

A Study of The Epistle of 1st Peter

Theme: “A LIVING HOPE!”

Trinity Lutheran Church - Norman, OK.

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Lesson: 23

Chapter 3:15-16

Date: 1-31-21

BIBLE TEXT:

(15) but in your hearts regard **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; (16) 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.

STUDY NOTES:

(15) but in your hearts regard **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;

(Is 29:23; Mt 6:9; Acts ch. 17; Col 4:6; 2 Tim 2:25; Heb 3:6)

(16) 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.

(Php 2:12,13; Heb 13:18)

Luther’s Works – Volume 30

Always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you.

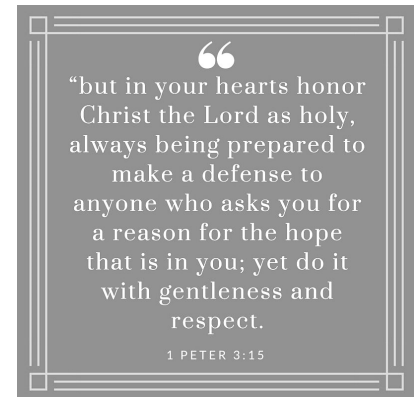
Here we shall have to admit that St. Peter is addressing these words to all Christians, to priests, laymen, men and women, young and old, and in whatever station they are. Therefore it follows from this that every Christian should account for his faith and be able to give a reason and an answer when necessary.

Now up to this time the laity has been forbidden to read Scripture. For here the devil came up with a pretty trick for the purpose of tearing the people away from Scripture. He thought: “If I can keep the laity from reading Scripture, then I shall bring the priests from the Bible into Aristotle.” Then the priests can babble what they please, and the laity has to listen to what they preach to them. Otherwise, if the laity were to read Scripture, the priests would also have to study, lest they be rebuked and overridden.

But note that St. Peter tells every one of us to be prepared to make a defense of our faith. When the time comes for you to die, neither I nor the pope will be at your side; and if you know no reason for your hope and say: “I want to believe what the councils, the pope, and our fathers believed,” then the devil will answer: “But what if they were in error?” Then he has won, and he drags you into hell. Therefore we must know what we believe, namely, what God’s Word says, not what the pope or the saintly fathers believe or say. For you must not rely on a person. No, you must rely on the Word of God alone.

Hence if someone tackles you, as if you were a heretic, and asks: “Why do you believe that you are saved through faith?” then reply: “I have God’s Word and clear statements of Scripture. Thus St. Paul says in Rom. 1:17: ‘He who through faith is righteous shall live.’ And above (1 Peter 2:6), when St. Peter, on the basis of the prophet Isaiah (28:16), speaks of Christ, the Living Stone, he says: ‘He who believes in Him will not be put to shame.’ I build on this, and I know that the Word does not deceive me.” But if, as other fools do, you want to say: “Ah, we want to hear how the council decrees! To this we want to cling,” then you are lost. Therefore you should say: “What do I care about what this or that person believes or decrees? If the Word of God is not preached, I do not want to hear what is said...”

Therefore we must now learn to give an account for our faith, for it surely must come to this. If it does not happen here, it must happen when death comes. .. Therefore St. Peter now wants to say here: Now that you have become believers, you will encounter much persecution from now on. But in persecution you must have a hope



and wait for eternal life. And when you are asked why you have this hope, you must have God's Word on which to be able to build.

That is, when you are challenged and are questioned with regard to your faith, you should not answer with proud words and act defiantly and violently, as though you wanted to uproot trees. No, you should conduct yourself reverently and humbly, as though you were standing before God's tribunal and had to give an answer there. . .

Therefore if this is not to happen to you, you must be reverent and not rely on your own strength. No, you must rely on the words and the promise of Christ in Matt. 10:19–20: "When they deliver you up, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say; for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour; for it is not you who speak but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you." It is proper for you to arm yourself well wit.'

RESOURCES FOR CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS:

A. Websites:

<https://www.cph.org/c-2830-apologetics.aspx>

<http://cyclopedia.lcms.org/display.asp?t1=a&word=APOLOGETICS>

<https://blogs.lcms.org/2012/free-higher-things-magazine-focuses-on-apologetics/>

<https://steadfastlutherans.org/2012/04/steadfast-defense-an-apologetic-for-lutheran-apologetics/>

<https://issuesetc.org/tag/apologetics/>

<https://www.kfuo.org/tag/lutheran-apologetics/>

<http://www.thebeggarsblog.com/blog/2017/10/24/apologetics-is-there-a-lutheran-approach>

B. If you want to read more about apologetics, here are a few good books:

The Defense Never Rests, Craig Parton, [CPH](#).

Religion on Trial, Craig Parton, [Wipf and Stock](#).

History, Law and Christianity, John W. Montgomery, [Wipf and Stock](#).

C. Also "Mere Christianity" C.S. Lewis

"Evidence that Demands a Verdict" Josh McDowell

DEFINITION OF APOLOGETICS:

A. *Definition.* In the Christian sense an "apology" (from the *Gk.* for "defense") is a defense against an attack on the Bible or on part of it, or a vindication of the divine authority of the Christian religion.

B. *Relation to Other Branches of Theology.** Apologetics is a branch of *systematic* theology*.

Christian *dogmatics** sets forth and expounds the Christian religion on the basis of Scripture; apologetics vindicated the truth of the Christian religion on grounds of reason, showing the unreasonableness of infidelity. Apologetics concerns itself with errorists outside the *ch.*, *polemics** with errorists within Christendom.

C. *History of Apologetics.* The *hist.* of apologetics may be divided: 1. Apologetic Period, 70–250; 2. Polemic Period, 250–730; Medieval Period, 730–1517; 4. Modern Period, 1517 to date.

D. *Methodology of Apologetics.* The apologetic method may be either historical or *philos.*, or it may combine both approaches. The 1st vindicates Christianity chiefly by defending Scripture, its fact and importance in human *hist.*, and the value of its teachings in human *soc.* The 2d vindicates such fundamentals of Christianity as the doctrine of God, of man's ethical obligation, and the like on the basis of pure reason. A simple but very practical grouping: fundamental, *hist.*, and *philos.* apologetics.

LIFE APPLICATION

In your hearts regard **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;
do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience.

What are the situations and ways you can practice this in your vocation and calling?