

Are you Ready?

1 Peter 3:15-17

- What does it mean to worship Christ as Lord of your life? Surrender- Jesus is in charge of me. Most people in the first century were religious but there was something different about these Christians. The big difference is they were willing to suffer for doing what was right. They really loved and served each other. They were even willing to die. People wanted to know, why are you like that?
- Always be ready to explain why Jesus is in charge of your life. **Matthew 28:19-20, Acts 1:8**
- **My testimony**
 - o **Before following Christ, my life was a mess.** I had a lot of unresolved pain in my life. I struggled with feelings of rejection, was lonely, and fiercely independent. I had an addiction that was threatening to destroy my marriage. I was religious, meaning I was legalistic, prideful, judgmental, driven, demanding, and mean. I was training to be a pastor. On the outside, I looked pretty good. On the inside, I was a mess.
 - o **How I learned to follow Christ.** Everything changed in 1997. Tina and I had been married for five months when she told me she did not love me, she did not want to be married, and she would never be in the ministry. My whole world came crashing down. I was exposed, broken, humbled, and could clearly see how desperately I needed God. Religion was failing me, I needed to learn how to follow Christ. An older retired pastor took me under his wing and taught me how to follow Jesus.
 - o **Following Jesus has changed everything!** Jesus has brought healing into my life. Jesus loves me and chose me to follow Him. Jesus freed me from my independence, addiction, and religion. I have learned to enjoy my daily walk with Jesus. Today my life is full of joy, peace, faith, and purpose. I hope to spend the rest of my life helping other people make the same discovery.

1. How do we share our faith? 1 Peter 3:16

a. **We share Gracefully.**

Peter says share your faith in a gentle and respectful way. Sharing your faith is not an argument or a debate. If you are arguing and debating a person you are usually doing more harm than good. This past year was a good illustration of what not to do. When people talked about politics, race, or the pandemic it often devolved into a character attack. If I begin to share with someone and they are resistant, or get offended, or they are argumentative, I just back off a little. I want to be a friend until their heart opens. That is what Jesus did! Jesus was the friend of sinners and looked for people who were open. Jesus was not offended or threatened by their lifestyle, their sin, their questions, or their past. Jesus knew, if they walked together, in time their heart would open. Some are not ready to listen, some are not ready to believe, some are listening and believe but have lots of issues to overcome. I want to be a friend through the journey. Jesus does this over and over again. Come follow Me!

b. We share Truthfully.

Peter says, keep your conscience clear. We have to find the courage to tell people the truth. I want to be gracious but I also have to love people enough to tell them the truth. Just imagine if you went to the doctor and the doctor discovered you have cancer. However, the doctor is a close friend and could not bear to give you such devastating news. Therefore, because the doctor loves you, he or she decides to tell you everything is clear, you are strong and healthy. You have nothing to worry about. Then three months later you are dead. Is this person a good friend? Are they a good doctor?

John 1:14, Full of grace and truth

Often this is one of the challenges of being a friend, parent, or pastor. If you are willing to tell people the truth, as graciously as possible, sometimes they are just not able or willing to hear it. I have to trust the Lord with that.

c. We live with Integrity.

We must be careful not to let our behavior invalidate our witness.

- I do not want my bad behavior to invalidate my witness.
- I do not want my witness to invalidate my witness.
- I do not want my hypocrisy to invalidate my witness.

1 Corinthians 9:19-23, "Even though I am a free man with no master, I have become a slave to all people to bring many to Christ. When I was with the Jews, I lived like a Jew to bring the Jews to Christ. When I was with those who follow the Jewish law, I too lived under that law. Even though I am not subject to the law, I did this so I could bring to Christ those who are under the law. When I am with the Gentiles who do not follow the Jewish law, I too live apart from that law so I can bring them to Christ. But I do not ignore the law of God; I obey the law of Christ. When I am with those who are weak, I share their weakness, for I want to bring the weak to Christ. Yes, I try to find common ground with everyone, doing everything I can to save some. I do everything to spread the Good News and share in its blessings."

2. What do we share? 1 Peter 3:18

a. Jesus died in our place. You can be forgiven. Your past can be forgiven and washed clean.

b. Jesus died once and for all. Jesus did not come to make you religious. You cannot add to what Jesus has already accomplished. The Christian life is learning to live in relationship with God.

c. Jesus died to reunite us to the father. You can become a child of God. God wants you to join His eternal family. God wants a personal relationship with you. This was His plan all along. **Genesis 1-2, Revelation 21-22**

Luke 15- OTB Monday, what does God celebrate? God celebrates when what was lost is found!

Worship- Is it a party or a funeral?

3. Why does it matter? 1 Peter 3:19-21

Explain: It matters because Jesus is king and the whole world will one day answer to Him.

Here Peter is thinking of the events that happened in **Genesis 6**. A group of heavenly beings rebelled against God, had sex with women, and produced these demi-gods. I know, sounds

crazy, it is in the Bible. This was the primary reason God flooded the earth because of man's wickedness and the human race had become corrupt. The book of Enoch describes how these divine beings were imprisoned under the earth. Here Peter is saying, when Jesus died, Jesus went and preached to these rebellious divine beings their ultimate defeat. Then he points to Noah, a righteous man, who was saved from judgment by faith and through the water, on the Arc. Peter is saying, God is a just God. If God judged and destroyed the world because of sin through a great flood, He will do it again. Baptism is a picture of our salvation.

- **Baptism is my public declaration that Jesus is my king!** Just like building and getting on the boat for Noah was an act of faith and trust in God.

- **Baptism is a picture of God's salvation, my victory over death and this world, through water!** Just as Noah was saved by faith from death and the evil world through water. We are saved by faith.

- **God is a God of grace but He is also just.** Would you worship a God who was unjust? Think about all the injustice, pain and suffering in our world. What if God just turned a blind eye to those responsible for the injustice? Would He still be good?

Exodus 34:7, God will not allow the guilty to go unpunished.

Revelation 20:11-15

God will punish sin. We serve a just God.

Why does God not do something about it now?

- Sin is in the heart of man. It is not a force out there. Sin is a heart issue.
- God is temporarily tolerating sin and the pain sin causes in order to give people an opportunity to repent. 2 Peter 2:8-9
- The good news is, following Jesus is like getting on the boat. Following Jesus protects you from judgement. Jesus died and God's wrath against sin was poured out on Him so that we could go free!

Then Peter points out, in heaven and in the New Heaven and Earth, Jesus is King. **1 Peter 3:22, Revelation 21:1-8**