

Verse 15b

The previous verses have labored the point of responding like Christ when we are treated unjustly or harshly by others. We are to guard our tongue, turn from evil, and pursue peace and good. When a Christian responds with Christ-like behavior it is found to be peculiar to the world as it goes against our fallen nature which believes we are to treat others as they treat us. When they see this behavior, they might often wonder why or how someone can act differently than how the majority of people act, especially when being treated unjustly. This may result in this asking us to give a defense of our faith and the hope that lies within us.

We are to always be ready to make a defense of the hope that is in us. There are no days off, there are not to be any “I don’t know’s” when it comes to making a defense of the faith and our hope. Not being ready to give a defense can impact the witness we have toward others and their views toward the faith.

The word defense comes from the Greek word “apologian” which is where we get our English word apologetics. This word in the Greek means: answer, reply, reason, account, defense.

Giving a defense requires the heart and the mind. The Greek word for repentance is “metanoia” which means a change in mind. This repentance is granted by God (2 Timothy 2:24-25). The heart is changed by the unilateral and sovereign work of God via regeneration. He takes out the heart of stone and gives a heart of flesh (Ezekiel 36:26). He also cultivates and prepares the soil of the heart to receive the seed which is the Word of God (Luke 8:4-15). Intellectual knowledge of Christ is not enough, it must get to the heart (see the example of Judas). Conversely, we can not shut off the brain and rely on emotion, feeling and responses to validate our salvation or love for God. The person with the heart that is changed will have more affection for God the more they know who He is as they grow in knowledge of Him. Higher theology= higher doxology.

The 3 elements of Biblical apologetics

- 1) **Know and use scripture.** We must know scripture and how to use it to defend the faith and our hope. The Christian is called to know scripture and grow in knowledge of His word. When we give defense to those who ask, we must use scripture. Our feelings and opinions are fallible and mutable, but God’s word is the infallible, immutable truth! The word is the only authority!
 - Acts 17:1-3 Now when they had traveled through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. ² And according to Paul’s custom, he went to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, ³ [a] explaining and [b] giving evidence that the [c] Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, “This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the [d] Christ.”
 - Matthew 4: 1-11. When tempted by the devil, Jesus quoted scriptures.
- 2) **Tell our personal story of conversion and a changed life. However, our story must center on Christ.**
 - Acts 22:1-21
 - Acts 26:12-18
- 3) **Respond with gentleness and reverence as to not impact or negate the truth in the message by our action.**
 - 2 Timothy 2:24-26 The Lord’s bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, ²⁵ with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, ²⁶ and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive [a] by him to do his will.

Verse 16

Our conduct as Christians should show the accusations of slander and improper behavior are false and they will be put to shame.

Verse 17

God ordains all things that come to pass. Peter has already discussed the fact that trials are necessary to test and purify our faith (1 Peter 1:6-7). Unjust suffering is ordained by God for His will and is for good (Romans 8:28).

Verse 18

Christ died for sins once for all. Unlike the animal sacrifices that were offered over and over in the Old Testament, Christ's substitutionary death is sufficient with no other sacrifices needed.

- **Hebrews 9:11-12** But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things ^[k]to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect ^[l]tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; ¹² and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, ^[m]having obtained eternal redemption.
- **Hebrews 9:24-28** For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; ²⁵ nor was it that He would offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the holy place year by year with blood that is not his own. ²⁶ Otherwise, He would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested to put away sin ^[n]by the sacrifice of Himself.
- **Heb 10:10-14** By ^[a]this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. ¹¹ Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; ¹² but He, having offered one sacrifice for ^[b]sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³ waiting from that time onward until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet. ¹⁴ For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are ^[c]sanctified.

The just for the unjust. Jesus is perfect and righteous. Perfect righteousness to the law of God is the requirement to enter heaven (Matthew 5:48). The problem is that no human being on their own has any righteousness (Romans 3:10) which can merit entrance into heaven to dwell with the perfect, holy God (Romans 3:19-20). We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). We are unable to keep the righteous requirement of the law on our own and are unable to save ourselves or merit our own way to Heaven. So how does a fallen creature ever enter Heaven if perfect obedience and righteousness to law is required? The answer is found in the active (His life on earth) and passive obedience (death) of Christ.

Active obedience. Christ came to die, but He also came to live which is just as important. Jesus lived a life of perfect active obedience to the Law and fulfilled the righteous requirement of the Law. This is of vital importance as that righteous requirement of the law (this is the righteousness that is required for entrance into heaven) that He met through His perfect life on earth is imputed and given to those who He justifies. Justification is the act where God declares someone righteous, and we are justified by faith alone which is the instrumental cause which brings justification. The person is not declared righteous on their own merit but is declared righteous as a result of the righteousness of Christ being imputed. The reason the believer now has no condemnation (Romans 8:1) and is declared blameless (Colossians 1:22, Jude 24-25) and without spot (Ephesians 5:27) is because when God looks at them, He doesn't see their unrighteousness, but the righteousness of Christ. The righteous requirement of the Law is fulfilled in those who He saves as they are those who walk according to the Spirit. Without Jesus coming in the flesh and living a perfect life of righteousness to fulfill the requirement of the Law, no human would have righteousness that could be given them, and as a result no one would enter the kingdom of God. Without the active obedience of God, we have no hope.

- **Romans 8:1-4** Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ² For the law of the Spirit of life ^[a]in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. ³ For what the Law could not do, ^[b]weak as it was through the flesh, God *did*: sending His own Son in the likeness of ^[c]sinful flesh and *as an offering* for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Passive obedience. After Christ had fulfilled all righteousness through His perfect life, He then displayed perfect passive obedience on the cross. He was perfect and sinless, but was bearing the sin of His people/sheep on the cross to be the propitiation for their sins and die in their place. This speaks of His substitutionary death for His sheep (**John 10:15**). Christ who was righteous and knew no sin, became sin for His people, so they could be the righteousness of God (**2 Corinthians 5:21**). Just for the unjust.

- **2 Corinthians 5:21** He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Bring us to God. Through His death, He has reconciled us to God. The war that we had with God over at the time of our salvation and we have peace with God.

- **Colossians 1:19-22** For ^[a]it was the *Father's* good pleasure for all the ^[b]fullness to dwell in Him, ²⁰ and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, *I say*, whether things on earth or things in ^[c]heaven.²¹ And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, *engaged* in evil deeds, ²² yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach—
- **2 Corinthians 5:18** Now all *these* things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation,
- **Romans 5:1** Therefore, having been justified by faith, ^[a] we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
- **Romans 5:8-11** But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Much more then, having now been justified ^[a] by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. ¹⁰ For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved ^[b] by His life. ¹¹ And not only this, ^[c] but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

Put to death in the flesh. The second person of the trinity, Jesus, lowered Himself and came to this earth in the flesh. In Jesus was the union of two distinct natures which is referred to as the hypostatic union. Jesus was truly God and truly man. Divine nature was not human, and human nature was not divine. When Christ died, the flesh of nature died only. If the Divine nature of God would have died, the universe would have ceased to exist instantaneously since He holds all things together and in Him we live, and move, and exist (**Acts 17:28**). Christ was put to death in the flesh but was raised by the Spirit.

The spirit that raised Christ, will raise us one day. Since Christ has been resurrected from the dead our hope is living. This is the hope that we are called to be always ready to make a defense.