be said

C. v.15 Sanctifying the Lord God in your hearts

1. 'sanctify' verb is 'holy' as an adjective (Latin 'sanctus' and 'facio')
2. as we confess Jesus as God, **Holy** Spirit abides in us
3. He in Whom we were baptized is now with us
4. He will even prompt us with words we have learned from Him

(continued)

III. MAINTAIN A GOOD REPUTATION

A. v.16 ...having a good conscience...

1. insofar as it is possible for a sinner to do
2. striving to conform one's life to the divine word of God
3. not staining Jesus' name by our bad conduct, esp. with 'outsiders'
4. "Oh, yeah, that's one of those Lutherans..."

B. You may suffer for doing the **right** thing (disclaimer)

1. it surely did happen to Jesus: His 1st sermon, and His last breath
2. Peter, Paul, and a lot of others suffered, too
3. it is still happening in our world today
4. if wrong, it's deserved; if right, "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for My sake."

IV. REVIEW AND REHEARSE YOUR TESTIMONY OFTEN

A. Always be ready (v.15)

1. policeman stays ready by practicing on the gun range
2. repairman studies latest bulletins and manuals; yours is the Bible
3. sermons, group Bible study, private reading (of the **right** materials)

B. Peter gives us a review

1. v.18 Christ suffered; once; for sins; just for unjust = vicarious atonement
2. v.18 that He might bring us to God (calls, gathers, enlightens)
3. v.18 being put to death in the flesh (True Man, Incarnate; cp. Nativity)
4. v.18 made alive in the spirit (Greek **men/de**) = He rose again...
5. v.19 went and preached to the spirits in prison (descended into hell)
6. 6aa. V.22 having gone into heaven = ascended
7. v.22 is at right hand of the Father; will return; be ready to testify then

CONCLUSION: So, now as you testify to Christ, two things happen: 1) the Holy Spirit is present in your words that are heard by the other(s), and 2) your ears hear it too! That sanctifies your heart; the Holy Spirit is at work in you and through you. That is the best way to prepare for Christmas, and for Judgment Day. Amen.