

**Christ-Centered Apologetics** - Manuscript - <http://sdapologetics.com/>

- I. (Text) Since we are in 1 Peter today and I want to set the stage for our text.
  - A. (Authorship) **The author is the apostle Peter.** Peter was one of Jesus' disciples who was with Jesus personally throughout His ministry.
    1. Peter is the disciple who made the confession of Jesus being the true Messiah, the confession that Jesus said he would build His church on, in Matthew 16.
    2. Peter was also the one who denied Jesus three times and had to face the resurrected Jesus in his shame for denying His Lord.
      - a) It was then, at the time Peter answered Jesus after His resurrection, that Jesus told Peter to "Tend my sheep."
      - b) This is significant because we now get to see first hand in the epistle we are in today Peter doing just that. He is being obedient to His Lord in tending to the flock of believers in Pontus, Galatia, Capadocia, Asia and Bithynia (Bith-IN-eh-uh).
  - B. (Location) Those locations are what we would know today as Asia Minor, or more specifically, mostly **the area of the country of Turkey.**
  - C. (Audience) At the beginning of this letter we find that **Peter is writing to "the elect" who are the Christians in those areas.**
    1. There are some who argue that he was writing *only to the Jewish Christians*, but evidence throughout the letter indicates that he was writing to all Christians because he says of his audience: those who have been called "out of darkness into his marvelous light", who once "were no people, but now are the people of God".
      - a) Their unconverted days are described as "the time of your ignorance" which is a term suited to Gentile readers.
      - b) Furthermore, they are reminded and warned against *their old heathen practices* from which Peter writes that *they have been delivered*. If it were only Jews he were writing to, they **would not** have thought it "strange," as it says in chapter 4 verse 4, to abstain from partaking in heathen practices. *This is because Jews kept themselves separate from those kind of pagan things as a regular practice (the Mosaic Law).*
      - c) **From this evidence it's clear that all Christians, Jewish or not, are in Peter's mind as he is writing this letter.**
  - D. (Occasion) Throughout the epistle we also see that **the reason Peter is writing to these Christians is because they had begun to experience sharp opposition and persecution for their faith.**
    1. There's no evidence in the text that *serious physical persecution, imprisonment or martyrdom* had taken place yet. But it does describe their situation as a "**test by fire**" or a "**fiery trial.**"
    2. They were likely experiencing **slander** and having **their reputations in society purposefully injured for the very sake of being Christians.**

3. They were being hated because they stopped taking part in sinful activities that were considered *normal* by the culture they lived in.
- E. (Initial Context) As we begin to focus in on the passage (that we're going to be in today) **we need to be aware of what has come before this text.**
1. First Peter is a rich letter in our NT *of very deep theology for the soul*. In my Tuesday night bible study in the Hills we have been traveling verse by verse through First Peter and it's been the best bible study I've ever done in a small group.
    - a) Peter hits on some of the most profound truths of the Christian life just in the first chapter! **He talks about the Christian's goal of growing in holiness, called sanctification, and grounds it in the truth of being found clean by the blood of Christ, which is called justification.** (Setting up the theme of this letter?)
    - b) He talks about the *trials that we will experience* as "proof of our faith," going back to what Jesus said, that if we are His disciples we **will** experience persecution in this life.
    - c) He talks about the "love of the brethren" which is the desire to be in fellowship with other believers once we're saved.
    - d) All of this in Chapter One...
    - e) I could go on, but the point is that Peter has given us *so much insight into the truth of what it means to be a Christian* in this letter.
  2. In chapter two he gives a warning to strive for purity from the lusts of the world, to be as "spiritual houses" for the work of God, to honor the authorities which God has instituted and *to look to Christ at all times as the perfect example* of all of those things.
- F. (Verse) Finally, in chapter three **Peter gets down to the specifics of Godly living** and *speaks directly to wives and husbands*, since the family is one of the most important institutions that God has created on earth.
- a) Let's begin reading in verse eight:
  - b) *"To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing. For,*
    - (1) *"The one who desires life, to love and see good days, Must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit.*
    - (2) *"He must turn away from evil and do good; He must seek peace and pursue it.*
    - (3) *"For the eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous, And His ears attend to their prayer,*
    - (4) *But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."*
  - c) *Who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good? But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you*

are blessed. And do not fear their intimidation, and do not be troubled, but **sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts**, always **being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence**; and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame. For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong.

2. (Apologetics) **Verse fifteen is THE go-to text for apologetics.** In Greek the word defense is **apologia** which is where we get the transliteration in english **Apologetics**.
  - a) Since this is a command to all Christians it's a powerful verse to use to stress *the importance of knowing what you believe and why you believe it*.
  - b) There's a lie going around in churches today **that faith is simply blind** and **you don't need to have reasons for what you believe**. But this verse flies in the face of that lie. You're either a good apologist or a bad one, but to not be one at all means *you are not a Christian*.
  - c) All Christians should be able to give a defense for the hope they have in Jesus. This should not be in dispute.
  - d) There are other verses in scripture that support this command, such as:
    - (1) Jude 3 which says we must all "**Contend for the faith** once for all delivered to the saints."
    - (2) 2 Cor. 10:5 says "We **destroy arguments** and **every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God**, and take every thought captive to obey Christ"
  - e) There is evidence throughout scripture that we must have a **trust-like faith** based on *reasonable hope* - hope that lies in the evidence that God has provided:
    - (1) God presents himself **in all creation**... "For (God's) invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, *have been clearly perceived*, ever since the creation of the world, **in the things that have been made**." Romans 1:20
    - (2) Evidence from **our conscience**... "For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that **the work of the law is written on their hearts**" Romans 2:14-15a

- (3) We also have ***the evidence of scripture itself***: “Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but **these are written so that you may believe** that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” John 20:30-31, “**I write these things to you who believe** in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.” 1 John 5:13 (“living and active...”)
- (4) Jesus even gave evidence to establish who he was and that he had authority to forgive sins, in Luke 5:23. His entire ministry was filled with miracles as evidence of His authority, all ending with **the greatest miracle - rising from the dead**.
- (5) ***Even our faith***, which is given to us when we believe, ***is evidence***: “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, **the evidence of things not seen**.” Hebrews 11:1
- f) In John MacArthur’s study notes for this part of the verse, he says that Peter “*is insisting that the believer **must understand what he believes and why one is a Christian, and then be able to articulate one’s beliefs humbly, thoughtfully, reasonably, and biblically.***”
- (1) Humility and thoughtfulness are important attributes to keep in mind!
- (2) What I want to note most importantly is that **apologetics 101 is knowing your Bible well**. If you don’t spend time in God’s Word regularly, ***you can’t be a good apologist***.
- (3) I can’t stress enough - especially after the debate we just had with the Iglesia ni Cristo cult - that you can be so easily deceived if you don’t know God’s Word well.  
(Examples)
- g) Now, *I have every reason to use 1 Peter 3:15 to show just how important apologetics is*. But, **one thing that I don’t want you to miss is the first part of this verse**.
- h) See, in order for us to be good apologists... or even just apologists at all... there are some **prerequisites**.
3. (Sanctify) It’s easy for me to skip over the first part of the verse and jump right to my favorite part. But to do that, *as James White pointed out to me a couple weeks ago to my friends and I*, **is to miss the most important part of being a defender of the faith**.
- a) In the beginning of verse fifteen it says “**sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts...**”, this part sets the stage for **everything** that comes after it.

b) **Sanctify** -what does that mean???

(1) It means to means to **set apart**. Other translations render it in these ways:

- (a) *Revere* (treat with reverence) Christ as Lord
- (b) *Honor* Him...
- (c) *Worship* the Messiah in your heart
- (d) *Exalt* Him in your heart
- (e) *Hallow* Him- like the Lord's prayer - hallowed be your name, Lord Jesus...
- (f) *Dedicate your life* to Christ as Lord
- (g) *Declare as sacred* the Messiah as Lord in your heart

(2) What are we doing (?) when we set apart Jesus as Lord in our hearts?

(3) We are treating him as God ought to be treated - we are **treating Him as Holy...**

c) *What is Holiness though?*

(1) There are many passages in the Bible which point us to understanding holiness. *All throughout the OT* we get a picture of God who is distinct from his Creation in a *morally perfect way*.

(2) We get a very clear and concise definition from MacArthur and Mayhue's systematic theology called "Biblical Doctrine":

- (a) "God's holiness is his inherent and absolute greatness, in which he is perfectly distinct above everything outside himself and is absolutely morally separate from sin."

(3) They point out that this definition comes from understanding the hebrew and greek words for holy which are centered around **the concept of separation**.

d) *What does it mean to treat Jesus as Holy?*

(1) Contrast the **common things** in life: our **clothes**, our **dishes**, **furniture**, our **vehicles**... we use them, we wear them out. To treat something *as commonplace* we treat it like we treat *those things*, we don't give any special attention to them. They have their place, but *they don't impact our life in any significant way*. We don't go around constantly thinking about those things - at least hopefully we don't.

(2) **Jesus is not to be treated as we treat those common things**. Instead He is to be treasured as the most

important person every hour of every day. We are to *meditate on His infinite worth within our hearts.*

- e) **God is so perfect: in His deeds, in His righteousness, in His moral purity; that He is to be treated in virtue of those truths. But He demands in this verse that we don't just treat Him outwardly as Holy, making a show of it in front of others, but inwardly. We must always be reminding ourselves that Jesus is sacred to us and worship Him within the sanctuary of our hearts. If we do this - if we treat Him as he ought to be treated - our hearts, along with our minds, will be transformed.**
- f) On this note, I'd like to take us for a trip into First Peter chapter one, verse thirteen through seventeen:
- (1) "Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, **do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance**, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, "**You shall be holy, for I am holy.**"
  - (2) If you address **as** Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, **conduct yourselves in fear** during the time of your stay on earth"
- g) We are commanded here to "be holy" as Jesus is Holy.
- (1) We are even to "**conduct ourselves in fear**", why does he say that?
  - (2) Because when we revere and set apart Christ, we do it in a proper context of **fearing Him only**. *Fear of any other sort is not permitted.* Instead, fearing Him *who will judge the world one day is the only right fear we should ever have.*
  - (3) One might say, "*but doesn't perfect love cast out fear?*" Absolutely, but *when is the last time YOU loved perfectly?*
  - (4) Until our time comes to be glorified with Christ - *after our deaths* - we cannot love perfectly. Instead **we keep that fear of God, which is proper, so that we will continually seek obedience, even in the midst of struggling in sin.**
- h) You might be thinking, "Boy, this is a high calling... this sounds nearly impossible to do, setting apart Christ in my heart, seeking holiness..." And you would be right for thinking that.
- (1) But this is the calling to all Christians. God doesn't lower his standard. Instead, as Christ is working in us, he helps us.

(2) We can only begin doing this **by drawing from the power of the Holy Spirit, with the foundation of God's Word renewing our minds each day.**

i) **If we are sanctifying Christ as Lord in our hearts, we will then have the foundation to be the apologist we are called to be.**

We will saturate our minds with God's truth so that we will be prepared to give an answer in love to everyone who asks.

j) But we won't simply be a good apologist, we will be a good spouse, a good worker, a good neighbor, a good servant to all...

k) You'll desire to **"present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth."**

l) You'll **"Let no one deceive you with empty words"**

m) You'll even **"flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart."**

n) You'll **"Walk as children of the light"** and you won't partner with those who are **"sexually immoral or impure"**, who are **"covetous"**, and those who have **"no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ"**. You won't take part **"in the unfruitful works of darkness"**, but instead you'll **"expose them."** (Ephesians 5:5-11)

o) I'm not saying we **isolate** ourselves from the rest of the world - not at all. *But what these truths are communicating* is that we must be **in the world, but not OF the world. We must stand out from it.**

4. (Final) I could go on about the results.... But let me be clear - if we seek to sanctify Christ in our hearts, he **will** sanctify us. Jesus will set US apart from everyone else and make us different in a way that is glorifying to Him.

a) If we stand out from the crowd, **people will notice.** And just like it says in our verse - be prepared to respond if someone asks.... Because *people will ask what makes you different.* They will want to know what it is that gives you an OTHER-WORLDLY hope!

b) You will be able to respond in **gentleness** and **reverence.** This is the goal of the command. And the command in our verse *is the highest calling of a Christian in this life.* It's **the calling to be renewed in our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.**

c) Here is the *tweetable quote for today*, in case that's what you were waiting on:

**(1) The wisdom of the world is behavior modification,  
But the wisdom of God is heart transformation**

II. (Conclusion) In our verse today we focused a lot on **what you ought to be doing with the Messiah in your heart.**

- A. Proverbs 4:23 says “*Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.*”
- B. In relation to that Jesus said, “*The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.*” Luke 6:45
- C. He says that our hearts are the **control centers** which produce **the good or the evil that overflows out of us**. Our sinfulness flows from our hearts.
- D. The bible also tells us the ***the heart is desperately wicked, who can know it?*** (Jer. 17:9)
- E. But I want to take the last few minutes to focus on something else Jesus said in the heart passage above. He used the words “**good person**”.
1. In the account of the rich man asking Jesus how he can attain eternal life (in Mark 10), Jesus says “***Why do you call me good, there is none good but God...***”
  2. Did Jesus contradict himself? **No, in the passage about the heart Jesus was giving a contrast for the sake of teaching. When speaking to the rich man, Jesus needed to make it clear that there is only one standard of goodness, and *that standard is God Himself.***
- F. (Gospel) **This should be a humbling thought.** There is “*none good but God alone...*” You and I, compared to God, *are so dirty and vile*, we don’t deserve anything. God has given us an abundance of riches we don’t deserve and we throw it back in his face.
1. After all we’ve talked about today, none of it can benefit you if you have not *laid the foundation of your life upon the only foundation that counts - Jesus Christ.* (Matt. 7:24-27)
  2. But just like a sick person who doesn’t know they are sick, you will not think you need Jesus if you think you are fine without Him.
  3. **Do you think you are a good person?** If so I urge you today, right now, ***look into the mirror of God’s law.*** (James 1:22-25)
    - a) **Have you lied?** The Bible says all liars will have their part in the lake of fire.
    - b) **Have you stolen**, no matter the value?
    - c) Have you **hated someone?** Jesus said that is murder of the heart!
    - d) **Have you lusted?** Jesus said that is adultery of the heart!
    - e) As the Scriptures say,
      - (1) ***“None is righteous, no, not one;***
      - (2) ***no one understands;***
      - (3) ***no one seeks for God.***
      - (4) ***All have turned aside; together they have become worthless;***
      - (5) ***no one does good,***
      - (6) ***not even one.”***
      - (7) ***“Their throat is an open grave;***



- (8) *they use their tongues to deceive.”*  
 (9) *“The venom of asps is under their lips.”*  
 (10) *“Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness.”*  
 (11) *“Their feet are swift to shed blood;*  
 (12) *in their paths are ruin and misery,*  
 (13) *and the way of peace they have not known.”*  
 (14) *“There is no fear of God before their eyes.”*

(Romans 3:10-18)

4. These truths **should** strip you clean of all your pride. They should bring you to the low place you and I both deserve. We should be humbled before a Holy and Just God. (James 4:6)
5. **God will not allow sin to go unpunished. (Acts 17:31)** If you are here today thinking that you can get along fine on your own, you will be terrified the day you have to face God. I don't want to be in your shoes.
- a) On the streets of Rapid City, I talk to people about their sin, and I tell them that our default destination is hell.
  - b) You'd be floored by the number of people who don't think hell is anything to worry about! (apathy [Ephesians 4:19](#))
  - c) Jesus talked far more about hell than he did about heaven. He said it's a place where **“the worm never dies”, “the fire is never quenched”** (Mark 9:48) and **“there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.”** (Matthew 13:42)
  - d) Hell is very serious. And right now, you may be thinking... I'm Ok, I'll be fine... but the scriptures also say to **examine yourself to see if you are in the faith.** (2 Cor. 13:5, 2 Peter 1:10-11)
  - e) Jesus is **not** a **“get out of hell free card”** you get punched.
  - f) Jesus gives us a picture of the day of judgement and informs us that there will be many who will say **“did we not know you Lord? Did we not do many things in your name?”** and **Jesus will say “away from me you worker of lawlessness, I NEVER KNEW YOU.”**
    - (1) There will be people who THOUGHT they knew Jesus, but they did not.
    - (2) **Do you have a false assurance?** Are you trusting in something other than the true Christ? Perhaps your trust is in a prayer you prayed or a confession you made. Those things will not save you.
    - (3) You need to drop to your knees today and *cry out to be saved!* You need be **humbled by God's law...** because if you've broken even one of His commands, *you've broken the whole law.*
    - (4) If you have not **surrendered your life to Christ - repented - turned away from your sins** - and trusted in

the Jesus *revealed in the pages of scripture*, I urge you to do that today.

(5) Today is the day of salvation. Don't wait any longer. (2 Cor. 6:2)