

1 Peter 3:13-17

1-26-11

“The Future’s So Bright, I Gotta Wear Shades!”

I. **INTRO:**

- A. There was a *post-punk*, husband & wife duo called *Timbuck3*, that had a 1 hit wonder in the mid 80’s called, “*The Future’s So Bright, I Gotta Wear Shades*”.
1. Actually, the meaning of the song was *misinterpreted* as a positive perspective in regard to the near future. It was really a **grim outlook** to an impending *nuclear holocaust*. We’ll borrow the phrase wearing our **Eternal Shades!**
- B. If you are a *spiritually mature* man or woman described in 8-12, then you will get responses from the world.
1. Some respond positive “that’s a nice thing you’re doing at your church/in Haiti”
 2. Some respond negative “I don’t like you”, or “I want to kill you”.
 3. Some respond w/questions - What motivates you to live such a *strange life of holiness & hope?*
 4. Some respond - “I wish you’d just stay out of my life of self gratification!”
 - a) No matter how **they** respond, **we** need to respond...with *a life of virtue*.
 - b) Peter lays out *5 pieces of advice* on how **we** need to respond as Christians.

II. **The Future’s So Bright, I Gotta Wear Shades! (13-17)**

- A. **[1] REMEMBER, YOU ARE BLESSED BY GOD!** (13,14a)
- B. (13) **Good** - “It is only when a man *falls in love with goodness* that the wrong things lose their *fascination & their power*.”
- C. (14) **Suffering** – 2 kinds of suffering we deal with:
1. **Because of our Humanity** – we have physical sufferings, sorrow, distress, weariness, pain of body, & death.
 2. **Because of our Christianity** – we may face unpopularity, persecution, & the necessary discipline & toil of the Christian life.
- D. **Blessed** - Peter reminds us of Jesus’ beatitude in Mt.5:10 **Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**
1. Anybody could suffer for doing **wrong**, but Christians must learn to suffer for doing what is **right**. (www)

- E. When we experience unfair treatment, we might think, *What have I done wrong? Or Why is God allowing this?*
1. Peter takes a similar approach that James did, “**consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials.**” (1:2)
- F. So, how can believers count themselves **blessed** by God in light of unfair treatment?
1. We’re **blessed** because God uses this kind of unfair treatment as part of His plan to **strengthen** us.
 2. We’re **blessed** because God uses this to **make us more like Christ**.
 3. We’re **blessed** because God uses this not to show we are *outside* His will, **but** it indicates we are *in* God’s will & plan.
 4. We’re **blessed** because we can look forward to **a future reward** for enduring such trials.
- G. **[2] REMEMBER, STOP WORRYING!** (14b)
- H. Do not be **afraid...troubled** - or, panic & worry.
1. The background of Peter’s call to avoid panic & worry lies in **Is.8:12,13**.
 - a) (12) **Do not say, ‘A conspiracy,’ Concerning all that this people call a conspiracy, Nor be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled.** (13) **The Lord of hosts, Him you shall hallow; Let Him be your fear, And let Him be your dread.**”
 - b) Israel was told turn away from your fears & trembling of the pagan nations threatening to undo them. **Instead**, rely on God’s promises & tremble before Him alone!
- I. Don’t give in to **fear**(14b), keep **sight** on Christ(15a)!
- J. **[3] ACKNOWLEDGE CHRIST AS LORD!** (15a)
- K. (lit.) “Set apart in your hearts Christ as Lord.”
1. **It means**, turn everything over to Him. **Live only to please & glorify Him.**
 2. **It means**, don’t be satisfied w/anything less than **the will of God** in your life!
 - a) Jn.4:31, **My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.**
 3. **In contrast to fearing man**, simply **revere God!**
 - a) Ps.118:6, **The LORD is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?**
 - b) Peter, again writing **from experience**, when he had **feared** a young servant girls 1 statement, *you also were with Jesus of Galilee*. Peter denied even knowing the Lord.
- L. How do we prepare ourselves for trials & tribulations that come from a hostile world?
1. Not simply by *hardening our minds* or *steeling our wills*, **but by immersing ourselves in righteousness** before God & man.
 2. That’s the Christians **finest armor** against the attack of persecution.

M. **[4] ALWAYS BE READY TO GIVE A DEFENSE!** (15b)

N. **Defense** /Apologia - to give an account; or to provide legal testimony.

1. Where we get the field of Apologetics.
 - a) We often think of the PhD's who can argue *atheists & unbelievers* into silence.
 - b) Those who can explain arguments for *the existence of God*; can fire off 3 responses to the *theory of evolution*; & can explain *where Cain got his wife*.
 - c) I appreciate men & women who have given their life work to this...but this doesn't get us off the hook. Every believer is called to have an answer/give a defense!
 - d) "Apologetics 101 begins not with having the **right answers** to others skeptical challenges, but w/having the **right lifestyle** to raise the right questions!" Swindoll
2. We are not to roll over, but **defend!**...but not really defend **our-selves** here, but defend our-**Hope!**
 - a) **Hope** - Once again the emphasis is on *Hope*.
 - (1) His outlook was ever on **the future**; & Christianity was to him a *prominent, important, & celebrated hope*.
 - (2) **Christ alone** is the source of **hope** in hurtful times.
He alone provides a solid basis for **hope** in the midst of suffering.

O. It's *Seizing The Offensive* at the **right time** and in the **right way!**

1. Like **Stephen** "And they were not able to **resist** the **wisdom** and the **Spirit** by which he spoke."
2. Like **Paul w/Felix** "Now as he **reasoned** about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and answered, "Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you."
3. Like **Paul w/Festus** "Now as he thus **made his defense**, Festus said with a loud voice, "Paul, you are beside yourself! Much learning is driving you mad!" But he said, "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of **truth** and **reason**."
4. Like **Paul w/Agrippa** "Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You almost **persuade** me to become a Christian."
5. Each of the dying **martyrs** spoke powerful words as they breathed their last!
 - a) **Polycarp**, Bishop of Smyrna to the proconsul, "86 years I have served Him & He has done me no wrong. How can I blaspheme my King who saved me?...You threaten me w/the fire that burns for a time, & is quickly quenched, **for** you do not know the fire which awaits the wicked in the judgment to come & in everlasting punishment. Why are you waiting come, do what you will."

6. **Seizing the offensive:** This morning sitting in Starbucks parking lot doing my devotions; J.W.'s were sitting in their car. They always wait & jump out & come up to windows there. I thought I'd beat them to it. (story...)
- a) We need to **Seize the Offensive**, w/o being offensive!

P. **A reason - It should be Reasonable.** [We are to have a **reason**, not an *excuse*]

1. Our faith must be **1st-hand discovery** & not **2nd-hand story!**
2. It is truly the tragedy of the modern church that there are so many members who if they were asked, could not explain **what** they believe **nor why** they believe it!
 - a) You must go through the **spiritual sweat** & **mental struggle** of **thinking out your faith!**

Q. **Meekness** - Don't share your faith with **arrogance**, or w/an heir of **superiority**.

1. **Don't** be a **know-it-all!** [This isn't your big chance to show all you know! *[Scratch where they itch!]*]
2. **Don't** make someone to be a **fool** or **naïve** if they do not agree with you.
3. **Don't** try to **shove** it down their throats.
4. **Don't** ever think you'll **debate** someone in to the kingdom.
 - a) We are not called to **win arguments**, but to **win lost souls** to Christ.
5. **Do** use gentleness, love, a listening ear, sensitivity, a word of wisdom/ knowledge, discernment in **giving a defense!**
6. (Francis de Sales) "Nothing is so **strong** as **gentleness**, & nothing so **gentle** as **real strength.**"

R. **[5] REMEMBER, KEEP A GOOD CONSCIENCE & CONDUCT!** (16,17)

S. **Having a good conscience:** Remember, the conscience is that *internal judge* that either accuses or excuses our actions.

1. The only compelling argument is the argument of **the Christian life!**
2. Let him meet criticism w/a life which is **beyond reproach**, a life that **does rightly!**
 - a) **Cowardice** asks the question: **Is it safe?**
 - b) **Consensus** asks the question: **Is it popular?**
 - c) **Conscience** asks: **Is it right?**¹

¹ Martin Luther King, Jr.

3. I like Wiersbe's illustration of the **conscience** being like "*a window*" that lets in the light of God's truth.

- a) If we persist in *disobeying*...the window gets dirtier & dirtier.
- b) This leads to a **defiled conscience**(Titus 1:5); to a **seared conscience**(1 Tim. 4:2); & ultimately to an **evil conscience**(Heb.10:22)
- c) Saints...Keep your window clean! - So **God's Word** can shine in; & for **the world** to peer in.
- d) "A **saint** is someone whose life makes it easier to **believe in God!**"

T. "In a **hostile & suspicious** world it was inevitable that the Christian would be called upon to defend **the faith he held & the hope** by which he lived." (Barclay)

1. Christian, look for those open doors to witness. You **don't** have to wait for persecutions & sufferings!
2. **Q:** How many people have you made *homesick for God*?
3. A lot of evangelism today is telling people what things they have to **give up!** We need to tell them to "*seek first the kingdom of God,*" and then they will get **new & better things**; and the **old things** will drop off by themselves!

U. **Prayer:** Lord, our Future Hope is So Bright, we Gotta Wear Shades.