

BIBLE STUDY
2020 Wyoming District LWML Zoom Video Virtual Convention
June 20, 2020

The convention theme: ***“honored in humility to share the love of Christ”*** based on 1 Peter 3:15: “. . . *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. . .*”

INTRODUCTION: We have difficulty doing what Peter talks about in this verse. We find that we are not always prepared to make such a defense of the hope that we have in Christ Jesus whom we confess as Lord. Why is that so?

Important words or phrases of the verse:

Honor Christ as holy
Always be prepared - keep on being prepared
Make a defense
the hope that is in you

1. The central theological theme of the first letter of Peter - Election by God for suffering.

Elect exiles v.1 - (John 17:11, 16)

Pilgrim people on our way to a destiny secured for us by our gracious God. - 1 Peter 1:3-9. - The thought of a people going somewhere, just as the Israelites were pilgrims in the desert on their way to the Promised Land. **A People With a Place to Go - on our way and not here to stay.**

The opening sentence of verse 3 reads like a thanksgiving. The wording follows that of the form of a Jewish blessing. We would normally say, “Thanks be to God!” But Peter had grown up as a Jew. From childhood on, therefore, he learned to give praise to God. **Peter confesses Jesus Christ as his Lord, and God as the Father of that Lord Jesus Christ.** (The first form of any kind of creedal statement used in the early Church was “Jesus is Lord.”) **A Bold Confession - a “defense for the hope that is in you.” (15)**

How did God accomplish all this? **God acted in mercy - Baptism:** Means of New Birth: **“Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”** (1 Pt 1:3). Can you name the **date of your own Baptism?**

Three major concepts about the future comprise the heart of verses 3-6. They are **hope, inheritance, and salvation.** All three derived from ancient Israel’s relationship to God as the Lord of history.

Hope: “trust” - confidence in God for the future on the basis of what He promised and delivered in the past (Jr 29:11). **When 1 Peter is referred to as “the epistle of hope,” that means it deals with a relationship as we have to God in faith - a faith turned to the future!** Conviction, assurance - 2 Cor. 5:14 - **“compels (NIV), controls (ESV)**

Genesis 12:1 Romans 4:18

Hope - as a noun

As a **verb**

Hebrews 11:1 - **“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”** - a conviction that something actually is so. This is the nature of Biblical hope.

Inheritance, too, is a word about the future. It is applied in the Old Testament to **Canaan as Israel’s Promised Land.** The apostle uses the term in verse 4; but then he goes on to describe the inheritance we are looking forward to as being **unlike ancient Canaan since ours is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading because it is “kept in heaven.”**

The word translated as **kept** really means **“on deposit.”** It assures us that our eternal destiny is waiting us - **not subject to the destruction of warfare (imperishable), the stand of idolatry (undefiled), and the ravages of time (unfading).**

How do these three adjectives apply to our heavenly inheritance?

Salvation (v5). While, of course, **our own salvation has its source in God’s past actions, the concept has a future sense.** In short, **salvation also has a future thrust because it is rooted in God’s actions of the past.** This is

another way of saying that as members of the church, baptized in the name of the triune God, we live with the constant tension contained in the formula: already-not-yet! (John 6:47)

2. What does suffering have to do with giving a defense of the hope that is in you?

Two kinds of suffering:

- 1) that which we suffer because of our own sin, or the sin of others; (2:20)
- 2) that which we endure because of God's grace. (2:20-21)

Why is suffering usually viewed as evil?

Theology of glory

Election by God for suffering = Theology of the cross

3. Suffering in the hands, by the grace, of God.

Shielded by God's Power (1:5): Even though our salvation is kept for us in heaven, we need God's attending strength to guard us on the way. By faith Jesus Christ, our Savior, has made us the beneficiaries of His protective power. Such protection does not exempt any Christian from possible suffering and harassment. After all, our Lord suffered not with a view to have us escape difficulties but to provide the opportunity for us to share in His suffering (Phil 3:10).

What is Peter's point about being subjected to various trials as a refining process like that of putting gold to the fire for purposes of burning away the dross. (1:6-7; 4:12) - Cleanse, purify - tested by fire (1:7) Fiery trial (4:12)

How does Hebrew 12:7-11 speak to the question of suffering? Discipline, edify, strengthen

What is the real issue that we struggle with concerning suffering and evil in our lives?

What is God's promise regarding such suffering? (Rom 8:18-39. Note especially v. 28)

The end product of such suffering by the grace of God is the kind of genuine faith that responds to God in lives that offer praise, honor, and glory to Him. (1 Pt. 2:19-25)

4. The convention theme: **"honored in humility to share the love of Christ"** based on 1 Peter 3:15: ". . . *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...*"

1 Peter 1:25

Romans 1:16

Ephesians 6:10-17

1 Peter 5:6-11

St. Peter's theme for this letter is most firmly seen in Chapter 5:6-12

Verse 12: ". . . I have written briefly to you, exhorting and declaring that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it." These concluding remarks from Peter are a conclusion to the entire letter, especially applicable to the subject of suffering as a Christian. We are powerless, having no control when others choose to insult us. At times, it feels as if there is no end in sight. We can only imagine what it is like for Christians in parts of the world who endure severe persecution. We are powerless, but God is not. 1 Peter 2:24-25 echo Isaiah 53:5 (the Suffering Servant of God in verse 24) and a reference to the "Shepherd and Overseer" of our souls in verse 25. We are like sheep who have gone astray. We are gathered and kept safe in the care of the Good Shepherd. Therefore (1 Peter 5:6-11) we can safely humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God. In his time, he will bring an end to all of this and exalt his elect. In the meantime, we can give attention to what we can do: cast our cares upon God in prayer, be watchful of our adversary the devil, resist him, and know that the universal Church experiences the same suffering. Then, with peaceful hearts, to know with all confidence that after we have suffered "a little while" compared to the time of history, the God who has elected us will restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish us.

This is our living hope, our confidence, our joy - a hope, a confidence, a joy to share with any who ask.

CONCLUSION: Having studied Peter's letter, now read Matthew 16:13-18. Where does Peter's strength, boldness, conviction of 1 Peter 3:15 come from? How is it that we, ourselves, are able to make the defense

that Peter writes of here in his letter? (Gen 1:1, 3, 9, 11, etc.; Eph 6:10-20; Romans 1:16-17; John 1:1, 14). What shall we conclude regarding how we are to make the defense that Peter writes of?

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The death and resurrection of Christ (1:3) referenced in 1 Peter 3:18-22 give Christians confidence to witness in the midst of the suffering discussed in 3:13-17. Verse 18 - the purpose of Christ's death - to bring us into the presence of God. Repentance, forgiveness, Christ's resurrection victory, ascension, our access to the throne of grace. **Where does this happen now? Worship? Sacraments?**

Go now in peace - the peace of sin forgiven, the peace of standing righteous and holy before God, the peace of being a part of His family, the peace of one who has been redeemed by Christ the crucified - Lord and Savior of all - and "make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you".