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**1 Peter 3.15, 18**

*Fruitfulness on the Frontline:*

*Messenger of the Gospel*

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**Website:** In 1 Peter 3:15, 18, the Apostle Peter explains to early believers what to do when someone who is not a Christian asks them about the hope they have. They are to give an answer for why they live and act differently than those around them. Listen to the sermon to learn more.

Introduction: **(S1-title)**

1. Are you surprised by what happened this week?
2. Against all odds and most polls, Donald Trump won the Presidential election.
3. Trump's win surprised all the news networks, my Facebook friends, and maybe even you.
4. In our sermon series, Fruitfulness on the Frontline, we're trying to get the unexpected to happen.
5. We're trying to live in *such a way* that non-Christians all around us take note. We... **(S2-fruits)**
  - M1) Model Godly Character
  - M2) Make Good Work
  - M3) Minister Grace and Love
  - M4) Mold Culture
  - M5) Mouthpiece for Truth and Justice
6. Imagine your coworker Janet has been working with you for years but begins to notice a change in you.
7. One day Janet asks you, "What's different? You seem happier. Are you on a new diet?"
8. How would you answer? Would you say "no reason" or would you share the real reason, Jesus?
9. The purpose of M1-5 is to give us the opportunity to be a *Messenger of the Gospel*. **(S3)**

(In 1 Peter 3:15, the Apostle Peter urges his audience to always be prepared to share the gospel.)  
(He's writing to early Christians who feel ostracized and harassed by their communities.)  
(But as they suffer for what is right (v. 14), some people are going to take note and ask questions.)

I. Always be prepared (v. 15a) **(S4)**

**1 Peter 3:15** But in your hearts revere 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. But do this with gentleness and respect,<sup>1</sup>

- A. Always be prepared, even if *sharing the gospel* is the last thing you expect.
  1. In v. 14, right before our verse, Peter says, "Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened."
  2. The people of Asia (Turkey) *aren't just not interested in Christianity, they're anti-Christianity.*
    - a) **1 Peter 1:6** In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. **(S5)**
    - b) **1 Peter 4:4** They are surprised that you do not join them in their reckless, wild living, and they heap abuse on you. **(S6)**
    - c) **1 Peter 4:14** If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. **(S7)**
  3. Despite society's rejection, Peter still says to always be prepared.
- B. Have you ever seen the National Geographic show, Doomsday Preppers?
  1. It's about ordinary people who prepare for disasters, anarchy, food shortages, earthquakes.
  2. Some live in the woods to stay away from cities and others stockpile canned food and fuel.
  3. Monica and I so got into watching this show we purchased our own prepper's food kit. [\(show kit\)](#)
  4. So if Yellowstone explodes, we'll be able to eat our beef stroganoff with noodles as we perish.
  5. If someone asks you about your faith, are you prepped?

(Are you ready? Do you know how you'll respond?)

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<sup>1</sup> All Scriptures are quoted from the New International Version (NIV®) unless otherwise noted.

## II. Always be prepared to give an answer (v. 15b) **(S8)**

### A. Always be prepared to give an answer.

1. There's a purpose to our preparation—we're to give a reason for what we believe.
2. The Greek word for *answer* is the word ἀπολογία (apologia), which means *a verbal defense*. **(S9)**
3. Apologetics are defenses or arguments justifying the truth of Christianity (*show Case for Faith*)
4. Does this mean we all need to have a complicated scientific answer for why Christianity is true?
5. The text doesn't say "give the smartest or best answer" or "give the most logical answer"
6. Apologetics can become argumentative very quickly—instead, we're to give "an answer."

### B. Your answer should be your own—no two answers are alike.

1. In Acts 24 the Apostle Paul defends himself before a Roman governor named Felix.
  - a) He's accused of being a troublemaker, starting riots, and defiling the temple (Acts 24:5-6).
  - b) Paul explains he has not argued, stirred up trouble, or defiled the temple (Acts 24:10-13).
  - c) But he admits he believes the OT is true and the resurrection is real (Acts 24:14-21).
2. In Acts 26, Paul defends himself before a Roman king named Agrippa.
  - a) First, he describes what his life was like before he became a Christian (Acts 26:4-11).
  - b) Second, he describes how Jesus appeared to him on the road to Damascus (Acts 26:12-15).
  - c) Third, he describes how Jesus changed his life since then (Acts 25:16-23).

(Does the way Paul defends himself in Acts 26 sound familiar?)

### C. At Cornerstone, we share faith stories the same way. **(S10-faith story pic)**

1. We divide our *conversion* stories into three parts:
  - a) How you lived before Jesus
  - b) How you met Jesus
  - c) How Jesus changed you
2. I want everyone to give their stories **in here** b/c it trains you for **out there**.
3. Now you can share your story with friends or family over coffee.
4. If your testimony doesn't fit this mold, we also have pilgrim stories and life event stories.

### D. Always be prepared to give a Holy-Spirit filled answer. **(S11>)**

1. Jesus taught his disciples not to worry but trust God in **Luke 12:11-12**, "When you are brought before synagogues, rulers and authorities, do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say."
2. This almost sounds like a contradiction to our text, "be prepared to give an answer" but it's not.
3. Jesus isn't saying we can't think about our answer but to not worry about our answer (Lk 21:14).
4. We trust and rely on the Holy Spirit to use both our preparation and spontaneity (sermon prep).

### E. When people ask me why I'm a pastor, I struggle with what to say.

1. Recently I answered, "I felt God wanted me to become a pastor..."—awkward pause.
2. Monica is a teacher at a Christian high-school, but she struggles when people ask about her job.
3. She'll say, "I teach high-school" and when they ask what subject, she'll say, "Bible..."
4. We need to encourage each other, not to force our faith on others, but to be honest and open.
5. When someone asks you what you did this weekend, share how you enjoyed church.

6. If you attend a small group, share that you're learning to do everything as if unto God.
7. I recently spent some time with new non-Christian friends.
8. Beforehand, I reviewed what I would say if they asked me why I'm a pastor.
9. I'd say, "To make a long story short, it's because I believe in the resurrection of Jesus."
10. I prayed and trusted the Holy Spirit to help me, and it never got awkward.
11. I didn't use my rehearsed line, but we did have good conversation and I shared about church.

(So to review, we want to always be prepared to give *an answer*, but not the smartest or angriest.)  
 (It's easy to spend lots of time defending the truth of Christianity and never get to what matters.)  
 (What matters is not just how Jesus has changed us, but how he has saved us.)

### III. Always be prepared to give a gospel answer (v. 18) **(S12)**

(In vv. 16-17, Peter explains that Christians are to do good even when others reject them.)  
 (He roots this response in the gospel message—how Jesus responds to sinners.)

**(S13) 1 Peter 3:18** For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit.

- A. Gospel means "good news" and it's the good news about Jesus Christ.
1. I'm going to share with you 4 "s"—I hope you'll use one aspect of an "s" in your answer.
  2. **(14) Sin.** (for sin) Before there's good news, we need to hear the bad news, that sin is real.
    - a) Sin separates every human being from a loving relationship with God (missing the mark).
    - b) If anyone dies without dealing with their sin, they're separated from God's love forever.
  3. **(15) Sacrifice.** (Christ also suffered/died) B/c God loves us, he sent his Son to deal with our sin.
    - a) To make our relationship with God right, Jesus had to pay the penalty for our sin.
    - b) He sacrificed himself for us, dying on our behalf, so that we wouldn't have to.
  4. **(16) Substitute.** (righteous for unrighteous) If we *confess* and put our *faith* in Jesus, he *forgives*.
    - a) Righteousness means *right relationship with God*—Jesus takes away our broken relationship.
    - b) In exchange, he gives us perfect righteousness, that means a perfect relationship with God.
  5. **(17) Salvation.** (to bring you to God) The gospel isn't just about forgiveness, it's about adoption.
    - a) We celebrate adoption Saturday because if you know Jesus, you've been adopted too.
    - b) Salvation means Jesus is your king but also that he's your brother.
    - c) Salvation means God doesn't withhold his love, but gives it to you every day.

(When your friend asks you why you go to church or why you have hope, share one "s".)  
 ("I go because I want a relationship with God." or "I go b/c Jesus changed my life.")  
 (Always be prepared to give a gospel answer.) **(18)**

### Conclusion:

1. I want to close by reading you a reflection written Courtney Ellis of Princeton, New Jersey.

When I attended graduate school for English, there were many occasions when my fellow students openly ridiculed the name of Christ. To my great detriment, I stayed silent. I was quite vocal about my belief in Christ at church and with my friends, but I was terrified of what might happen to my reputation if the people at my school found out I believed in Jesus. ... Most of them were just

ignorant about who Jesus is. Several of them had never even met a Christian before and assumed that all Christians were the uneducated, judgmental stereotypes we sometimes see in the media. Yet, I was still afraid.

As the program went on, I began to feel guiltier for these silences. If I couldn't be obedient to Christ in such a central thing, how would I be able to serve him in other ways? God was faithful in my rocky road to obedience—opportunities to speak up for Christ continued to come my way.

One day a fellow student asked me flat out—right before class, when many other people were around—if I was a Christian. I was at a crossroads. . . . I had a clear decision to make.

I took a deep breath, and, with God's help, I said a soft, shaky, "Yes." The student looked at me for a second, skeptically.

"Interesting," she said. "I always thought that Christians were like circus freaks...but you're actually kind of smart!"

It was a small step, but even the smallest step made in obedience is progress.

**Big idea:** Always be prepared to give a gospel answer.

**Preview:** Next week we're wrapping up our series, *Fruitfulness on the Frontline*.

**Ephesians 3:20-21** Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.