



In The Defense of Our Faith

“Honoring Jesus Christ as Lord” 1 Peter 3:8-17

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Introduction:

Theodore Roosevelt is credited with the origin of the quote, **“People Don’t Care How Much You Know Until They Know How Much You Care.”** While I’m not aware of the context in which the late President used it, it sure fits our study of apologetics, for if our lives do not match our lips, all of the apologetics we can muster will not convince anyone to believe in what we are saying.

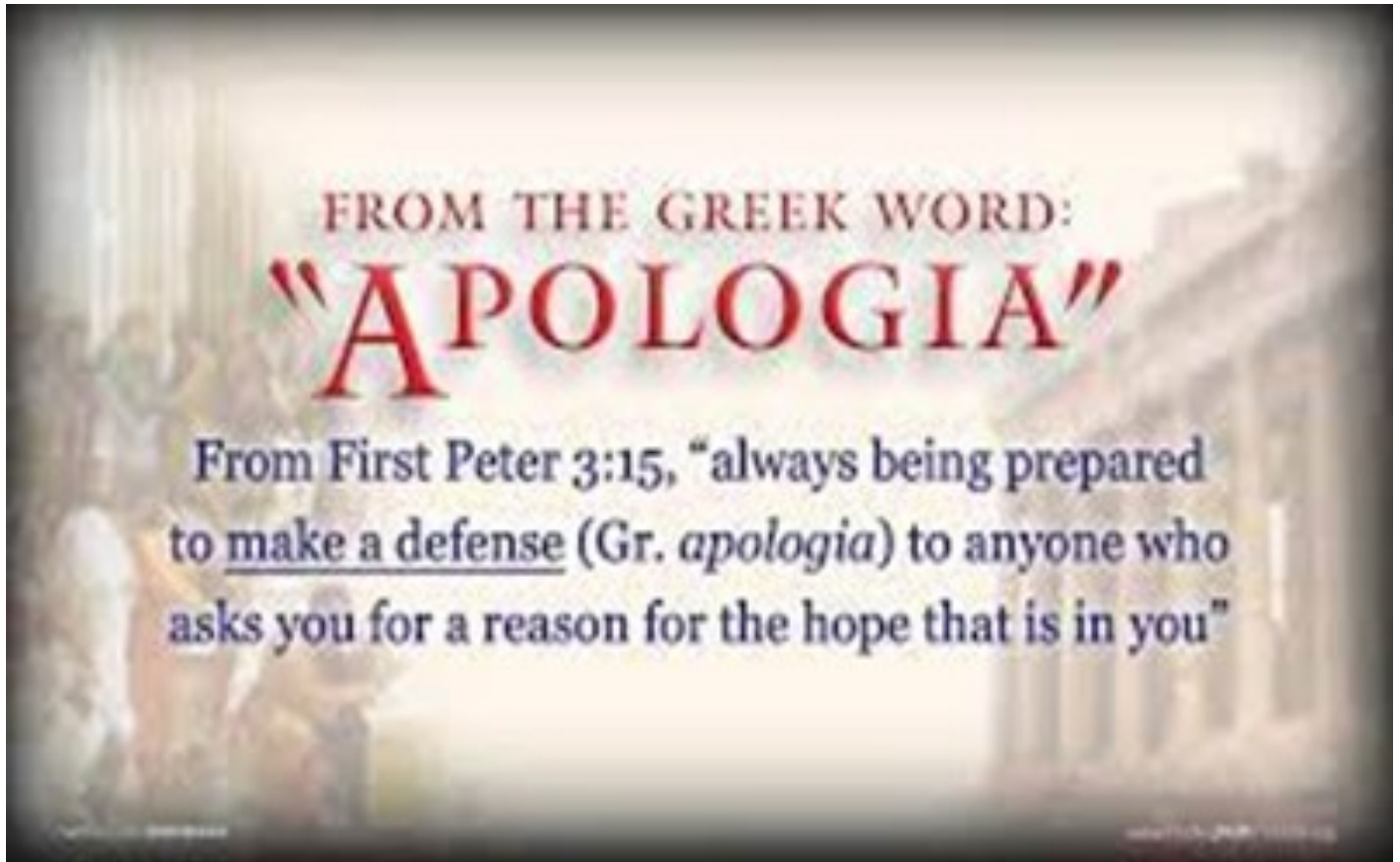
In an era where secularism and skepticism are the cultural norm, Christian apologetics is more important than ever. Even with the modern technologies available to us, the today’s Christians are no match for the secularists, which means our children are growing up in an Anti-God, Anti-Christ, Anti-Bible, Anti-truth culture, without the sufficient biblical knowledge to refute the lies of the evil one, much less with the ability to counter those lies with the truth of God’s Word.

The title of our second sermon in this series: **In the Defense of Our Faith is “Honoring Jesus Christ as Lord,”** based on 1 Peter 3:8-17.

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In The Defense of Our Faith “Honoring Jesus Christ as Lord” 1 Peter 3:8-17

Wayne J. Edwards, Pastor

Based on today's sermon themes, there is a greater focus on how Christians can enjoy God's temporal blessings than on the essential doctrines of the Christian Faith and how to defend them against the lies of the secular world.

- Right doctrine is essential to right living, for without knowing the biblical doctrine, i.e., THE LAW, it is impossible to live the Christian life.



Many “celebrity preachers” say the study of doctrine isn’t necessary at all, because it is divisive. Andy Stanley was quoted as having said, **“Unity is more important than theological correctness.”**

- In Philippians 1:9-11, the Apostle Paul prayed that the Christian’s love for one another would abound ***“in both knowledge and discernment, that you may approve things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense until the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness.”***
- The unity of the fellowship of believers must be built around the essential doctrines of the Christian faith.

So, Christian apologetics refers to the correct way to defend the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith, including:

- **Our trust in the reliability of the Holy Scriptures**, e., that the Bible is the divinely inspired Word of God; truth with no mixture of error in its content and intent; sufficient in all matters of faith and the expression of our faith.
- **The existence of the God**, who is revealed in the Bible as the only true God, and manifested in three distinct persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.
- **God’s plan for the redemption of lost man** through the sacrificial death of His only begotten Son, and therefore, our expressed faith in Jesus Christ as our Savior and submission unto Him as our Lord.

Obviously, right doctrine must be accompanied by right living – i.e., “Orthodoxy must be wed to orthopraxis.”

- One can have the right doctrines and live wrongly, but it is hard to live rightly if we do not believe rightly.

The main points of our last study:

- **The place we are called to witness is the hostile world in which we live** – and in which we will continue to live until the Lord delivers us from it.
- **The practice of our witness is the combination of righteous behavior and thoughtful words** – making sure we are living according to the standard we are about to explain to others.
- **The power of our witness is the Lord Jesus Christ** – in whom dwells all the authority in heaven and in earth.
- Evangelism is not about winning a verbal argument with those who do not believe as we do about biblical doctrine.
- Christian apologetics is not about educating our minds with the right words to say, but in conforming our lives to those biblical doctrines so we can set the right example.
- Christian apologetics is about our lives, for the sinner will not be led to Christ by our intellect alone.
- Before we can give someone a reason for the hope that is within us, they must see that hope within us, and such hope must emanate from the innermost recesses of our hearts.

The overarching themes of 1st Peter is the Christian’s call to suffer for the righteousness of Christ.

- Peter said Christians should expect to suffer, for our attitude toward suffering reveals our true testimony of faith.
- This is “living our apologetics,” showing them what it means to suffer for righteousness and how to maintain hope



“But if you should suffer for righteousness’ sake, you are blessed. And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled, but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts.” 1 Peter 3:14-15

- The Greek word translated as “sanctify” is “Hagiazō,” which means to set something apart for God’s use; to make it holy, to consecrate it, respect and reverence it.
- In Peter’s theology, to sanctify the Lord God in our hearts is to fully surrender our lives unto His Lordship.
- Peter’s conclusion was that before a Christian can give a verbal defense for their faith to others, they need to make sure they have settled the issue of Lordship in their lives.
- To honor Christ as Lord in our hearts is to:
 - Remember that God is sovereign over all, in all, and through all, even if He allows us to suffer.
 - Revere Jesus Christ as the Lord and Master of every area of our lives.
 - Realize that our testimony is about our faith in Christ and the difference our faith in Christ has made in our lives.
 - Recognize that our witness is about our salvation in Christ, which was a gift of God’s grace, and received by our faith alone in Christ alone.
 - Glorify Christ in all that we say and do.
- Therefore, if Christ is rightly honored in our conversation with an unbeliever, when the defense of our faith has been rightly made, and the reason for the hope of our lives has been rightly revealed, the one to whom we have been witnessing will have a right view of a holy God, and will be receptive to the gospel of salvation.

Peter said, as Christians who have been saved by God’s grace, we are to defend our faith in the Lord Jesus with an attitude of:

- **Meekness** – Meekness is not weakness – meekness is strength under control, and when we witness to someone with an attitude of meekness, we show our respect for what has been given to us by the grace of God.
- **Fear** – Fear is not to be afraid – fear is to show reverence and respect, realizing that what is going on at that moment is more than just winning an intellectual debate, but rather it is to get in the middle of what God is doing in the heart of the person to whom we are witnessing.
- In John 6:44, Jesus said no one could come to Him unless the Father draws them. While we can lay the foundation for one’s faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord, only the Holy Spirit can regenerate their souls and lead them to a saving knowledge of Christ. Therefore, we have no right to approach a sinner with an air of superiority.





"When God gives us the opportunity to share or defend our faith in Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord, if we will honor the Lord in our heart by yielding ourselves unto Him, He will replace our fear with hope, and with a holy boldness."

- The place to begin in our study of apologetics is our acceptance of God's sovereignty, which means He has absolute authority over every area of our lives.
- Then, our primary activity is to keep our hearts filled with hope through our daily study of God's Word and our unconditional trust in the promises of His Word.

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