

SHARING OUR HOPE

1 Peter 3:13-22

All of us know the guilt of not taking advantage of a great opportunity to witness. It has been said that we are intentionally identifying, interceding, investing, and inviting people in our world to Christ.

You say, pastor it's difficult. Let me remind you the first Christians had little of what we have today to communicate the gospel. No Jesus tee-shirts, no CD's or DVD's, no television or tracts. Yet they had exponential growth.

How did they do it? They did it with the same kind of advertisement we see today; simple testimonials from satisfied customers. A simple testimony of their faith in God.

Peter gives us four essentials of effective evangelism and we need to do these to witness in ways that work.

I. We need hope prayerfully focused.

“But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.” (1 Peter 3:15, LB)

A. I share my faith: A look back.

***NOTE** Typically we talk about sharing our faith. That's a good term. By sharing our faith we are looking back at what God has revealed.

1. Our conscience.

2. God's creation.
3. Jesus Christ's special revelation.
4. His death, burial and resurrection.

There was a day when I understood my sin and Jesus as Savior. I prayed and asked Him to forgive me and come into my life.

B. I share my hope: A look forward.

"Here's why I am confident and optimistic in a troubled world."

1. Everyone has hopes.
 - The economy will turn around.
 - The oil spill will be cleaned up.
 - A better job or a job will come.
 - Kids will turn out OK.
 - We will get married, etc.
2. The problem with hope is there are no guarantee that things will turn around.
3. The worlds hope is really wishful thinking.
4. An optimistic outlook.

C. The Christian hope is an optimistic outlook based on powerful promises.

1. Our hope is a living hope.
2. Our hope is secure.
3. Our hope is sure.
4. Our hope is firm.
5. Our hope is certain.

***NOTE** There is a song, *"I have a hope and my hope has a name! It's Jesus Christ our Lord."* The reason our hope is in Him is He is who He said He is and He did what He said He would do. He rose from the dead, ascended into heaven,

is returning to get us and take us to heaven. He is interceding for us right now.
What a different hope from the world.

D. How do I know I have hope properly focused?

1. What makes me confident in new and difficult situations.
2. Many people's hopes are divided.
 - I hope in Christ and a good hair day.
 - Peter said Jesus must be our only hope, "set apart as my one and only hope."

II. We need reasons individually prepared.

"Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have..."

A. It's one thing to have the hope and another to share it. Most Christians understand they have hope, but have never shared their hope.

1. I don't know anyone.
2. I don't know the Bible. I might mess things up.
3. The easy thing about this is, it's your hope.
4. It's your story.

***NOTE** Peter did not say to have a snappy reply or rebuttal to every objection or question that comes at you. Just have a reason for your hope.

B. How do you prepare a presentation of your hope?

1. A single mom worried about her child, "I don't know what to do."
Reply – "I have the same problem and concerns, but God's promise is He will be a Father to the fatherless."
God tells me if I raise a child in the nurture and admiration of the Lord, when he is old he will not depart.

2. A man out of work who held on to Matthew 6 that his needs will be met.
3. The world wants to see people whose lives are different and want to hear their story.

C. You might be an introvert, what then?

1. You don't have to have a big persona.
2. Listen, I get that. I know it's hard to break the ice.
3. You have to trust God.

III. We need gentleness sincerely expressed.

“But do this with gentleness and respect keeping a clear conscience so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.” (1 Peter 3:15-16)

A. Just be real and speak the truth in love.

1. A key to witnessing is being a good listener.
2. You don't have to be the biggest _____.

“God opposes the proud and gives grace to the humble.”

3. The biggest _____ might also be the furthest from God.

B. If you are in self-promotion how are you going to promote God?

1. If you come across as so self-confident how are you going to be believable that your confidence is in God?
2. If you are so self-assured how are you going to convince someone that Christ is your assurance?

***NOTE** It's not my job to convict of sin; that's the Holy Spirit. The Word of God is not as sharp as a tack; it's sharper than a two-edged sword. It's alive in itself

and it produces life. It opens us up and exposes who we are and our need for God.

C. How do I know my attitude is right?

1. When God's Word is a bigger deal than you are.
2. When people leave your presence and people know you are real.
3. When you are real, lost people will not stereotype you as a Christian.
4. They will be drawn to God. Not by the bigger than life personality, but your genuine concern for them and passionate love for Jesus.

IV. We need a confidence courageously maintained.

“Jesus went and proclaimed God’s salvation to earlier generations who ended up in the prison of God’s judgment because they wouldn’t listen. You know, even though God waited patiently all the days of Noah building his ship, only a few were saved, eight to be exact.” (1 Peter 3:19-20, The Message)

A. Look at Noah.

1. I know some will say I still don't think I can.
2. Noah worked 120 years as a witness and a worker.

***NOTE** Noah had to give an answer to:

- What are you building?
- Why are the animals living in your yard?

Nobody seemed to listen. He must have gotten discouraged, but he stayed with it.

B. Be encouraged.

1. If Noah had God's manifested presence with him, so do we in a greater way. We have Christ!
2. If Noah did not have to produce results, neither do we.
 - Was Noah a failure? No!
 - He was one of the greatest men of God and of faith in the Bible.
 - Remember it's my job to share; it's God's job to save.
 - It's my job to do the possible; it's God's job to do the impossible.

I can't save anyone, but I can share my hope and trust God.

3. If Noah could handle the insults and persecution, so can we.

“And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good?” (vs. 13)

- Most people will not oppose you.
- In Noah's day they were greater pagans.

“Every thought and intent of their hearts was to do evil all the time.” For 120 years Noah lived with people who were godless.

Do you know people who have their hope kicked out of them? They are everywhere: in your family, on the job, even on the church roll.

Our cultures hope is built on hopeless things. Their world is headed to disaster. Ours is on the Solid Rock...Jesus Christ!