

Defending Our Faith Introduction

Introduction

1. The word apologetics comes from the Greek word, apologia, which is itself two different Greek words (apo-away, logia speech) meaning to speak away
2. It referred to giving a reply or making a defense and in ancient Greek it was used in the judicial system to refer to a defendant attempting to refute the charges against him
3. It's used throughout the New Testament to refer to defending not just oneself, but the Gospel:
 - a. Philippians 1:7, 16
 - b. 1 Peter 3:15
4. It's in this latest sense, the defense of the Gospel or our faith, that we will focus on in this series
5. How do we do what Peter encourages us to do, defend our faith?
 - a. We must know the challenges to our faith (e.g. what does the world believe regarding the topic)
 - b. We must know the truth regarding those things (e.g. what does the Bible say about the topic or subject)
 - c. We must know how to respond
6. So, each week we will discuss a different topic or subject and follow the outline below:
 - a. Knowing the Challenge
 - b. Knowing the Truth
 - c. Knowing How to Respond
7. Today we will follow the same outline as an introduction to defending our faith

A. Knowing the Challenge

1. When it comes to defending our faith there are two main fronts:
 - a. On the one front is the **WORLD**:
 - 1) The world is, and has always been, hostile towards the Truth
 - a) It all began in the Garden with the Enemy, Satan, when He challenged God's Word and His authority (Genesis 3:1-5)
 - **"Indeed, Has God said...?"** (1)—He first questioned God's Word
 - **"You surely will not die"** (4)—The then rejected it
 - **"For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."** (5)—Finally, he accuses God of being deceptive
 - b) Jezebel persecuted and killed the Lord's prophets, so much so that Elijah had to hide one hundred of them in caves by fifties to protect them (1 Kings 18:13)
 - c) They persecuted and crucified Jesus for speaking the truth
 - d) Paul's ministry was constantly plagued by those trying to harm or kill him because he spoke the truth (see Acts 9:23-31 and 23:12-15)

- 2) The world is getting more and more hostile toward God, Christianity and Christians
 - a) Many nations that once embraced Christianity (like those in Europe or the US), have descended into secularism and are becoming more and more intolerant of the Christian world view and teachings of Christ
 - b) Many institutions—like our governments, courts and schools—that once upheld, supported or at least tolerated Christian ideals now ridicule and despise them
 - c) In many places, Christians are now persecuted and prosecuted for simply preaching what they believe (e.g. preaching about homosexuality in Canada) or living by their faith (e.g. baker prosecuted for not making wedding cake)

- 3) This shouldn't shock up because Jesus told us it would happen:
 - a) He said we would be hated because of Him (Matthew 10:16-23): **"You will be hated by all because of My name..."**
 - b) He said the world would hate us because we are no longer of this world (John 15:18-19): **"If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. 19 "If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you."**

- b. On the second front is **FALSE TEACHING** (and teachers) within the Church:
 - 1) We are going to deal with how to identify false teaching as one of our topics in this series and will go into more detail then
 - 2) For now, it should suffice to simply say that there are times when we have to defend what we believe to other Christians
 - a) Sometimes this is simply because other Christians have questions about what we believe or why, or maybe they disagree with us
 - b) At other times we are faced with false teaching within the Church and need to confront it and stand up for the Truth of God's Word

 - 3) This second reason, to confront false teaching, is becoming more and more critical today because the Church continues to move further and further away from the Truth:
 - a) Paul warned us that this would happen: 2 Timothy 4:3-4
 - b) In fact, Paul wrote that the Church will experience a great apostasy (a defection from the truth) before Christ returns (2 Thessalonians 2:3)
 - c) Examples:
 - Rejection of Creation account and the Flood
 - Theistic Evolution
 - Mysticism disguised as Spiritual Formation
 - Acceptance of homosexuality

2. So, as we seek to defend what we believe we face an ever increasing hostility, both inside and outside the Church—that's THE CHALLENGE

B. Knowing the Truth

1. In order to defend what we believe we need to know the Truth and why we believe it
 - a. When it comes to all moral and spiritual matters we have only one reliable source, the Bible

- 1) It is Truth (John 17:17): **“Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.”**
 - 2) It’s God-breathed (2 Timothy 3:16-17): **“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”**
 - 3) Therefore, we should handle it accurately (2 Timothy 2:15): **“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.”**
 - 4) The only way to do this—and be prepared to defend what we believe—is to study the Word!!!! (Read a portion of Psalm 119 as a reflection of David’s heart on knowing the Word)
- b. When it comes to other issues like science, history, etc. we have multiple sources but only one which is truly inerrant (without error) and that’s the Bible:
- 1) The Bible speaks to many scientific and historical facts, and when it does it is without error
 - 2) Human observation and learning are other sources of truth in these areas, but they are prone to error due to sin (fallen, corrupt minds observing fallen, corrupt evidence is bound to result in a fallen, corrupt answers)
2. We should not expect the unsaved to accept the Truth easily (many of the verses below refer specifically to Gospel matters, but can apply just as equally to any revealed truth):
- a. They have been deceived by the Enemy (Revelation 12:9): **“...the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world...”**
 - b. Their minds have been blinded by Satan (2 Corinthians 4:4): **“...in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving...”**
 - c. Their thinking has become futile (Romans 1:21): **“For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools,”**
 - d. God has handed them over to a depraved mind (Romans 1:28): **“And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind,”**
 - e. The wisdom of God is foolishness to them (2 Corinthians 2:14): **“But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.”**
 - f. They **“suppress the truth in unrighteousness...”** (Romans 1:18)

3. Knowing How to Respond

1. We should remember that the ultimate goal is to see people come to know Jesus Christ, not simply to agree with us on what the Bible says, or with what we believe
 - a. The great mission is to make disciples (Matthew 28:19-20)
 - b. Notice that baptism (conversion/commitment) comes before teaching
2. The focus shouldn’t be on defeating our opponent or simply “winning” the argument, but rather giving a defense for what we believe (1 Peter 3:14-15):
 - a. We should be courageous (14): **“But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. AND DO NOT FEAR THEIR INTIMIDATION, AND DO NOT BE TROUBLED, but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts”**

- b. We should be ready (15b): **“always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you,”**
 - 1) As stated earlier, a defense refers to providing a reason for why we believe something
 - 2) While the immediate context of this verse is to give a defense for the hope that we have in Jesus, it applies to defending everything that applies to our faith
 - c. We should be gentle (15c): **“yet with gentleness and reverence;”**
 - d. We should be consistent (e.g. walk the talk; 16): **“and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame.”**
3. Use the Bible as the starting point:
- a. When we use the Bible, we let God speak for Himself
 - b. It’s the greatest weapon we have (Hebrews 4:12): **“For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”**
 - c. It has the power to change minds and hearts—see Psalm 19:7-11:
 - 1) The Word can restore the soul
 - 2) It can make the simple minded person wise
 - 3) It can rejoice the heart
 - 4) It can enlighten the eyes
 - 5) It endures forever
 - d. It’s ultimately the only thing that can lead a person to faith (Romans 10:17): **“So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.”**
4. Use other arguments—like history, science, archeology, etc.—to support the Biblical arguments