

Hope in Uncertain Times by Nigel Coles A Reason For Hope: Part 4

‘to everyone who asks you’

Welcome to The Fuelcast on Friday. We continue today looking at *A Reason for Hope*, for although we are called to live in uncertain times, they are also times of opportunity.

Today is part four, as we work our way through what Peter says in his first letter, chapter 3 verse 15. Today in particular, we’ll stop and look at the phrase: ‘to everyone who asks you’. *‘Everyone’ really?*

The Message translates this verse:

Through thick and thin, keep your hearts at attention, in adoration before Christ, your Master. Be ready to speak up and tell anyone who asks why you’re living the way you are, and always with the utmost courtesy. Keep a clear conscience before God so that when people throw mud at you, none of it will stick. They’ll end up realizing that *they’re* the ones who need a bath.

The NIV says ‘everyone’ and The Message ‘anyone’.

Everyone and anyone ... that’s who Peter is saying we need to be prepared to share our hope in Jesus with.

Three things to bear in mind as you seek opportunities to do just that:

Don’t pre-select the “everyone”

We were talking about this in a small group last week and I took note what Maggie, said:

*“over the years I’ve divided people into those who **I think** will want to listen and those **I think** who won’t be interested and that used to influence who I tried with most. I now realise the reality is it’s been the one’s I least thought would ever ask me a question, who have. I’ve learnt to not select”*

I know Maggie’s not alone in doing that, because I’ve done the same ... still do.

Don’t be surprised at the “anyone”

- They may not always be your friends who ask.

We all want the world to know we've found joy, peace, freedom, love etc. when we first become Christians and we can easily assume, everyone else is ready to do the same, straight away, but that's invariably not the case, is it?

Remember, even Jesus, once said the world hated him, so we shouldn't be surprised not everyone welcomes our newfound faith.

- They may be those you expect to find the most difficult (those closest and those most antagonistic).

Just think about just two circumstances Peter addresses some Christian's found themselves in:

Close family – when I was local pastor I always used to say when baptising a husband, or wife who's partner was yet to become a Christian – 'if you don't get a better partner as a result, there's a guarantee, bring them back in twelve months! Jesus expects us to display the fruit of the spirit.

And 'Slaves'. - Peter doesn't condone this evil practice, neither does he call for retaliation What he does is anticipate the hope they had in Jesus, being radiated from within, so much to provoke question.

Don't hold back

Writing to those whose very lives were under threat ... Peter says: Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened.

Don't allow your fear to silence you.

I wonder if Peter was remembering the episode in John 18:17.

¹⁵ Simon Peter and another disciple were following Jesus. Because this disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the high priest's courtyard, ¹⁶ but Peter had to wait outside at the door. The other disciple, who was known to the high priest, came back, spoke to the servant-girl on duty there and brought Peter in.

¹⁷ 'You aren't one of this man's disciples too, are you?' she asked Peter.

He replied, 'I am not.'

Or maybe John 18:25:

²⁵ Simon Peter was still standing there warming himself. So they asked him, 'You aren't one of his disciples too, are you?'

He denied it, saying, 'I am not.'

Or maybe even John 18:26:

²⁶ One of the high priest's servants, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, challenged him, 'Didn't I see you with him in the garden?' ²⁷ Again Peter denied it, and at that moment a cock began to crow.

Peter knew how we all feel at times – how we can allow our fear to silence us. He'd been there on at least three occasions.

But he's confident of his hope in Jesus Christ and calls us all to answer everyone and anyone who asks us to share the hope they see a glimpse of within us.

Lord God, our Father in heaven, give me your eyes to see who asking me this week to share the reason for my hope in you.
In Jesus name. Amen.

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