

## **“Living Hope: Good Days, Good Witnesses & Good News”**

- **Text: 1 Peter 3:8-22**
- **Pastor: Robin Boisvert**
- **Date: Sunday, July 11, 2010**

**Main Idea:** Christ’s victory through the gospel enables us to be godly witnesses in a fallen world.

### **Do you want to see good days? (verses 8-12)**

1. With the word, “Finally” Peter is summing up what he began in 1 Peter 2:11. Beginning in 2:11, Peter states that genuine Christian living, in society, in the workplace, in the home (even in the midst of trials and suffering) will silence the opponents of Christianity and may win them to the faith. When we get to 1 Peter 3:8-12, the focus is on living righteous lives.
2. The point Peter is making is that we should live righteously because God promises to bless those who live righteously. And Peter calls that blessing “good days.” And to experience those blessings, those “good days,” Peter lists some “dos” and “don’ts” of righteous living.
3. Do:
  - a. Do have unity of mind—think the same thing under the revelation of God’s Word.
  - b. Do have sympathy for one another—feeling together for those who are suffering.
  - c. Do exhibit tenderness, brotherly and sisterly love, and a humble mind—these should characterize the atmosphere of the church.
  - d. Do return a blessing when cursed.
4. Don’t:
  - a. Do not repay evil with evil or reviling with reviling—no getting even or revenge.
  - b. Do not speak evil or deceive—no malicious words or thoughts or lying.
  - c. Do not do evil—no ill will or malicious actions.

### **Do you want to be a good witness? (verses 13-17)**

1. The focus in these verses is suffering for righteousness sake and being a good witness for Jesus Christ in the midst of that suffering.
2. Peter gives his readers some advice about those who persecute Christians: have no fear of them, nor be troubled by them. Instead in your hearts, regard Christ the Lord as holy. In other words, “*Trust in the Lord with all your heart*” (Prov. 3:5-6). Confess in your hearts that Christ is the reigning King and Lord. All authority in heaven and earth has been given to Him. All events are subject to him. Nothing can happen but what God in Christ allows.
3. We are to be witnesses by what we do and say. A witness is someone who testifies to what he has seen, heard, and experienced. To be an effective witness, we must relate what we have seen to the revelation of God’s word. And we must witness in a gentle and

respectful way. To be prepared to answer and give a defense for our faith is not the same as winning an argument. In sharing the good news, we should be relationship builders, not argument winners.

### **Do you hope in the good news? (verses 18-22)**

1. Verses 18, 21-22 recounts the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ. He was put to death in the flesh (his body), but made alive in the spirit (the spiritual realm; referring to his resurrection). He has gone into heaven (the ascension of Christ) and is at the right hand of God (that is, Christ is in session—the place of highest authority) where all angels and authorities and powers have been subjected to him.
2. But what about Noah in verse 20? What is he doing there? Peter brings Noah in because his readers may be tempted to discouragement and despair. In Noah's day and in Peter's day, God's people were persecuted minorities. Judgment was coming. It came in the flood on the ancient world. Persecution was close at hand in Peter's day. Like other saints and prophets of old (see 1 Peter 1:10-11), Christ was preaching through Noah just as Christ was proclaiming through the church in Peter's day. The spirits of those who did not believe Noah are in prison, being held until the final day of judgment. And both Noah and the Christians of Peter's day were saved in the end.
3. Peter goes on to say that Noah and his family were brought safely through the waters of judgment. In the same way, baptism corresponds to this. The waters of baptism that every Christian goes through represent the judgment of death. The person is lowered into the water as into a watery grave, and then lifted out, representing the newness of life that comes through Christ.
  - a. Peter does say that baptism saves us, but he is quick to add, *"not the removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience through the resurrection of Jesus Christ."*
  - b. Baptism itself does not save us. But the faith that leads one to be baptized is so closely associated with baptism, that to say "I am saved through faith" is tantamount to saying "I'm saved through baptism."

### **Fellowship Starters:**

1. Robin shared that the atmosphere of the church should be one of unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly and sisterly love, tender-heartedness and humility (1 Peter 3:8). In which one of these character qualities do you desire to grow?
2. How are you tempted to respond when you are reviled or slandered or evil is done against you (e.g., "fight fire with fire," insist on your rights, demand fairness, plot revenge)? According to Jesus' example (1 Peter 2:21-23) and Peter's words in 1 Peter 3:9-10, how should believers respond to evil? How can you grow to emulate Christ's example?

3. When you suffer for doing good (1 Peter 3:13-15), how can believing that Christ is the reigning, sovereign and exalted Lord strengthen your faith and enable you to persevere?
4. Robin taught us that giving a “defense...for the hope that is in you” (1 Peter 3:15b) means being a relationship builder, not and an argument winner. In sharing the good news, which do you tend to be? What does it look like to be a witness for the gospel with gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:16)?
5. Robin shared that Jesus suffered once for sins, was resurrected from the dead, is exalted and seated at the right hand of God with angels, authorities and powers subjected to him (1 Peter 3:18-19, 21-22). Is all your hope in this good news, or do other hopes compete for allegiance?