

Lesson Notes: 1 Peter 3:14b-16 (NIV based)

TITLE: Giving An Answer For The Hope That Is In You

READ: 1 Peter 3:14b-16, with vv.13-14a for context

v.14b (cf. Isaiah 8:12b)

"Fear" and "frightened" of what? And why should we believers not fear or be frightened?

- - Generally, evildoers do not harm those people who are striving to do good (v.13). But if such harm nevertheless does come for doing what is right (v.14a), then believers should not fear or be frightened of that harm, with its accompanying suffering.
 - - The righteous sufferer should stand firm in the confidence that God is on his/her side and not give in to fear, which also will extinguish what God is going to do in and through that righteous sufferer within that unwarranted harm and suffering situation.
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v.15

How does God want us believers to respond to unjust harm and suffering from other people?

- - Rather than respond to harm with fear and fright, instead respond to harm and suffering from others with pure devotion to Christ, which implies not defending your rights.
- - The willpower to righteously stand firm in unjust suffering needs to sprout or spring forth from being spiritually "set apart" "in your heart", perhaps implying that divinely-empowered fortitude results from personal consecration - especially in the midst of suffering situations.
- - This kind of silent, passive, non-defending acquiescing to the receiving of unjust harm and suffering is quite unusual and by nature creates opportunities to convey why you are responding in this passive manner to unjust harm inflicted upon you.
- - Therefore, we believers are to take advantage of these opportunities by giving a verbal witness to supplement and clarify your non-verbal response to unjust harm.
- - And a non-verbal message is insufficient in itself to explain to other people why you are responding in this passive godly manner.
- - So, "being prepared" means not missing any opportunity to give a verbal witness.
- - A "prepared" answer insures that the critical facts are given.
- - "Always" suggests that you cannot accurately anticipate when an inquiry will occur.
- - "Everyone" suggests that God wants you to give a verbal witness no matter what the potential is for ridicule, ostracizing, negative backlash, "malicious speaking against you" (v.16), etc.
- - Your righteously suffering unjustly will be noticed by other people around you and will thereupon incite inquiries from them about how you are able to stand up in the midst of the suffering.
- - But a harsh or disrespectful response will negate the virtue of your answer and be counter-productive to God's purposes and working within this unjust suffering situation.
- - How you deliver your verbal answer is just as important as what content you deliver.

- - Therefore, the proper and the effect-producing way is to give this answer with "gentleness and respect" as to why you are responding in this passive manner to the unjust harm inflicted upon you.

v.16

Why does God want us to respond in this passive and godly manner, followed by a gentle and respectful verbal answer? What is He trying to accomplish in this?

- - Succumbing to responding naturally with sinfulness will corrupt your mindset and your "conscience" before God.
- - Hypocrisy will also negate the godly answer that you want to give to those watching and inquiring people.
- - So, responding in all godliness to the unjust harm and in the delivery of an answer will establish and fortify the credibility and the potential for impact of your answer.
- - Eventually, those people who reject your answer will realize your innocence, the rightness of your answer, and their abusive treatment of you.
- - Expect that a "malicious", "slandorous", or scornful response may come at times, perhaps even from unexpected sources such as your own church people, or ministry co-workers, or believer family members!
- - Regardless of how people react to your "good behavior in Christ" as you endure unjust harm, stay focused on the long-term goal of maintaining credible godly non-verbal and verbal witness of your faith.
- - We are to realize and remember that you are getting the attention of other people by your "good behavior in Christ".
- - Continue to give non-verbal witness in the hope that one day you will have opportunity to give verbal witness, which you will forthrightly take advantage of with a credible godly answer.
- - Persevere in suffering in this godly manner, as necessary, so that your non-verbal witness will initiate opportunity for verbal witness.
- - A main ultimate goal of God is to comprehensively use various aspects of this whole situation to bring other people to God through Christ. (v.18)

BIG IDEA: Be prepared to give a reason for the hope that is in you, but the reason has to match your behaviors, speaking, and attitudes.

IMPORTANT SUB-POINTS: What are some other important points God is making here in these verses?

APPLICATIONS: What applications can you think of for how we should respond to the concepts in these verses?

PERSONALIZED APPLICATIONS: From these verses, what do you think God wants you to learn, or know, or remember, or put into effect in your life? How are you going to do that?

Works Cited:

Bible. "The Holy Bible: New International Version." *The Bible Library CD-ROM*. Oklahoma City, OK: Ellis Enterprises, 1988.

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