

Hope in Uncertain Times by Nigel Coles A Reason For Hope: Part 2

Welcome most especially to our second part of **A Reason For Hope**: looking at 1 Peter 3:15:

But 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,

Today I'm pressing the pause button on the phrase 'always be prepared', or as some translations say 'be ready'.

To be 'always' prepared makes **now** the time of preparation. The simple fact is if we don't address what's preventing us today, then we'll never be 'ready' tomorrow.

In practice, I've noticed people think about what it means to be 'ready' differently. I remember when my own three children were younger, and I regularly dropped them off at school. We leave at 8.10 everyone ready?
Nobody in sight!
'I'm just getting ready'.
'I'm in the bathroom'.
'I'm looking for my books'.

I never actually left without any of them, even if sometimes I did drive part way along the road before everyone was on board.

The point is for me then, and for Peter in his letter, if you're going to be ready, you have to prepare before time, not **at** the time.

Peter is talking specifically about the challenge to be 'always ready' **to give an answer for the reason for our hope in Jesus Christ to anyone who asks.**

Do you feel ready for that? I know from conversations with many Christians, many of us don't 'feel' we are ready and some of us feel we'll never be ready. I wonder if that's you?

Today I hope you'll be provoked by Peter's words to address whatever it is that is acting like a barrier to your sense of readiness.

Maybe it helps to realise Peter is not talking about the ability to reason and present indisputable evidence to support the truth of the Christian faith, what some of us call 'apologetics', neither is Peter talking about preparing a formal testimony you might expect to hear in a court room. Peter rather sees all his readers as being 'on trial' every day as they live for Jesus.

He's describing the informal, conversational engagement we all have with people, some we know well, others not so. Some will have questions and Eugene Petersen who translated 'The Message' puts it like this:

Be ready to speak up and tell anyone who asks why you're living the way you are

Still not confident?

Is that because you're **looking at yourself**?

Think about who wrote this letter: Simon Peter.

We're told in the Bible (John 1:42) When he met Peter:

Jesus looked at him and said, 'You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas' (which, when translated, is Peter).

He was called Simon, which means 'reed' in Hebrew and then Jesus gives him a new name: 'Cephas', which means 'rock' in Aramaic.

The reed Simon, becomes the rock Peter.

It was Jesus who transformed a reed into a rock and Peter remembers that.

Peter knows if Jesus can transform him, he can transform anyone.

The good thing is that's what anyone who asks you needs to hear ... because they are looking for hope for their life and if they see something in yours enough to make them ask more, be assured you have what they need.

Maybe you're thinking at **your circumstances** and thinking, not now, not yet, maybe when things change.

Think about who Peter was writing to: verse 1 chapter 1: 'To God's elect, exiles, scattered throughout'...

Peter's first listeners were being persecuted for following Jesus, they faced the reality of death regularly and were suffering directly **because** they were followers of Jesus.

His basic message here is neither fear, nor be troubled by those who accuse you. Your life is not determined by your relationship with the Roman Empire, the dominant power seeking to crush Christianity, nor by your marginal status in the world-at-large, but by being as he says in the next verse 'in Christ' (3:16).

Maybe you're just a bit scared? Frightened by what people might think of you?

Those early Christians had every reason to be frightened for their very lives, facing the reality of death regularly. In the UK today, where we're so blessed to have our NHS, we can be lulled into thinking if someone dies, they've somehow failed. That's not the case though, is it, with death remaining a 100% statistic for human beings, for us all – there's no way round it, but as a Christian your hope is rooted in heaven.

You will always be prepared if you remember who started transforming your life and confident where you're headed whatever happens next.

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

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