

I. INTRODUCTION.

A. Scripture text: **1Peter 3:13-16.**

And who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good? [14] But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, *you are* blessed. AND DO NOT FEAR THEIR INTIMIDATION, AND DO NOT BE TROUBLED, [15] but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always *being* ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; [16] and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame.

B. Be honest with yourself for a minute; you know when you are giving someone a list of excuses, not reasons to excuse your behavior. If someone were to ask you why you were a Xian, would you give some excuses like:

1. "My parents were Xians so that is why I am one."
2. "I was raised in a Xian nation and did not really have a choice."
3. "Xianity is all that I have ever known."
4. "My spouse is a Xian and I am one, to please him/her."

C. There needs to be more than that, if you are going to be a Xian. Peter says that we must be ready to give a reason for the hope that lies within us.

II. WE ARE TOLD TO PREACH THE WORD OF GOD.

A. Paul told Timothy to "preach the word," even though men would rather hear fables. Only by knowing the Word can we give a reason (2Tim. 4:2-4).

preach the word; be ready in season *and* out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. [3] For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but *wanting* to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; [4] and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths.

B. Paul told the Colossians that we should not focus on the teachings of men (Col. 2:18-23).

Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on *visions* he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind, [19] and not holding fast to the head, from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God. [20] If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as, [21] "Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!" [22] (which all *refer to* things destined to perish with the using)-- in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men? [23] These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, *but are* of no value against fleshly indulgence.

C. The Bible is the word of God and our lives should be directed by it (2Tim. 3:16-17).

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; [17] that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

III. WE MUST BE READY TO GIVE AN ANSWER.

A. Notice the text; 1Pet. 3:15.

but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always *being* ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;

B. Four things:

1. **"Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts."**
 - a. The word "sanctify" means to make holy, to purify or consecrate. It means to set something apart for spiritual purpose. Our hearts are to be separated from the world and dedicated to God's special purpose.
 - b. Put God in His proper place in your life and thinking.

2. **“Be ready.”**
 - a. We can never “be ready” without “getting ready.”
 - b. The term implies making the necessary preparation. We cannot dedicate our hearts to God without preparing for it by turning from serving sin to serve God.
 - c. Be disciplined; do whatever it takes to get ready and be ready.
3. **“To give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you.”**
 - a. This requires a diligent study of God’s word. This is to be done before the question is asked. Prepare yourself by knowing the Scriptures that will answer the basic fundamental questions of faith in God and X. Hope is desire plus expectation, how badly do you desire and expect to go to heaven? Hopefully enough to be able to give a defense of your faith!
 - b. Like a lawyer have your arguments and case prepared.
4. **“With meekness and fear.”**
 - a. Remember you are nothing without God. You stand by His strength and X’s blood. There is no place for a Xian to be haughty or proud. Fear means respect, dignity, and uprightness.
 - b. Know where your real strength comes from.

IV. **SOME REASONS WHY I AM A CHRISTIAN.**

- A. Here are some sound, Biblical reasons why one should be a Xian:
 1. I believe in God; the creator and sustainer of life.
We are not the product of an evolutionary process.
 2. I believe in the Bible as the Word of God.
It alone and not the teachings of men have the answers of life. It tells me where I came from, who I am, and where I am going.
 3. I believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God.
I believe He was Immanuel, and that His death at Calvary paid the price for my sins.
 4. I believe that the church is the greatest organization in the world.
No where else can I receive the encouragement and support I need.
 5. I believe that Jesus is coming again.
There will be an end to all things and a judgment where the just and the unjust will be awarded accordingly.
- B. Can you give good reasons like these and then back them up with Scripture? This is what Peter wants every Xian to be able to do.
- C. Resolve to know why and be able to tell others why you are a Xian.

IV. **CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.**

- A. Excuses never worked with Mom and Dad as a kid and they won’t work as adults with God! We need reasons for our actions that are consistent with how we live.
- B. The Bible is sufficient to give us the answers and reasons we need.
- C. If you are ready to sanctify X in your heart, you can obey Him and be saved.
- D. Plan of salvation for non-Xians, erring Xians.