

**Prepared to make a Defense**  
**1Peter 3:13-22**  
**May 17, 2020**

When we think of the Gospel in a nutshell we normally think of John 3:16-17. “For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him.. We look to these verses because we see in them the reason God would come and be one of us, one of His creation that has turned their backs on Him time and time again. Just like a parent, no matter what a child does, the one who came from God providing a new life through the coming together of a man and a woman, that child will be loved even to the end.

God loved the world, good, bad and ugly. He loved what He created; loved the flesh He breathed into with the breath of life, life, created by Him to live forever. Like a good parent though to spare the rod is to really not show love. It is to keep the child from continuing to turn his or her back on the one who gave them life. That sin, goes all the way back to the perfect garden, where the first two of His creation decided what they had been provided by their “Father” wasn’t enough.

As Christians we know what He has given us as His children. We know so much from what we learned from His Word and from the many who have taught us over the years. We know of how it all started. From the Bible, we can name so many who trusted in the Lord as well as others who turned their backs and had things happen to them like having the earth open up and swallow up all they thought worthwhile in this world.

We could see how the Lord brought about so much death and destruction to those who turned their backs on Him, even causing the death of little ones whose parents unrighteous acts brought about their destruction as well. We think of Noah and the total of eight out of millions or even billions that didn’t die in the flood, but were saved by the prophesy of God, of a coming flood, even though it would be 100 years in the future.

Some may say, “How could God cause the death of so many?” We have hearts that wonder why in some ways. Yet, it wasn’t without warning. Noah preached to them, I imagine, day after day, warning of the coming destruction and just like the sign on the road that says, “Bridge out ahead”, a person can ignore the warning and find he, his wife, his children and even the family dog at the bottom of a fast flowing river.

The Lord wants His children to grow up to be believers and not just believers but witnesses to the world of the love of God, the only God, the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who loved us so much that He was willing to come to this earth and pay the price for our salvation and not only ours but the salvation of all people.

We think of Israel being God's chosen people but they were supposed to be the seed that was to yield 30, 60 and 100 fold. God knew He would have to come, send His Son into this sin filled world to overcome it, to do what no other man could do, fulfill all righteousness. By all, He meant all. It was His righteousness that gave us a hope, the sure and certain hope of eternal life.

We as Christians know this hope. We know why we have this hope as it is backed up by the work of Jesus who lived the perfect life expected of Adam and Eve and then went to the cross, willingly so that we could have life, you and me and all mankind.

We know it but so many don't. There are many you may even call friends that don't have that hope. Their hope is in themselves, that somehow they are better than another or less bad than someone else. They see their lives weighed, weighed on a scale but not on the scale of God. They like Adam and Eve try to take the place of God in their lives.

As you live your lives, what makes you different? Do you still sin? Does sin show forth in your relationships? What if you handled your life differently? What was it that caused the Christian faith to spread in the days after Jesus ascended to heaven? Jesus said He would send a helper, the Holy Spirit so that we would do even greater works than He did.

Jesus did send the Holy Spirit to live in us. He provided water and the Word, water to drown the old Adam and the Spirit to give life to spirits and bodies destined for hell. All those who rejected what Noah said, died. We hope that some turned to the Lord in the end but we know so many only cursed God and died in their sin. They probably thought that God would love them enough to rescue them from hell. We want people to have another chance, yet like all, those who trust in themselves and their so called worth, will find themselves eternally separated from the God who loves them, loves them enough to let them have their own way in the end.

Knowing what we know and the hope we have, can we just sit on the gold mine we have been given? The hope we have is a gold mine that has an unlimited supply, enough for everyone and yet we, because it is going to cost us, want to hide it, bury it

like the one with the one talent of gold, thinking he didn't want to lose it as he waited for the master to come back.

The master wasn't too happy with him. No, what he had been given was taken away and the other two were blessed with even more in tune with their abilities. Given even more than what they thought they deserved.

Have you ever stopped to think of what you have been given? Do you feel privileged that you have what you have been given, something you haven't earned but are in the possession of? Have you thought of how you can't give it away to others and not have any for yourselves?

We have learned from Proverbs, **3:5-6** Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.KJV. This is from the King James Version of the Bible. This is how I remember it.

The faith we have been given is not something to be held so tightly that we trust in our own strength to keep it. It is a gift given, a precious gift that is for all.

Jesus has done so much for us, suffering as He did so we could have life. How can we repay Him for what He has done? What would a good soldier do for him who is in command? He would suffer cold, heat, dust, mud, hunger, thirst, you name it but he will fight to the death.

Have you ever thought you were a soldier for the Lord. He will allow things to happen to you, allow you to suffer and yet what is that compared for what He has done for us and compared to what awaits us when this life is over?

Knowing what we know to be true, it is evil to not let the rest of our world know of Him. Yes, evil, as evil as taking the life others have been given. We know where our hope lies and to keep it a secret, is as evil as wanting others to die in their trespasses in sins because we know the truth, the truth we can tell to them of the hope we have.

Many these days are probably wondering about life, their lives and how long they have to live it. We may even be tempted to go to them, telling them to wake up, warning them of the destruction and death that is coming upon them.

Noah foretold of the coming destruction. We can imagine there were many who were friends but didn't get it. They probably thought Noah was a crazy old man, "Noah's Folly" is probably how they described that monstrosity of a ship. They were so set on their own lives, they didn't have time to think of the future, the future that was sneaking up on them even though they thought they had many days before them.

None of us knows how long the Lord has for us on this temporary earth. We know, somewhat of what awaits us. Yes, we know Jesus is preparing a place for us but to see it with our own eyes, what awaits, no one can imagine, except maybe Adam and Eve.

We can't keep that hope a secret and as Peter writes, we are to let others know, not by beating them over the head or using force but with gentleness and respect, yes even respect for the one we are witnessing to, understanding that they don't know any better. No, they have no idea what we know and to show respect for them and their lack of understanding is to let the Holy Spirit do His work, the work of a helper that can move them from death to life, through the witness of our hope, a hope that isn't in ourselves or in any other person than the person, Jesus Christ.

We need to understand that unbelievers are enemies of God even though He wants them to be His children. His is a witness of love and mercy that no other can provide for He paid the price on that cross for all.

What will it take for us to get out of our homes, out of our easy chairs to tell of the hope we have? Oh, I almost forgot, so many are on lock down, in seclusion. That would be true if we couldn't distance ourselves, but even at a distance, can we witness, even in person?

How many have a phone, a computer, a pen and paper? Even today, my grand daughter loves that mail that is especially for her. Think about it, yes we have phones but once the words are said, how long does it take before some of them are gone? We have all these things to avail ourselves of.

Peter wrote: **1Pet. 3:15-16** but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.

Yes, we may have to suffer for the name of Jesus but He and He alone is the reason for our hope, a hope that is as sure as the sun coming up over the mountains. We have this hope but it is our to give to others, even if we are reviled, and have to suffer for doing good. What greater good can we do than to proclaim the reason for our hope, Jesus Christ our Savior.