

Sermon Quotes
August 24, 2008
I Peter 3:13-18 The Hope that is within you

Scripture Text:

I Peter 3:13 – 18

13 Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? 14 But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, 15 but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, 16 having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. 17 For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.

18 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit,

Greek word for “Defend” - Apologia from which we get “Apologetics”

Criticisms of Apologetics:

- a. Some would say, “I don’t need facts and apologetics” I just have faith, I just love Jesus. To that we say “Praise God!”
- b. Then there are those who tend to be a bit more skeptical. Those who like Thomas, need to put their fingers in Christ’s pierced hands.
- c. Christianity is a faith founded in facts, it is founded in truth.
- d. Apologetics is Biblical.
 - i. Job – God asks 61 questions back to back to back many of which are “apologetic” in nature.
 - ii. Acts 17 (reasoned, persuaded, explain, proving, examining)
 - iii. Romans 1:20 – “For his 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. So they are without excuse.”
- e. Apologetics never rescues / never saves
 - i. Holy Spirit draws us and God Saves us through His Son.
 - ii. But apologetics removes barriers to the heart and to the mind.

The Bible is unique in its continuity.

It was written over a 1,500-year span covering over forty generations. When we refer to the “generation gap” today, we typically refer to the challenges that arise when individuals from just two different generations attempt to communicate but we will soon see the Bible overcomes FORTY “generation gaps”! And there is more – this amazing book was written by over forty authors from every walk of life ranging from fisherman to kings and doctors to tax collectors. It was written in different places, from the wilderness to palaces and from dungeons to battlefields. It was written at different times including war, peace, abundance, famine, freedom and captivity. It was written during different moods as varied as joy, sorrow, celebration and despair. It was written on the three continents of Asia, Africa and Europe and was written in the three languages of Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic.

Gather ten authors from one walk of life, one generation, one place, one time, one mood, one continent, one language and give them one controversial subject to write about. One would not be surprised to find that they delivered ten completely different and contradictory perspectives. Contrast that to the Bible which speaks about hundreds of controversial subjects yet maintains one consistent and harmonious theme - - God’s redemption of man!¹

The Bible is Unique in its Circulation²

#1 bestseller year in and year out. Not other book is in more languages than the Bible.

The Bible is Unique in its Survival³

It has survived thousands of years despite severe persecution. In fact, we will see shortly that it has survived and fared much better than any other ancient texts, none of which were “persecuted”

The French Skeptic Voltaire declared the Bible would be gone 100 years after his death. Well it has certainly been more than a hundred years and the Bible managed to remain the world’s best-seller every year since his death. Furthermore, his home was later used to print thousands of Bibles. 😊

The Bible is Unique in its Influence⁴

The historian Philip Schaff (*The Person of Christ*, American Tract Society, 1913) vividly describes its uniqueness along with its central theme, the Savior:

¹Josh McDowell, *Evidence that Demands a Verdict* (San Bernardino: Here’s Life Publishers, 1979), 17.

²*Ibid.*, 18.

³*Ibid.*, 19.

⁴*Ibid.*, 24.

This Jesus of Nazareth, without money and arms, conquered more millions than Alexander, Caesar, Mohammed, and Napoleon; without science and learning, He shed more light on things human and divine than all philosophers and scholars combined; without the eloquence of schools, He spoke such words of life as were never spoken before or since, and produced effects which lie beyond the reach of orator or poet; without writing a single line, He set more pens in motion, and furnished themes for more sermons, orations, discussions, learned volumes, works of art, and songs of praise than the whole army of great men of ancient and modern times.

Unique in God-centeredness

In every other major belief system and probably every minor belief system one finds salvation (however defined) through one's own efforts. Christianity is the only one where you cannot save yourself. Furthermore it is the only one to propose the most outlandish notion of all. Unlike the others where man attempts to appease in Christianity you find the most amazing example of love, mercy and grace in the entire universe. The CREATOR, sends His Son to die for the sinful, rebellious CREATED. I find this most compelling for in no other book of religion does man write such a thing. It is shockingly different and it tells us that there was something more at work than just man writing this book. Does that not scream "Inspired of the Holy Spirit"?

"Let us be sure of one thing. While God has given us more than enough evidence to make believing in him a reasonable thing He has not given us enough evidence that we may base our belief in Him on reason alone."

– Ravi Zacharias

Hebrews 11: 6 "And Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who seek Him."

- II. Two points of application
 - a. Be Prepared
 - i. Know that I Peter 3:15 is a command to all believers past, present and future. BE PREPARED.
 - 1. Don't have to be Ravi Zacharias but be diligent to be prepared to make a defense of the hope that is within you.
 - ii. Humble Yourself
 - iii. Pursue Accountability
 - iv. Seek Godly Counsel – Pastors / Parents

Proverbs 18:1 Whoever isolates himself seeks his own desire; he breaks out against all sound judgment.

- b. Pray
 - i. Parents you cannot assume your children's salvation and more importantly you cannot save them. This is not a call for you to take on the role of the Holy Spirit and start being in your children's face constantly doubting their salvation.
 - ii. We as parents, more than anything else, should be on our face before God, praying and crying out to God that He draw them to Himself.
 - 1. Matt 7:7 – “Ask and it shall be given unto you” conditioned later in the passage by ...”how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him! There is no question that God considers the salvation of our children to be a good thing.
 - 2. Trust God. Carolyn Mahaney asked biggest regret raising children? I wish I had feared less and trusted God more.