

## Hope in Uncertain Times by Nigel Coles A Reason For Hope: Part 1

‘In your hearts revere Christ as Lord’

Welcome to Hope in Uncertain Times.

We began this weekly series for twelve weeks thinking we may well be in a different place by then. Well, twelve weeks were up last time: we are in a different place, but I believe two constants remain:

1. Everybody is still looking for hope
2. Uncertain times are here to stay

So, I want to invite all of you to walk with me over the next six weeks to explore further how we can all be key workers for God’s purposes in these uncertain times.

You are the hope of the world. Now regular listeners will know what I mean is more accurately you and I are the clay jars which contain the treasure; the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ, the hope, the light, the truth, the way.

Now I confess I wouldn’t have done it this way were I God, but you’ll be relieved and under no illusion to know I am not. However, God habitually chooses flawed and even very flawed human beings like us to act as the bridge over which the treasure can pass from one human heart to another.

I recognise it has so little to do with me. Whatever I have to offer someone else is not mine. I don’t possess God, even a tiny part of him, but I am rather akin to a national ambassador of a national government, able to speak for God, knowing his word is more powerful than my words; it’s not so much God backing me up, so much as my mouth being his actual mouthpiece when I’m aligned with him.

There’s one verse in Peter’s first letter I want to explore with you over six weeks. Yep you heard that correctly. Just one verse, but we’ll look at a different element each week. It’s a verse that either seems to spur Christians on, or paralyse them. I wonder which you are. Myself, I can be both in the same day!

in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. 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 1 Peter 3:15

So already you might be thinking *wow God wants to pursue his purposes through me.*  
OR: *Oh no, I couldn’t possibly do that!*

Whichever your particular reaction, my guess is Peter starts in a different place. We tend to assume Peter is saying it’s all about our words, but he says it’s all about our heart.

'in your hearts revere Christ as Lord' – that's where Peter starts, because he knows if our heart's not right, our words will not convince anyone.

On the other hand, if we give Jesus his rightful place in our heart ... and that's Peter's shorthand for saying the deepest, most profound part of who we are, the very core of my being ... then whatever my words, however inadequate I think they are, they will be a true reflection of my heart. That's what communicates, that's what connects, that's the hope everyone wants.

So, what does it mean for you?

Well, staggeringly the root of the word we've translated to 'revere' here in English, is the same as when Peter, a little earlier, speaking for God says: 'Be holy, as I am holy'. (1 Peter 1:16).

One aspect of this word means 'to dedicate' – to say, 'Jesus is Lord' and mean it from your heart, is to be 'dedicated' or devoted to him.

When I say Jesus is my Lord, I mean

- I freely welcome and desire his ways, his reign and rule, to determine and steer my ways, my attitudes of heart.

Jesus says it is out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks.

The Message translation of the Bible puts it this way:

Through thick and thin, keep your hearts at attention, in adoration before Christ, your Master.

So, whatever you face today, or whatever you think you face, whether you think you'll have an opportunity to speak up for Jesus, or not, it always comes from the heart, today and every day.

When I think of the day ahead, on a daily basis, I acknowledge Jesus is my Lord and Saviour and dedicate my heart to him, because if I set that right, rather like a compass bearing, then the rest of me will flow in the same direction. God's looks on the heart and delights in those who seek him in all their ways.

I invite you to pray the words of Psalm 51 with me today:

'Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me' Amen.

To watch the video, go to: <https://www.thefuelcast.com/>

「 T H E 」  
F U E L  
「 C A S T 」

