

We do it because in Christ we are blessed. Yes, the Bible says that even though we are persecuted we are blessed. “Blessed are those who are persecuted for My name’s sake.”

You are blessed and you have hope. If we are going to defend our hope, we have to know why we have hope. Christ’s lordship, our blessedness and our hope are seen clearly in the resurrection of Christ. He died for sins once for all, the righteous (singular) for the unrighteous (plural), to bring us to God.

Jesus proclaimed His victory with certainty to the spirits kept in prison. And just as surely as He saved Noah and his family, so He saved us in baptism by connecting us to the resurrection of Christ.

Our hope at every point along life’s way, whether we are suffering or not is found in Christ, His suffering, His righteousness and His resurrection.

By the end of the Easter season, it becomes easy for hearers to want to move on to something different than the Easter story. But there is never a day or time when we want to forget about the resurrection.

Our prayer should be, “Grant grace sufficient for life’s day that by our lives we truly say: Christ has triumphed! He is living! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

May God bless us as our lives faithfully proclaim, Alleluia, Christ is risen! He is risen indeed, Alleluia! Amen

Easter Living, May 14, 2023, **1 Peter 3:13-22**
Alleluia! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed, Alleluia.

At least in part last Sunday’s Gospel focused on eternity when Jesus said, “I go to prepare a place for you so that where I am you may be also”. Today’s lessons make clear that Easter impacts our lives in this world.

One of my favorite Easter hymns is “Now All the Vault of Heaven Resounds.” v. 3 says “Grant grace sufficient for life’s day that by our lives we truly say: Christ has triumphed! He is living! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

What is on your to do list? Do your homework, make the bad, clean the house, mow the lawn, grocery shop, pay bills, send cards, etc.

To your list and mine our text adds, set apart Christ as Lord, recognize that He is Lord, remember that He is risen that He reigns and be prepared to explain why you live the way you do. In short be an advertisement for God. This text God is encouraging all of us to live in such a way that others want what we have.

Whose to do list is this to be on? Earlier Peter had words for husbands, wives and slaves but in v. 8 he says, “Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another, be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. Then a few verses later Peter says, all of you regard Christ as Lord, all of you be prepared to give an answer, all of you live in gentleness and respect. All of you tell the good news.

When? Not some of the time or even most of the time. It says, “Always be prepared.” But specifically, this text says this should be true of us in the midst of suffering.

Rome was at that time a hornet’s nest for Christians. In a short time, St. Paul would be executed there. On the eve of that persecution, Peter dictated a message to the Christian churches, urging them to be brave and steadfast in that difficult time.

When they were challenged, persecuted, and abused Peter did not advise them to run and hide, to keep a low profile, to be ashamed. On the contrary he called on them to be prepared to give witness to Christ.

God through His Word and Spirit prepares us to make a defense to anyone who asks us about our hope.

Do you think anyone might have asked Abram why he was willing to leave his country and his family and his father's house to the land that God promised to show him. Hebrews tells us it was by faith.

Do you think anyone might have asked Noah why he was building an ark. If so, it was an opportunity to share the hope he had.

Then there was Esther who was willing to lay her life on the line. She could tell others that she was confident that God had placed her there for such a time as this.

All of them were willing to do what God wanted them to do and it may well have given them an opportunity to defend their hope.

Where are we to tell the Good News? At school when someone asks why you are so kind or why are you doing this? Rachel Scott was one of 13 students killed at Columbine High school in Colorado on April 22, 1999. She wrote in her journal that she tried to be kind to those who were bullied, those new to school, and those who were disabled.

She wrote: Compassion is the greatest form of love that humans have to offer. I have this theory that if one person can go out of their way to show compassion, it could start a chain reaction . . . And what's behind all of this is my faith. I'm a Christian.

I'm not trying to be weird or convert anybody or anything like that. I just wanted to be real with you guys, and let you know who I am. Jesus gave his life for me, and I'll give my life to him. Just wanted to get that out there.

Tell the good News at work when others ask why you don't complain, or why you don't curse. When they ask, what are you doing this weekend you can say I'm going to church to worship God and to be with His people because He is the source of my hope.

Tell the good News at home. It has never been easy to be a mother or father. Yet being a parent gives you the opportunity to feed those who are hungry, to give a drink to those who are thirsty, to welcome someone into your life, to care for those who are sick. Being a parent gives you an opportunity to speak about the hope you have. You can do it when difficulties come up, when putting the children to bed, when eating lunch, after worship on Sunday, when taking a walk on Sunday afternoon.

This text isn't asking anyone to go door to door but to be ready in the midst of your vocation whether a student, farmer, father, mother, neighbor, friend spouse, employee or employer. Always be ready to give a reason for the hope you have.

Defend your hope in a winsome manner. Do it with kindness or gentleness. The opposite is hotheadedness, bitterness, and arrogance. How many arguments have you really won?

Do it with a clear conscience. Peter calls on God's people to live holy and blameless lives. Hypocrisy hurts any attempt on our part to tell the good news. Your good manner of life speaks volumes, even when attacked stay gentle and respectful. It won't be easy.

Finally, tell the good news with reverence. Do it with a sense of awe and wonder. Respond with kindness and gentleness toward others and reverent fear or awe before God's holiness.

Why is to tell the Good News on your to-do list? Why do you respond with kindness, godliness, and reverence? Verses 18 -22 draw our full attention back to Jesus Christ. Look at how many times Christ is mentioned in these verses.