

PRACTICAL EVANGELISM

“Witnessing the Hope”

1 Peter 3:15

But in your hearts set apart 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, NIV

I, like many of you, have read this verse many times. But it came alive to me one day when I realized that there was a missing ingredient to my witnessing. That ingredient was hope. If people are to ask about the hope we have, then it would follow that Christians should be by character a hopeful people. The immanent return of our Lord is a reality we should be giving voice to!

Heb 3:6

But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house. And we are his house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast. NIV

Our hope is something we should be boasting about! Jesus did.

John 3:16-18

16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. NIV

John 4:13-14

13 Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again,

14 but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." NIV

John 11:17-26

17 On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days.

18 Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem,

19 and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother.

20 When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home.

21 "Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died.

22 But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask."

23 Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

24 Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies;

26 and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" NIV

*The promise of eternal life and His power as **the** resurrection were major components in Jesus' declaration. Resurrection hope is implicit in the gospel message. The apostles also gave faithful witness to the resurrection.*

Acts 1:7-8

7 He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority.

8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and **you will be my witnesses** in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

11 "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? **This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.**" NIV

Acts 2:23-28 NIV

23 This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.

24 But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.

25 David said about him: "'I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

26 Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will live in hope,

27 because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay.

28 You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.'

Acts 23:6

Then Paul, knowing that some of them were Sadducees and the others Pharisees, called out in the Sanhedrin, "My brothers, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee. I stand on trial because of my hope in the resurrection of the dead." NIV

Acts 24:14-16

14 However, I admit that I worship the God of our fathers as a follower of the Way, which they call a sect. I believe everything that agrees with the Law and that is written in the Prophets,

15 and I have the same hope in God as these men, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.

16 So I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man. NIV

Acts 26:8 "Why should any of you consider it incredible that God raises the dead?" NIV

We too should be found faithful witnesses of the resurrection.

Following are some great verses to begin laying a foundation of hope in your heart.

Ps 49:13-15

13 This is the fate of those who trust in themselves, and of their followers, who approve their sayings. Selah

14 Like sheep they are destined for the grave, and death will feed on them. The upright will rule over them in the morning; their forms will decay in the grave, far from their princely mansions.

15 But God will redeem my life from the grave; he will surely take me to himself. Selah NIV

Ps 17:14-15

14 O LORD, by your hand save me from such men, from men of this world whose reward is in this life. You still the hunger of those you cherish; their sons have plenty, and they store up wealth for their children.

15 And I--in righteousness I will see your face; when I awake, I will be satisfied with seeing your likeness. NIV

Job 19:25-27 NIV

25 I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth.

26 And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God;

27 I myself will see him with my own eyes--I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!

Isa 25:6-9

6 On this mountain the LORD Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine-- the best of meats and the finest of wines.

7 On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations;

8 he will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth. The LORD has spoken.

9 In that day they will say, "Surely this is our God; we trusted in him, and he saved us. This is the LORD, we trusted in him; let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation." NIV

Isa 26:17-19

17 As a woman with child and about to give birth writhes and cries out in her pain, so were we in your presence, O LORD.

18 We were with child, we writhed in pain, but we gave birth to wind. We have not brought salvation to the earth; we have not given birth to people of the world.

19 But your dead will live; their bodies will rise. You who dwell in the dust, wake up and shout for joy. Your dew is like the dew of the morning; the earth will give birth to her dead. NIV

Hos 13:14a "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death."

Isa 35:1-10

1 The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom. Like the crocus,

2 it will burst into bloom; it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy. The glory of Lebanon will be given to it, the splendor of Carmel and Sharon; they will see the glory of the LORD, the splendor of our God.

3 Strengthen the feeble hands, steady the knees that give way;

4 say to those with fearful hearts, "Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution he will come to save you."

5 Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped.
6 Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert.
7 The burning sand will become a pool, the thirsty ground bubbling springs. In the haunts where jackals once lay, grass and reeds and papyrus will grow.
8 And a highway will be there; it will be called the Way of Holiness. The unclean will not journey on it; it will be for those who walk in that Way; wicked fools will not go about on it.
9 No lion will be there, nor will any ferocious beast get up on it; they will not be found there. But only the redeemed will walk there,
10 and the ransomed of the LORD will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away. NIV

Rom 8:18-25

18 I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.
19 The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed.
20 For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope
21 that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.
22 We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.
23 Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.
24 For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has?
25 But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently. NIV

1 John 3:2-3

2 Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.
3 Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure. NIV

Some questions that can be used in witnessing the hope:

- ◆ If you died today, do you know where you would go?
- ◆ What if Christ came back today, in what condition would He find you?