

## **Good News to Share**

1 Peter 3:13-17

Something that is good news for some, may not be good news for all. That is why Christians have faced persecution. It is also way the Christian message faces hostility to today. How should we respond to that? Rather than withdraw, Peter says we should engage people with the gospel.

### **The Message**

Peter says we should be ready to give a reason for our hope. Religion tends to give you a target, not a hope, whilst our culture is typically about how you perform. But the gospel gives you hope: hope for now and hope for the future. Peter describes it as the hope that is in us. It is personal hope – the gospel mediated through our lives – how what Jesus has done for us transforms our lives.

How are we supposed to talk about what Jesus has done for us when we might face opposition for doing so?

### **The How To**

Peter uses three words, prepared – defence – reason, that tell us we need to understand the gospel for ourselves and be able to explain it in ways others understand. Then he says we must speak with gentleness and respect – which means with an attitude of humility. Humility towards others in how you speak; humility towards God, in that this is his work, not yours, so you can relax!

### **The Walk and the Talk**

Peter says we must be able to talk about the gospel with a good conscience. Hypocrisy is a great turn-off for people, whilst they value authenticity. A bad conscience comes when our lives fail to match our words. To be able to speak compellingly of our faith, we need to allow the gospel to genuinely transform our lives. But that does not mean we have to wait until we are perfect! We can be honest about how the Christian faith helps us in our struggles.

### **The Message Becomes the Means**

At the beginning, Peter says we must set apart Christ as holy, or as the Lord, in our hearts. If we do that, we will get our significance and inner security from him. That will mean we won't be held captive by what others think of us, and that is very liberating! It means we can be free to talk about our beliefs and our struggles. It gives us courage. But it also means we can be gentle and respectful – we don't need to win the argument to feel good about ourselves. Our inner wellbeing comes from God's love for us in Jesus – and that is what motivates us to speak about him: we want others to experience that love for themselves.