

The Art of Apologetics

1 Peter 3:13-16

I. Intro

● Anecdote

• Testimony

- It was the summer of 1995 - when I found myself - face to face with an old friend who had become a born-again believer.
- Next thing I knew - he had his Bible out - and he was encouraging me to consider the Christian faith.
- In response to his evangelistic endeavors - I challenged his newfound worldview...
- ...by presenting him with questions about Biblical inaccuracies - the existence of dinosaurs - and yeah - aliens from outer space.
- Much to my surprise - he had a reasonable response for all of the problems that I presented.
- And not only that - but - he also presented me with many apologetic arguments...
- ...which helped me to see that - it makes good sense - to embrace the gospel message of Jesus Christ.

II. Outline

● Points

• The Art

- In this way - the guy who led me to the Lord Jesus - engaged in the art of apologetics...

- ...as he presented me with many reasonable reasons for why I should repent - and trust in the Lord Jesus.
- And all of this - according to the instructions that the Apostle Peter presented to the original recipients of his first epistle.
- And as we spend some time studying these instructions - we'll begin to see that...
 1. ...The Art of Apologetics begins with a Righteous Devotion
 2. ...The Art of Apologetics involves a Reasonable Explanation
 3. ...The Art of Apologetics includes Respectful Communication
 - With this as our outline - let's open our Bibles to 1st Peter chapter 3...
 - ...where we find the apostle Peter - helping His audience to understand the Art of Apologetics.

III. Righteous Devotion

● Set up

• Context

- As you make your way to 1st Peter 3 - - I should take a moment to provide you with some context for today's text.
- It'll help you to know that - Peter was writing this letter - to a group of Jewish believers - who were living in the Gentile world...
 - ...after fleeing for their lives — from those who were persecuting Christians - back in the land of promise.
 - Sadly - the persecution of believers was becoming a common practice throughout the entire Roman Empire.
 - And it's for this reason - that Peter encouraged his audience to stop running...

- ...and to start defending the Christian faith - with apologetic arguments.
- With this as our focus - let's pick up our study of 1st Peter 3 - beginning there at verse 13 - where Peter asked...

● Text

1Pe 3:13 Who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good?

1Pe 3:14 But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. "And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled."

1Pe 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;

1Pe 3:16 having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed.

- Suffer
 - Here in our text today - we find Peter - encouraging the original recipients of this epistle...
 - ...to stop running from their persecutors - and instead - to start defending the Christian faith.
 - And just to be clear - Peter wasn't challenging them to engage in a physical fight.
 - No - instead - he was instructing them to become bold believers - who were willing to suffer the pain of persecution...
 - ...so that they might also have an opportunity to offer an apologetic argument...
 - ...to those who wanted to know why they were willing to suffer for righteousness' sake.
- Defense

- In order to further grasp Peter's point - it'll help you to know that the phrase found there in the middle of vs 15 which was rendered - give a defense...
- ...was translated from the Greek word - apologia - - which is the basis for our term - Apologetics.
- And seeing how the Greek word - Apologia - is defined as a reasoned statement or argument which is given in defense of an idea or belief...
- ...Peter was clearly encouraging every Christian to engage in the art of apologetics...
 - ...by learning how to defend our faith - against the arguments of those who are trying to tear it down.
 - And with this as our goal - it's important to understand that - the art of apologetics should always begin with a Righteous Devotion.
- Followers
 - Let's consider again how Peter put it - here in our text today - - look with me again - there at verse 13 - where Peter asked...

1Pe 3:13 And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good?
 - Now - that word - - followers - was translated from a Greek word - which can also be rendered - - imitator.
 - It's for this reason that the scholars who gave us the Hebrew Names Version of the Bible - rendered verse 13 in this way...
 - "...now who is he who will harm you, if you become **imitators** of that which is good?"
 - This is the same word that Paul used in 1st Corinthians 11 - where he declared: "...Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ."
 - And again - in Ephesians chapter 5 - he also encouraged every Christian to become "imitators of God as dear children."

- Devotion

- It's also interesting to note that -the original Greek word which was rendered - follower - and imitator - can also be rendered - devoted.
- It's for this reason that the scholars who created the Christian Standard Bible - rendered verse 13 in this way...
- "Who then will harm you if you are **devoted** to what is good?"
- Now - as we consider this rhetorical question - it seems to me that - Peter wanted every Christian to realize that...
 - ...we're either disciples who are devoted to Jesus - or we're devoting our lives to something that is less than important.
 - With that being the case - Peter challenged them to live a life that is completely devoted to following Christ Jesus.

- Suffer

- And according to Peter - this devotion should be evident - in times of trouble and trial.
- Let's consider how the apostle put it - beginning there at verse 13 - where Peter declared...

1Pe 3:13 And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good?

1Pe 3:14a But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake...

- Now - - I wanna stop right here - because - it's important for us to notice that - Peter wasn't suggesting that...
 - ...the devoted disciples of Christ - will always be able to avoid the pain of persecution.
 - To the contrary - there are many verses in the Bible that assure us that...

- ...those who desire to live a life that is devoted to Christ Jesus - will suffer for the sake of righteousness.
- And while this terrifying promise could fill our hearts with fear - Peter refocused our faith - on the promise of blessing.

- Blessing

- With this in mind - look with me again - there at verse 14 - where Peter declared...

1Pe 3:14 But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are **blessed**. "And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled."

- That word - blessed - - was translated from a Greek word - that can also be rendered - happy.
- And while most Christians today equate the blessings of the Lord - with worldly wealth - and physical health...
- ...the apostle Peter was helping his audience to understand that - the blessings of the Lord are poured out on those who are persecuted.
- This was precisely the point that the Lord Jesus was making in the sermon on the mount - where He declared...
 - "...**Blessed** are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake - for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

- Fear

- We'll - despite this promise of blessing upon those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake...
- ...the average Christian here in America - has allowed the fear of those who oppose our faith - - to silence their testimony.
- Some of us are afraid that an outspoken faith - will ruin relationships with our unbelieving friends - or family members.

- Others disregard the blessings of persecution - because they're afraid that - an outspoken faith will cause them to lose their source of income.
- And so - rather than risking the rejection - or the retaliation of the unbelievers around us...
 - ...many Christians hide their faith - with the camouflage of carnality - in order to fit in with this fallen world.
- Arguments
 - And while some Christians are afraid of rejection - or possible retaliation...
 - ...there are also those who WANT to share their faith - but - they don't - and the reason why is because
 - ...they aren't prepared to answer the arguments of those who are quick to question our faith.
 - And while I can assure you that - there are excellent answers to every argument against the Christian faith...
 - ...most Christians haven't equipped themselves with this information - and the reason why is because...
 - ...they've wasted ALL of their free time - on worldly entertainment.
- Sanctify
 - That being the case - we should consider the admonition Peter presented here in our text - look with me again - there at vs 13 where Peter asked...

1Pe 3:13 And who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good?

1Pe 3:14 But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. "And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled."

1Pe 3:15 But **sanctify** the Lord God in your hearts...
 - Now - let's stop right here - so that we can consider what Peter meant - when he directed the disciples - to **sanctify** the Lord God in our hearts.

- That word - sanctify - was translated from a Greek word - which in this context - speaks of a separation from sinful things.
- It's for this reason that - the scholars who created the New English Translation - rendered the beginning of verse 15 in this way...
 - “...**set Christ apart** as Lord in your hearts”
 - Or in other words - Peter was directing us to set our hearts apart from sinful things - so that we can keep the Lord first.

- Devotion

- That word - sanctify - is also a word that speaks of consecration - and dedication.
- Therefore - we could render the beginning of verse 15 - in this way...
 - “Consecrate - and Dedicate your heart to the Lord your God.”
 - Or more simply put - Peter was encouraging His audience to make sure that they were devoting their lives to the Lord.
 - You see - the Christian who is living a life that is completely devoted to the Lord...
 - ...is also ready to take a public stand with our Savior - even if it means suffering for the sake of righteousness.

- Application

- Paul
 - In order to further grasp the importance of this righteous devotion - - we should consider Paul's perspective.
 - With this as our focus - hold your place here in Peter's first epistle - - and let's turn in our Bibles to Philippians chapter 1.

- And as you make your way to the 1st chapter of Philippians - I want to take a moment to remind you that...
- ...Paul was a man - - who's devotion to the Lord - resulted in the pain of persecution.
- The Jewish leaders beat him five times - - he was beaten with rods three times - and once he was stoned - and left for dead.
- And seeing how he constantly imprisoned - many of his letters - including Philippians - were written while wearing chains.

- Chains

- With all of this in mind - let's consider what Paul wrote here in Philippians 1 - look with me - beginning there at verse 12 - where Paul declared...

Phl 1:12 ...I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out **for the furtherance of the gospel**,
 Phl 1:13 so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that **my chains are in Christ**;
 Phl 1:14 and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become **confident by my chains**, are **much more bold** to speak the word **without fear**.

- Here in these verses - we find the words of a man - who's heart was so dedicated - and devoted to the Lord...
- ...that he was willing to suffer the loss of everything - so that the world might receive the gospel message of Jesus Christ.
- He also rejoiced as he realized that - his suffering was helping other Christians become bold believers...
- ...who were also willing to suffer for the sake of the gospel message.
- And in light of their example - we can see that the art of apologetics begins with a heart that is fully devoted to the Lord.

- Transition

- Points

1. And while it's true that - the Art of Apologetics begins with a Righteous Devotion to the Lord...
2. ...it's also true that - the Art of Apologetics also involves a Reasonable Explanation of our faith.
 - In order to explain what I mean - let's make our way back to 1st Peter chapter 3...
 - ...where we find Peter - encouraging his audience to present their persecutors - with a reasonable defense of the Christian faith.
 - With this as our focus - look with me again - beginning there at verse 15 - where Peter instructed every Christian to...

IV. Reasonable Explanation

- Text

1Pe 3:15 ...sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.

- Persecution

- Now - as we consider the challenge that Peter was presenting - we must not lose sight of the context.
- Remember - Peter was writing to a group of Christians - who were being persecuted for their faith in Jesus.
- And while this persecution began with the marginalization - followed by the criminalization of the Christian faith...
- ...it wasn't long before the first century believers - were being martyred for their faith in Jesus Christ.
- According to a historian named Tacitus - the early Christians were...

“...killed by dogs by having the hides of beasts attached to them or they were nailed to crosses or set aflame, and, when the daylight passed away, they were used as nighttime lamps.”

- Recant

- Many Christians in the first - second and third centuries were persecuted in kinds of horrific ways.
- Many were also given the opportunity to save themselves - by recanting their faith in Jesus.
- Not only that - but - they were also required confess - Caesar is Lord.
- And in light of this historic context - it's no wonder why the apostle Peter felt the need to declare...
 - “...don't be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled - But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts”
 - Not only that - but he also encouraged them to be ready with a reasonable response - when asked why they refused to recant.

- Interrogation

- As a matter of fact - look with me again - there at verse 15 - where Peter declared...

1Pe 3:15a ...sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to **everyone who asks** you a reason for the hope that is in you

- Now - the Greek word which was rendered - - asks - - seems to carry with it - the idea of - interrogation.
- It's for this reason that - the scholars who created the Revised Standard Version of the Bible - rendered the original Greek in this way...
 - “...Always be prepared to make a defense **to any one who calls you to account** for the hope that is in you.”

- And as we consider the historic context - it seems to me that - Peter was referring the questions of the interrogators...
 - ...who were probably questioning the Christians who were unwilling to recant their faith in Jesus.
- Prisoners
 - It's also possible that Peter was referring to the questions which were posed by the unbelieving prisoners - who shared the same cell.
 - Imagine for a moment that you're a hardened career criminal - and you're sitting in a Roman prison - as you await your trial.
 - You know that you're ready to say anything - - and you're ready to do anything - to gain your freedom.
 - Next thing you know - another prisoner is shoved into your cell - and you learn that - their only crime is that - they're a Christian.
 - Then you discover that they could secure their freedom - by simply recanting their faith in Christ - - - but they refused.
 - You better believe that this Christian would receive many questions about the reason for the faith that kept them from recanting.
- Our Stand
 - Now - I realize that - these are both extreme scenarios - which would most certainly cause an unbeliever to ask questions...
 - ...about the confident conviction of the Christian - who is ready to die - before they recant their faith Christ Jesus.
 - And knowing that there are still Christians around the world - who are suffering in the same way - we should pray for the persecuted church.
 - Thankfully for us - the 21st century church here in America is free to worship the Lord - without the fear of arrest - and execution.

- But now - - this is not to suggest that - there are no opportunities - to take a stand for our faith in Jesus.
 - As a matter of fact - we will all find ourselves facing situations which require a firm faith - the keeps us from recanting.
- Situations
 - For example - you may have an employer - who is asking you to set aside your faith based convictions - - by doing something that is illegal.
 - Do you give in and sin just to keep your job - or do you risk unemployment knowing that your hope is based on your faith Christ Jesus?
 - Or - maybe you're a student who has a professor - who uses their classroom - to launch a constant attack against the Christian faith.
 - Do you remain silent - for fear that they might fail you - or - do you risk a bad grade - by defending the Christian faith?
 - Without debate - we're all given many opportunities - - to either stand with our Savior - by speaking up for our faith...
 - ...OR - to fearfully remain silent - as we attempt to avoid the rejection of those who oppose our faith.
- Defense
 - Now - as we consider these options - I would encourage every Christian to embrace the challenge that Peter presented there in verse 15...
 - ...where he directed every disciple - to "always be ready to **give a defense** to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you."
 - Now - remember - the phrase which was rendered - give a defense - comes from the Greek word - Apologia.
 - And as I pointed out earlier - this word refers to a reasoned response - which is designed to defend an idea - or a belief.

- Therefore - Peter was actually encouraging every Christian to take a stand with our Savior...
 - ...by offering a reasonable explanation - to those who will want to know - why we're so willing to suffer for our faith in Jesus.
- Reasons
 - With that being the case - - we should take a moment to examine our own lives by asking — am I ready?
 - Am I ready to give a reasonable explanation - for why I'm willing to suffer for the sake of the gospel?
 - Am I able to defend my faith - against the arguments of those who attack the hope I have in Christ Jesus?
 - Am I able to present a reasoned response - to those who ask tough questions...
 - ...about the empirical evidence for the resurrection of Jesus?
 - If the answer is - no - we're not ready to defend our faith - - then - it's time to become a student - of Christian apologetics.
- Apologetics
 - For the sake of clarity - it'll help you to know that - Christian apologetics can be broken down into 6 different categories.
 - And while we don't have time to examine the entirety of this important subject - - it'll help you to know that....
 - ...these 6 categories include - Biblical - Theological - Philosophical - Experiential - Cultural - and Scientific apologetics.
 - These 6 categories can be further broken down into subtopics - each of which are focused on the arguments against the Christian faith...

- ...as well as the evidence that supports the hope that we have in Christ Jesus.
- And it's my strong opinion that - every believer should spend time studying this broad topic of Christian apologetics.
- You might start by listening to the 4 part series that I taught on Christian apologetics. (Website)

● Application

• Common

- Now - - this is not to suggest that - we must stop everything - in order to learn every apologetic defense - - against every anti-Christian argument.
- And yet - I do believe that - every Christian should get equipped - - so that we are able to deal with the most common arguments against our faith.
- For example - it's common for unbelievers to question the inerrancy of the Bible - by insisting that it's filled with contradictions.
- It's also common for unbelievers to dismiss the unique nature of the Christian faith - by insisting that all religions are equally valid.
- There are those who are quick to claim - there is no evidence for the resurrection of Jesus.
 - And finally - it's always easy to find an atheist who insists - there is no such thing as God - - because - science.

• Answers

- More often than not - these are arguments that every Christian will face - as we set out to share the gospel message of grace.
- Therefore - I would encourage you to begin your study of Christian apologetics...

- ...by taking the time to study the apologetic resources that we provide on our website.
- As you study these resources - you'll become a believer - who is equipped - and empowered to offer a reasonable explanation...
 - ...to those who are asking tough questions — as well as those who are attempting to silence the church - with anti-Christian arguments.
 - Not only that - but you'll accomplish the great commission with confidence - knowing that you're able to defend your faith in Jesus.
- Waste?
 - Sadly - there are some Christians - who insist that Christian apologetics is a huge waste of time.
 - According to them - you can't argue a person into the kingdom of God - - and therefore - apologetics is a fruitless endeavor.
 - What these believers are failing to realize is that - many - many people - including myself - have come to Christ...
 - ...after receiving the reasonable explanations - - presented to them - by a Christian apologist.
 - And so - while I agree that we can't argue an unbeliever into the kingdom of heaven — I also agree with Peter...
 - ...who encouraged us to use apologetics - to help unbelievers see that there are good reasons to believe in Jesus.
- Appointed
 - Paul was also a believer - who engaged in the art of Apologetics.
 - For homework - I encourage you to read Acts 17 - where we find Paul - presenting a lengthy apologetic argument - to the philosophers in Athens.

- He not only addressed the arguments of Atheism - and relativism - but - he also presented a case for the resurrection of Christ Jesus
- Not only that - but it's in Philippians chapter 1 - where Paul declared: "I am appointed for the defense of the gospel."
- In other words - Paul was informing his audience that - he was determined to take a stand...
 - ...by offering every unbeliever - a reasonable explanation — for why the gospel message is true.
 - And I would encourage every Christian - to follow his example.

● Transition

• Points

1. With this as the goal - I should remind you that - the Art of Apologetics begins with Righteous Devotion to the Lord...
2. And not only that - but - the Art of Apologetics also involves a Reasonable Explanation of why we believe what we believe.
3. Thirdly and finally - it's important to understand that - the Art of Apologetics includes Respectful Communication
 - With this as our focus - let's continue to consider the point that Peter was making - here in his first epistle.
 - Look with me again - there 1st Peter chapter 3 - beginning at vs 15 - where Peter instructed every Christian to...

V. Respectful Communication

● Text

1Pe 3:15 ...sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with **meekness and fear**;

1Pe 3:16 having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good **conduct** in Christ may be ashamed.

- Conduct

- Here in these verses - we find Peter - - once again referring to the good conduct of the Christian.

- This is actually the 6th time that Peter has used the Greek word - which was rendered - conduct.

- For example - it was back in chapter 1 -verse 15 - where Peter declared: "He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your **conduct**."

- In chapter 2 verse 12 - Peter encouraged his audience to make sure that their "**conduct** was honorable among the Gentiles."

- And in chapter 3 - verse 1 - Peter encouraged Christian wives to yield in cooperation with their own husbands...

- "...so that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by **the conduct** of their wives."

- Conversation

- Now - here in our text tonight - we find Peter - using this word once again...

- ...as he referred to the way in which the unbelievers who oppose our faith - will revile our good **conduct** in Christ.

- With this as the goal - it'll help you to know that the word - conduct - not only refers to the way we behave...

- ...but - the original Greek word was also used in reference to the conversations we have.

- And as we consider how the context of this verse has everything to do with the way we defend our faith...
 - ...it seems to me that - Peter was encouraging his audience to remember that - our conversations should be Christ-like.

- Meekness

- In order to prove my point - I would draw your attention once again to verse 15 - where Peter encouraged his audience to...

1Pe 3:15 ...sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with **meekness and fear**;

- Now - that word - meekness - was translated from a Greek word - which speaks of a gentleness of spirit.
 - It's also a word that was used to describe those who have a mild disposition.
 - In light of this - we can see that - Peter wasn't encouraging Christians to become argumentative believers...
 - ...no - instead - he was directing every disciple to defend the faith - with a mild disposition - and a spirit gentleness.
 - Therefore - the art of apologetics should involve conversations that demonstrate the gentleness of Jesus.

- Fear

- It's also interesting to note that - the word - fear - was translated from a Greek word - which might be better rendered - reverence - and respect.
 - It's for this reason that the scholars who created the New International Version of the Bible - rendered verse 15 - in this way...

- “...Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. **But do this with gentleness and respect.**”
- Simply put - those who set out to share their faith with an inquisitive unbeliever - - should communicate in a respectful way.
 - What this means is that - the art of apologetics has less to do with winning arguments - with overly aggressive assertions...
 - ...and it has more to do with winning souls - as we offer reasonable explanations - in a respectful way.
- Accuse
 - I like the way that the scholars who created the King James Version of the Bible - rendered verses 15 and 16 - - they put it like this...

1Pe 3:15 ...sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with **meekness and fear**:

1Pe 3:16 Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that **falsely accuse** your good **conversation** in Christ.

- Here in these verses - we find Peter - assuring his audience that - there will be those who falsely accuse our good conversation.
 - And for the sake of clarity - it'll help you to know that - the Greek word which was translated - falsely accused...
 - ...could also be rendered - threaten - insult - abuse and revile.
 - What this means is that - there will be those who abuse us with insults - after hearing our defense of the Christian faith.
 - Not only that - but - they will also revile us - by falsely accusing us of lying - after they hear our apologetic arguments.
- Return

- With that being case - it's important for us to remember something Peter wrote - back in verse 9 of this same chapter - where he declared...

1Pe 3:9 don't return evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing

- Christian - listen - we shouldn't be surprised - when an angry unbeliever reviles us - for defending our faith.
- And knowing that our knee-jerk reaction is to return reviling for reviling - - Peter challenged us to bless those who revile us.
- With this as our goal - I would encourage you realize that...
 - ...the angry unbeliever who rejects our apologetic arguments - with abusive insults - is not our enemy.
 - No - instead - they are sinners who have been blinded by the lies of the enemy.

● Application

- Captive
- In order to further grasp my point - - let's turn in our Bibles to 2nd Timothy chapter 2...
- ...and as you make your way to the 2nd chapter of 2nd Timothy - - I want to take a moment to point out that...
- ...the Lord has called us to patiently suffer the abuse of unbelievers...
- ...so that we can help them to see the grace of God - - in our lives.
- Therefore - rather than returning reviling for reviling - we should defend our faith - with respectful communication...
- ...so that they might consider the evidence that we're presenting.

- The Enemy

- I like the way that Paul put it - here in 2nd Timothy chapter 2 - look with me - beginning there at verse 23 - - where Paul declared...

2Ti 2:23 ...avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife.

2Ti 2:24 And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient,

2Ti 2:25 in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth,

2Ti 2:26 and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.

- Here in these verses - we find Paul - encouraging Timothy to correct those who oppose our faith - - with a spirit of gentleness.
 - And the reason why is because — remember - - we're not trying to win arguments - we're trying to win souls!
 - Therefore - rather than getting into an insult battle with the angry unbeliever who reviles us...
 - ...let's instead learn how to defend our faith - in a respectful way - so that we can help them to see that...
 - ...the cross of Christ is the only hope we have - - and Jesus alone can set us free - from the snare of the devil.

VI. Conclusion

- Wrap up

- Confidence

- Now - as we begin to wrap up this message - - I realize that - it's easy to be overwhelmed - - by the broad topic of Christian apologetics.
- And if you've already decided that - you could never successfully defend the Christian faith - then - I would applaud your humility.

- At the same time - I would also remind you that - the Holy Spirit was sent to help us accomplish this daunting task.
- In order to prove my point - let's turn in our Bibles - to Mark chapter 13 - because - it's in the 13th chapter of Mark's gospel account...
- ...where we find the Lord Jesus - helping His audience to understand that...
- ...the Holy Spirit was sent to provide us with all of the help we need - to defend the Christian faith.

- Faith

- Look with me - there at Mark chapter 13 - - beginning there at verse 9 - where the Lord Jesus declared...

Mar 13:9 “...watch out for yourselves, for they will deliver you up to councils, and you will be beaten in the synagogues. You will be brought before rulers and kings for My sake, for a testimony to them.

Mar 13:10 “And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations.

Mar 13:11 “But when they arrest you and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand, or premeditate what you will speak. But whatever is given you in that hour, speak that; for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit.

- Christian - listen - - the Holy Spirit - who dwells within the heart of every believer...
- ...is ready to help us give a defense - at the moment when our faith is put to the test.
- And so - - if you're allowing the fear of men - to keep you from sharing your faith...
- ...then - it's important to remember that - the Holy Spirit is the One - Who wants to speak through us.
- Therefore - the art of apologetics is ultimately based on the belief - that the Holy Spirit will help us defend the faith.

- Points
 - Christian - listen - there are many people in the world today - who are rejecting the gospel message...
 - ...simply because - they've been duped into believing that - the Christian faith is based upon blind faith.
 - Therefore - what the world needs - is a church that is reaching the lost - by engaging in the art of apologetics.
 - With that this as our goal - I would encourage every Christian to remember that...
 1. ...the Art of Apologetics begins with Righteous Devotion to the Lord.
 - And so - let's make sure that our apologetic endeavors are first fueled by a faith based devotion...
 - ...the One Who alone can save sinners - from the punishment that we all deserve.
 2. The Art of Apologetics also involves a Reasonable Explanation for why we believe what we believe.
 - And while it's true that we will never argue anyone into the Kingdom of God...
 - ...we should be ready to present Apologetic arguments - that help unbelievers to see that it's reasonable to trust in Jesus.
 3. And finally - the Art of Apologetics includes Respectful Communication which is inspired by the indwelling Spirit of God.
 - With this as the goal - let's become those believers who are able to present every argument - without being argumentative.
 - Let's speak to people with gentleness - and respect - as we help them to see all the good reasons - for believing in Jesus.