

are preparing for God's harvest. Remember what Jesus said in John 15:5, "**I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.**"

- 3) God the Holy Spirit indwells all true Christians. We can always depend on His help. Our part is to be walking in the Spirit, that is yielding to His leading and fleeing temptation (Gal 5:16-17, 22-23, 25).

b. Our answer must be ready for every occasion.

- 1) If we are letting our light shine for Christ, occasionally someone may ask about our faith.
- 2) If we take a stand for what is right, we must be ready to give an answer to those who question us.
- 3) Often the occasion will be the result of asking God for opportunities and then tactfully bringing up the subject.

3. Clearly, know the hope that is in you.

a. If you are a true Christian, you have hope.

- 1) Our faces and lives ought to display our hope.
- 2) Our hope is the confident expectation that Christ will take us to heaven to live with Him for all eternity.
- 3) We must not be ashamed of the reason of our hope – new life in Jesus Christ.

b. Be able to explain your hope properly.

- 1) Explain it with meekness. Have a gentle, humble spirit when explaining your hope of eternal life in heaven. We have not earned that hope. It is 100% a gift of God's grace.
- 2) Explain it with fear. That is, explain it with a reverent respect for God who provides such a priceless hope.

Conclusion: Overcoming the obstacles to witnessing is a matter of sanctifying the Lord God in our hearts, being ready always to give an answer to every man and being able to explain clearly the hope that is in us. This will not guarantee that every person to whom we witness will trust Christ, but it does help us to do our part properly for God's glory.

Are you 100% sure that you will go to heaven?

Song: Have I Done My Best - 368

Boldness in Witnessing

21 May 2023 AM – 1 Peter 3:14-15 – Witnessing – Scott Childs

Introduction: Statistics indicate that about 95% of all professing Christians will go through life without ever sharing the Gospel with anyone. Why do we fail to witness for Christ as we ought? For some, it may be **ignorance** – they just do not know how. Occasionally, it may be **apathy** – we just do not really feel the urgency. Often **fear** plays a big part – fear of rejection, of persecution, or of being unable to answer questions. I struggle with this. Here is a Scripture God uses to rebuke me. (Proverbs 29:25) "**The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe.**" We should not fear to share the **good news** of salvation.

In preparation for this sermon, I listened to Donnie Anthony, author of "**Share Jesus Fearlessly**". He identified another significant reason we fail to witness – we may lack an exciting, growing, **love-relationship** with Christ. I think he is right. When we are passionately excited about something, we want to tell everyone about it. Grandparents love to show off photos of their grandchildren. Gardeners love to talk about their gardens. Fishermen like to recount their fishing experiences. New homeowners like to give tours of their new home. Each of these is passionate about something and not ashamed to tell others about it. Could it be that the main reason that we do not witness more is that our walk with the Lord is dull, and we are not excited about the subject? Sadly, I think that is often my problem.

Transition: How are we to overcome our obstacles to witnessing? Here in this verse, Peter gives us some answers that I believe will help us.

1. Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts

a. What does it mean to sanctify?

- 1) The word literally means to set apart unto God and apart from the world. It is to view God as holy.
- 2) It is giving God first place in our lives. Thus, it is to make God the joy of our lives and our continual focus.
- 3) How can we sanctify the Lord like this?
 - a) Well, we cannot do it until we truly know Him as our Saviour. Sadly, many who claim to be Christians are

just fakes. They are trusting in a prayer, an experience or their good deeds. They have never truly repented of their sins and trusted Christ alone to rescue them from damnation in hell. Their lives have never changed. As a result, they find it a struggle to read the Bible, pray and to live like a Christian. *If that describes you, you need to humble yourself and seek help.*

- b) Sanctifying the Lord God takes a desire. You will not do it until you choose to “clean house”, get rid of sinful baggage, and long to give God first place in your life so that you can live for His glory.
- c) Sanctifying the Lord will involve setting aside time. Young couples build friendships by spending lots of time together. They study each other. They talk with each other. They think about each other. Such fellowship is what keeps marriages strong and happy. Sanctifying the Lord will take no less time and effort.
- d) We must keep the Lord in our thoughts.

b. This sanctifying must be in our hearts.

- 1) Did you know that God truly DESIRES a close relationship with you? *He does!* God created you for His pleasure (Rev 4:11). When we fellowship with God, we fulfil our created purpose. When we have a church fellowship, we get together and enjoy each other’s conversation. That is what God desires with you and me every day.
- 2) If we become excited about our Bible study and about our walk with the Lord, we will want to tell others what God is doing in our lives.
- 3) Each of us has good things that we enjoy in this life. That is not wrong. However, God wants to be one of those good things we truly enjoy. In fact, He wants us to set him apart as a treasure.
- 4) Is the Lord your special treasure? Jesus said, (Matthew 6:21) **"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."** If you cannot honestly say that you treasure a sweet fellowship with God, you will lack the excitement of

heart to tell others about Him.

- 5) Peter knew well that some people will bluntly reject our witness (Read again, v.14). The devil wants this to cause fear in our hearts and to discourage us. I must admit, it is disheartening. On Tuesday, as I was preparing this sermon, the Lord gave me a chance to witness to a rural woman that gives me horse manure. I had prayed for her and for the words to say. I was gentle and kind, but she flatly rejected my witness and let me know that she did not like people trying to convert her. She rejected God, not me. It still hurt me, but I just gave it to the Lord and prayed for her. *God does not want us to view evangelism as a dreaded duty. He wants us to view it as telling others about our wonderful God and His invitation to heaven.*

2. Be ready always to give an answer

a. God wants us to be ready.

- 1) Getting ready always involves preparation. To get ready for an exam, you must study. To get ready for visitors, you may clean the house and prepare food. Getting ready for work may mean setting out your briefcase or tools.
- 2) Getting ready to witness for the Lord also involves preparation.
 - a) We must first sanctify the Lord God in our hearts. If we are not excited about the salvation God has given us, we are not ready to share it.
 - b) Learn all that you can about sharing the Gospel. You do not need a Bible degree in order to witness. However, you at least need to be able to explain clearly how you trusted Christ. *We will dig more into this next Sunday, Lord willing.*
 - c) We then must seek God’s help and depend on Him. It is not our job to save people in the true sense of the word. Only God can save a person. In 1 Corinthians 3:5-7, the Apostle Paul compared witnessing to farming. Some people plough, others cultivate, plant, water, and weed, but only God can give the increase. Each time you share the gospel with someone, you