

How to communicate with unbelievers

sermonaudio.com

True or False

By Clemon Chappell

Bible Text: 1 Peter 3:15

Preached on: Tuesday, January 22, 2013

Son Rise Baptist Church

2301 Fairbanks St.

Gary, Indiana 46406

Website: www.thesonrisechurch.faithweb.com/

Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/vincent74

Some things I don't grab a hold of down here but I'll understand a lot of things better by and by. Amen. Alright if you've got your Bibles let's run over to 1 Peter, chapter 3 and we are starting a series tonight on "True or False," amen. Tonight will just be really an introduction on where we'll be headed, and so you go ahead and start on 1 Peter, chapter 3, verse 15, and we'll proceed in the next few weeks on the topics themselves, but tonight I'm looking at 1 Peter 3:15. The Bible says, God's word says, "But sanctify the Lord God," where? "In your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason." Think about that now for a second. "A reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." Tonight this is the introduction but true or false, true or false, we will talk tonight about this, how to communicate with unbelievers. How to communicate with unbelievers.

Father I pray for your help tonight, we all need it, and I pray, God, that as you open these scriptures tonight that's really laying the ground work on how we should respond and how we need to interact with those who are unbelievers I pray, God, that your Holy Spirit will guide us and direct us to these truths, and I pray, God, that as we grab a hold of these truths and not only realize that it's your Word, but also God that it's your Word to be enacted in our lives. I pray God to guide and direct us, and I pray through the Holy Spirit to illuminate our minds, open up our minds to truth. Truth, as well as falsehood. We need to know the difference, and I pray God that you help us.

I pray God also that if there's one among us who is not truly saved, not born again, I pray God they receive Jesus as the Lord's Savior and King. Bless every individual that's watching right now on Livestream as well. I am excited that there are folks who are watching even now, who have watched from China and Japan and other places, Romania, and for that God we pray, Germany, we praise you. We ask God that the news, the good news, continues to spread abroad to others, and for that God we'll thank-you. Help us, for it is in your Son's name we pray. By the way, if there's anything whatsoever between you and I that will hinder you from using my vessel, I pray God that you forgive me, cleanse me, and wash my thoroughly and then use me for your Honor and your Glory. Help us! For in your Son's name we pray, Jesus amen.

True or false, amen. This is really an introduction to how to communicate with unbelievers. As we begin to go through this series of messages on true or false, is there a God, true or false? Is Jesus God, true or false? Is the Bible from God, true or false? What is it creation, is it creation or is it evolution? These are some of the topics we're going to talk about in the next few weeks. But tonight it's important for us to know how we need to communicate with those who are unbelievers, those who are atheists, those who are agnostics, those who are skeptics, and those who follow humanism and the list goes on. It's important for us to know how we are to communicate with these various groups. Every Christian should be able to give a defense of his hope in Christ, but there's a way to do it.

By the way, there's a way to talk to each other. Amen. I mean, we don't have to be ugly and unkind even in the house. There's a way to communicate. I know somebody will say, "Well, I grew up in a home where everybody just yelled. Hey, come over here and hey!" I understand that, but you know what? It's good to be able to communicate in a loving way, let me rephrase that: a godly way. A godly way. And we're going to see briefly tonight on how you and I should communicate with unbelievers. The Bible says in verse 15, "but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts."

The first thing my dear friends, is to be dedicated to the Lord. The Bible says here "to be sanctified, sanctify the Lord God in your hearts." That word "sanctify" means "to separate or dedicate, or be holy." He says where? In your hearts. Where's your hearts? The word "heart" there means your feelings. It's your emotion, it's your will. Give all that over to God. I'm going to tell you what, when you begin to do that kind of thing my dear friends, we will interact and communicate with those that don't believe, with those who are following a different path than the Word of God. We will know better how to help them when we have given our hearts over, our feelings over, our emotions over to God, and let Him be the orchestrator of it all.

Watch what he goes on to say here, he says, "sanctify the Lord God in your hearts," and be what? Be ready. That word "ready" means "fitness" or "ready." "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you." Because you and I need to be ready, we need to be fit. When I think about that word "fitness", I think about somebody that's in training. Somebody that's out there doing jumping jacks, doing push-ups, getting themselves fit. We're going to have a Super Bowl in a couple of weeks, those guys are getting fit, and they are getting in shape. They're going to face an opponent and they are ready, my dear friends. You and I we've also got to be ready and prepared to give an answer of the hope that you and I have. Now this word "answer" is an interesting word. The word "answer" here means "defense," like in a courtroom, defense. But now check out this, it also means "answer; defense; a verbal defense." But now watch this, it also means "apology."

Now, I'll tell you what, this is very important and I have no command much over the English language at all, but it's good to have a good command of the English language. Because when you first hear "apology," why would we apologize for what we believe? But look up the word "apology," there's more than one meaning. There's one meaning of

apology which is apologize if you're sorry for something, but there's another meaning of apology which simply means this, my dear friends, it means "a defense, excuse, justification in speech or writing as for a cause or doctrine." That's where we get the word "apologetics." You see, in Christianity we have this thing called apologetics and these are people, my dear friends, who are giving a defense, an answer for the hope that you and I have, and that isn't just 10 or 15 books, there are thousands of books that are written by apologists that go around to give defense of the gospel, or defense of what we believe.

The ones that come to the top of my mind are Josh McDowell, and what's awesome to me is this: most of these, not all but most of these people who are apologetics or apologists, are people that were one time atheists. Think about what I'm saying: they were atheists and their whole desire when they first started was to disprove that God existed. Was to disprove that creation took place by God making man and so on. But then because they were seeking truth, they found the truth and wound up being born-again and now are some of the leading... Lee Strobel is one. He's a columnist down in Chicago for the Chicago Tribune; he's written many different books on apologetics and the defense. Norman Geisler, I don't know if he was an atheist or not but many of these men were at one time atheists or agnostics. An atheist is someone who doesn't believe that God exists, and then agnostics are people that believe basically this: that you can't know if there's a God or not, that there's no way to find out if there's a God or not. A skeptic, of course, is somebody who is really struggling over the whole thing, they're skeptical about a lot of things.

By the way, there are basically three what you would call world views, religious world views. One of them is theism, which we fall into. Theism means that God made all, He made everything. Not only Christianity believes that but also Judaism as well as Islam. But then you have pantheism, which is God is all. This is what you guys learn in school a lot of times, God is all. That falls into Buddhism, Hinduism and New Age. What we mean by God is all, that means that God is in everything: like animals are like God, plants, trees and all this kind of thing. That's where you get that New Age stuff and we'll talk about that a little later on down the road. Then there's something we call atheism, which I said before is there's not a God at all. That really falls into what we call religious humanism. By the way, all of these have a belief system. Because if you say, "I don't believe that there's a God!" that's your belief, so you have a belief system my dear friends and we're going to talk about these things down the road. But the bottom line with what we're talking about tonight is this, the Bible says, in verse 15, be ready always to give an answer to the atheist, give an answer to the agnostic, to give an answer to the skeptic. Be ready always to give an answer, a defense, to every man. That means all those, my dear friends, who fall into those different categories.

By the way, the word here "every man" means not only individually, but also collectively. See, in other words, when we talk to people individually we should be able to give an answer. Or if it's in a group, we should be able to give an answer. "Well, Preacher, I don't have that kind of knowledge. I don't have that kind of wisdom." Whoa, wait a second, can you not give them a reason why you trusted Jesus Christ as your

Savior? There is a reason why you received Christ as your Savior, you give your testimony. There's no way that I could be like some of these men I mentioned a few moments ago. I've been reading their materials and my brain, you know I can't even remember half of your names. Imagine that kind of knowledge crammed into my little, bitty brain. Amen. But what's so awesome is that God has given us individuals who have this ability, my dear friends, and they can stand toe-to-toe with the best of those who try to disprove that God is God. But see, what they would try to have us believe is we're all ignorant, we don't know anything. You all have just got to hope type of thing where there's more evidence, which we'll see, there's more evidence that proves that there is a God than that proves there is not a God. As a matter of fact, it takes more faith to believe that there is not a God, than there is someone who designed all of this, my dear friends. What's amazing is even now there are folks who are scientists and all of these other "ologists" at the end of their names, who have come out and said they don't follow Darwinism, they don't follow evolution, they don't believe that, because more and more evidence is showing that it's not true.

Listen, trust me, we have dictionaries to help us but some of these words like micronism and all these different types of things but you'll see, my dear friend, that what it all comes down to because what we're going to do here is this, it's going to be like being in a courtroom, we're going to lay the evidence down and once you and I see the evidence my dear friends, to make verdict about the evidence which has been presented to you, is it true or false? Is God real? We'll give the evidence and then you make the decision. I'm loving just studying it. You see right here the bible says this, "Be ready always to give an answer," a defense, "to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you." That word "answer" here, my dear friends, means "craves" or "desires" a reason. Why? Some folks really do want to know. Sometimes folks won't say it out loud but inside they want to know what is the truth. People are seeking the truth, but do we have that truth to give to them? The Bible says, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." Truth, if there's truth then there's falsehood. There's going to be.

Watch this: the bible says here so first of all be dedicated to the Lord, secondly be ready to answer, and then, my dear friends, we need to have the right attitude. Look at what the Bible says right here, the right attitude answering. The Bible says right here, "A reason of the hope," the word "hope" here means "a faith or confidence that you have," "that is in you with meekness and fear." That word "meekness" here means "humility; gentleness of spirit." That hurt right there because sometimes when we are giving an answer we don't do it with humility and meekness, we do it with, "I got the answer and you know it! You're heading to hell and you know it!" But there's a right way, the Bible says with meekness, humility, gentleness of spirit. I've got a lot of brothers and sisters, we all do it in the family of God and I've seen them not be so humble, pride you know. Some of them walk around with their chests blown way up, and that's the wrong type of attitude to have. We're not supposed to be belligerent or unkind, the Bible says, the Word of God, we say that we believe it, the Bible says right here "with meekness and fear." That word "fear" means "reverence, respect."

Brother Brett was witnessing to a Jehovah's Witness this past Monday and he was ready with the materials I gave him to read and one of them told you not to be ugly. If they came to the house he could have said, "Let me show you how wrong you are and how right I am." That's not with respect it's not with humility, that's with arrogance and that's with pride and the Bible said those things God, what? Hates. They commit adultery, the commit all this kind of stuff, "Oh my goodness!" What about pride and arrogance? Self-righteousness? You don't believe me? Look at Proverbs 6:16,. This is the introduction right here and we'll get to the meat of things next Tuesday but look what it says in Proverbs 6:16, look at what the Bible says, the Word of God, the Bible says in Proverbs 6:16, "These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him." The donk head. I'm sorry, that isn't what it's saying. It says "a proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed," what? "Innocent blood." That deal with that Roe vs. Wade thing today, that's innocent blood that's being shed. "An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, a false witness that speak lies." "Preacher, this can't be that bad, is it?" "And he that soweth discord among the brethren." Wait, what happened to murder? But what happens to some of this other stuff? Discord among the brethren? That ain't no big thing. I'll tell you what: we have folks shooting up and we'd say they're probably not even saved. What about the person that's sowing discord among the brethren, are they saved? "Well yeah, they're saved. But he said...I didn't say it." God said these things, these things I hate. That messes us all up. Like the preacher said, "Bible study will mess our theology all up." But we need to go by what does the Word say? And the Word says all these things here, He hates. Where is adultery at? That's still a sin, calm down, but nonetheless, you see what I'm saying here is that the Bible shows us what's a big deal to God is little to us.

Now flip back over to 1 Peter and read what it says again, "to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." Let's make sure we are witnessing, make sure we are sharing the gospel, that we are doing it with meekness and with fear, with reverence and with respect. Not with ugliness and unkindness. And look what it says next in verse 16, "Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you," they slander you, "as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that," what? "Falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ." So if they do slander your name, let's make sure that's a false accusation. And the Bible says here that having a good conscience that whereas they speak evil of you as evildoers or criminals, they may be ashamed, put to blush, that falsely accuse your good, what? Conversation in Christ. That word "conversation" in this verse doesn't mean you're speaking, it could include your speaking but it's talking about your behavior. Let's make sure that our good behavior is good behavior when we're giving that answer, when we're responding, it's good behavior, it's a good conversation, it's not with pride and it's not with arrogance. "Why are you saying all that, Preacher?" Because, my dear friends, as we begin to look and we say if it's true or false about is God real and Jesus Christ and all these things like this, I don't want us to have that arrogant attitude if we do meet someone that may be an atheist. Now, I know the Bible says that the fool has said in their heart there is no God so, "He's a fool, he is." Why are you saying that though? Sometimes when people are lost, when they're going to hell, some folks are like they're glad they're going. They're going to bust hell wide open. Are you happy about that? Are you excited about that? Now, if it was one of our loved

ones, we wouldn't be excited about it. What about the guy that broke into my house and stole my flat screen, my 60"? Wait a minute, wait a minute, that's somebody's brother, somebody's daddy, somebody's niece, that's somebody. Unless it hits home, then we look at it totally differently. But, my dear friends, the bible teaches us that we're supposed to be like who? Like Christ, He was our example, He had humility. The only people he got rough with was who? The religious crowd. The ones who walked around like they had it all. "We've got it right here." He was on to them. He said, "Do you know what you are? You're hypocrites, vipers." He was letting them have it. You know what he was trying to do to them, don't you? Breaking them. Because, you see, the way you deal with pride is that pride has to be broken. You see, until you're broken you walk around like you've got it, "I'm a self-made man. I did it. Look what I did." He's got to humble us. But wouldn't it be great if we started off being humble?

Now don't go around saying you're humble, then you're messed up. You know, "I'm a humble person," and you're messed up already, bro. Amen? No, we need to really be humble. A humble person doesn't say that they're humble. They're seeking to be humble. Paul said, "I have not arrived." What was he saying? Simply this: I want us to have the right type of attitude, know how to communicate with unbelievers. When you are dealing with people who are involved in cults, when you're dealing with people who are atheists, agnostics or whatever the case might be, skeptics. Let's make sure we have the right attitude as we begin to witness to them, as we begin to share with them the hope that we have and not be excited that they are lost. No, let's be excited because they have the potential to be saved, maybe you can share with them the Gospel. If those guys ever do come to your house, I don't know how they're going to be but sometimes, especially when you're dealing with Jehovah Witnesses, they smile but, man, but if you hit the wrong button they could be really ugly, I've encountered them and if you're not careful you will get in the flesh and you're going to want to punch somebody. You're going to have to have the right attitude, the right mindset, and all that comes with you and I taking our heart as we said in the beginning of the verse, and give your heart over to Him, consecrate it over to God. "God, you take my heart, my emotions and my feelings and use it for your honor and for your glory."

I've got a few questions and then we're done. This is just an introduction here. Next week we'll get into, is there a God? That's going to be taught next Tuesday. Here's a few questions for you. First of all, have you given your heart over to God? Secondly, are you ready to give answers to why you believe what you believe? "Well, my Momma believed it, Granddaddy believed it." No, we need more than that. Why do you believe what you believe. Are you ready to give an answer for that? Thirdly, do you have the right attitude when responding to those who don't believe? Let's ask God to help us.

Father, thank you for your many wonderful blessings. I've done my best with this short introduction and it's what we'll be dealing with, True or False. But I pray, God, that we can start to help each of us to have the right mindset, the right heart, the right motives because we want to see people saved and people's lives changed, brought to Christ, rescued from sin. And, Father, I pray that you would help each of us starting with myself, help each of us to have the right mindset, Father. I pray that you would touch us tonight

and perhaps there are other needs that need to be met, that folks would come and bring to your throne tonight in prayer. I pray that they come. Perhaps there are some things that you lay on their hearts as the message was being brought forward but perhaps some time or other today, I pray they bring that over to you, Father. Help somebody tonight. God, we need you and we need more of you. Father, we will give ourselves over to you. Help us to do that, show us how to do that and for that, Father, we'll thank you. Just help somebody tonight and, of course, if there is one here that is not sure of their salvation, that they'll come forward and get that thing settled. I can show them from the Word of God or someone else and I pray they come and let's go from there. It's in your Son's name that we pray, Jesus. Amen.