

## **HOPEFUL**

*First Peter: Standing firm in the hope and encouragement of the grace of God*

### **Lesson Title: Fearless Hope**

#### Introduction

M. Scott Peck says, “life is difficult!”

Ultimately, good will triumph over evil. God is just and kind and fair. Sometimes Life just isn’t fair.

#### **TWO DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES**

- A. The human perspective.
- B. The divine perspective.

#### **FOUR DISTINCTIVE EXHORTATIONS**

##### **A. General Principle.**

1. 1 Peter 3:13
2. There are exceptions to most every rule.
3. The Greek use of the word “*if*” means “*unlikely but possible.*”

##### **B. Occasional Inequities.**

1. Review of material already covered.
2. The culture was foreign to the gospel. Christians must have felt vulnerable.
3. Into this difference, this peculiarity, this feeling of danger and risk, Peter speaks these four exhortations.

##### **C. CONSIDER YOURSELF UNIQUELY BLESSED**

1. When opposition and difficulty come, it is easy to turn inward in self-protection.
2. Peter tells us to live like we know that we are blessed. (vv.12-13)

3. We have been tracing this pattern for five weeks. Suffering and subsequent glory of Christ as our pattern.
4. Safety does not lie in protecting ourselves from criticism, but by zealously throwing ourselves into discipleship.
5. The guarantee of blessing is the promise of Jesus in Matthew 5:10-12.
6. Peter wants us to pursue bold, risky obedience to Jesus.
7. Persecution will come as a result of this, and Peter tells us to live fearlessly.

**D. HAVE NO FEAR OF THEM BUT ACKNOWLEDGE CHRIST AS LORD**

1. Do not live in fear of those who oppose Christ, rather live in holy fear of God, honoring Christ as you holy Lord.
2. Peter assumes that if we do Christianity correctly, we will need this encouragement.
3. We know that we are going in the right direction when people raise an eyebrow at us.
4. Fear is a fundamental law in Scripture.
5. If we are mastered by fear of people rather than fear of God, it becomes impossible for us to be zealous for what is good according to God.
6. If we live this fruitful life of Christ and become zealous for the good of a gospel-shaped life that is fearless, the result will be that people are going to ask a particular kind of question.

**E. BE READY TO GIVE A WITNESS**

1. Be ready to defend the hope that is producing in you a kind of life that looks utterly foolish to those around you.
2. Peter is telling us to be ready to give a defense of the hope that makes what is folly to the world the very wisdom of God.

3. William Barclay explains what our “**defense**” and “**account**” should be like.
  - His defense must be given with “**gentleness.**”
  - His defense must be given with “**reverence**” or respect.
4. The life of a Christian is bold, fruitful and fearless. God is through his people making a display of taking up our cross and following Jesus.
5. Peter does not want this image marred, and so, lastly, he says...

**F. LIVE LIKE THE ENEMY IS WATCHING.**

1. Very simply nothing undermines a Christian defense like a wicked Christian.
2. Peter principle: Unjust suffering is better than deserved punishment.

***SUMMING IT UP!***