ALWAYS BE PREPARED

I Peter 3:15 But in your hearts revere 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.

Living in Hope

I Thessalonians 4:13 Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope.

Romans 15:13 Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 5:-5 Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

Is Anyone Asking?

I Peter 3:15 assumes people will be asking us why we are hopeful in a hopeless world. Overflowing with hope and being filled with joy and peace should certainly cause people to ask questions in the day in which we live.

Always Be Prepared

The Greek word translated prepared means “prepared” or “ready” and is translated by one of these two words almost every time it occurs. It has both the idea of knowing what to say and being ready to say it. I Peter 3:14&15a But even if you should suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. “Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened.” But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord.

We are to be living in such a way that people want to know what makes us have joy, peace and hope in our lives and always be ready to explain to them why this is so, to tell them how to know Christ.

EXPLAINING THE GOSPEL

We Are All Sinners

Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

This is probably the most difficult part. I like to say that God doesn’t grade on the curve. Most people see themselves as mostly good or as doing more good things than bad things. The word literally means to “miss the mark.” Romans 3:23 says we all “fall short.” I like to use what Jesus called the greatest commandment in Matthew 22:37, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”

The Punishment for Sin Is Death – Eternal Separation from God

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord.

The basic meaning of death is separation. To be spiritually dead in this life is to be separated from God, to have no relationship with Him. When a person dies physically, his soul and spirit separate from his body. The second death is eternal separation from God.

The Gospel

I Corinthians 15:3&4 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

The word Gospel means good news. We have sinned, we deserve to be eternally separated from God, but Christ took the punishment for our sins when He died on the cross.

Isaiah 53:4&5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray; each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

He was buried, proving He really died. He rose from the grave, proving that what He did was acceptable to God the Father.

The Gift of God Is Eternal Life in Jesus Christ Our Lord

Ephesians 2:8&9 For it is by grace that you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.

Salvation is a gift. It is by grace, God’s undeserved favor. It is not by good works. It is by faith, by believing that Jesus paid the penalty for your sin and was buried and rose again. As long as a person is trusting in something other than what Jesus did on the cross for them, they are not saved.

Romans 4:4&5 Now to the one who works, wages are not credited as a gift but as an obligation. However, to the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness.

I like to tell people that they do not have to change to be saved, but if they are truly saved God will begin to change them.

A Person Must Receive the Gift of Eternal Life

Romans 10:13 “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

There are many scriptural terms for receiving salvation. Call, receive, take, come, etc., all refer to an act of the will in receiving the gift of eternal life by faith. The most common way people do this is by praying, telling God they believe Jesus died for them and asking Him to forgive and accept them. There are no set words. Heart attitude is the important thing.

People often will say, “I don’t know how to pray.” Encourage them to pray that they know they have sinned, pray that they believe that Jesus paid for their sins when He died on the cross and they want to be forgiven and have a relationship with God.

If they are still not comfortable praying on their own, lead them in a prayer, using your own words to tell the basic truths.

Follow-Up

Assure them that if they believe the Gospel and meant it when they asked God to forgive them that they are saved.

Tell them they need to pray to God every day.

Tell them they need to read the Bible every day.

Tell them they need to find a good church so they will have people to help them grow in their faith.

Tell them when they sin, they need to confess it to God and He will forgive them.

If possible, commit to keeping in touch with them to help them grow.

Things to Remember

If we live lives filled with hope, joy and peace, people will want to know why.

We always need to be prepared to tell people how they can be saved.

They need to know:

They have sinned: Romans 3:23

The penalty for sin is separation from God now and for eternity: Romans 6:23

Christ died for our sins, was buried and rose again: I Corinthians 15:3&4

Salvation is a free gift: Ephesians 2:8&9

They need to ask God to give it to them: Romans 10:13

We need to follow-up with those who respond.