

# A REASON TO HOPE

---

**1 PETER 3:15 • TV264B**

A television broadcast sermon delivered  
SUNDAY, JANUARY 26<sup>TH</sup>, 1986  
by  
**HENRY T. MAHAN**

---

Transcribed, edited and published  
MAY 24<sup>TH</sup>, 2010

**HENRY T. MAHAN TAPE LIBRARY**  
Zebulon Baptist Church  
6088 Zebulon Highway  
Pikeville, KY 41501

---

## **1 Peter 3:15**

*“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:*

Here is our subject for today: **“A REASON TO HOPE.”** Our Scripture will be read from **1 Peter 3:15.**

This is a most familiar passage of Scripture; you don’t hear it preached very often but it is known to most people. Follow along in your Bible as I read **1 Peter 3:15.**

The Scripture says, *“Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you”* (the hope of eternal life, the hope of a relationship with God). *Be ready to give every man that asketh you a reason,* (not an experience), *a reason for the hope you have with meekness (humility) and fear.”*

I want to take this passage and speak from it almost phrase by phrase. The first statement is this: *“Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts.”* How in the world does a mortal man sanctify the Lord God? The Scripture says, *“Sanctify the Lord God.”*

## A REASON TO HOPE

1 PETER 3:15 • HENRY T. MAHAN

---

How does a mortal man sanctify God? God is essentially holy, God is infinitely holy. God is perfectly holy and God is unchangeably holy. We do not make God holy; there is no way that we can make God holy or add to His holiness or make Him any holier than He is.

What does the apostle mean when he says, “*Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts?*” God said this to Moses, “*You didn’t sanctify Me; I told you to sanctify Me in the eyes of the people.*”

So, when the apostle writes here, “*Sanctify the Lord God.*” Peter means for you and me to regard God to be holy and to believe, declare and proclaim God to be Holy. Peter means for us to look upon God and to consider God and to regard the Lord God as a Holy God, an immaculately, infinitely, holy God.

How big and how holy is your God? How great is your God? That is the question that I am asking, how do you look upon God? How do you regard God and how do you consider God? The Scripture says, “*Sanctify the Lord God.*”

My friends, to do this we have to sanctify God in our hearts. This is not a theology; this is an experience. This is not a creed or catechism; it is a heart experience. We know in our hearts that God is Almighty. We must sanctify the Lord God in our hearts. We must consider Him to be holy and eternal.

We are frail; God is Almighty. We are finite but God is eternal. We are sinful and God is holy. This is what Job found out when he saw the Lord. He had gone through all of these experiences and finally said, “*Lord; I have heard of you and now mine eyes seeth Thee.*”

The conclusion to which he comes is this, “*I am sinful and I abhor myself.*” Do you see his attitude? He saw the holiness of God and it overwhelmed him. He saw the holiness, the majesty and the greatness of God and it consumed him and overwhelmed him. Job said, “*I hate myself; I repent in sackcloth and ashes.*”

Isaiah said the same thing when he saw the holiness of God. He was overwhelmed with the holiness of God. That is what you and I have to have, which is a better understanding of who God is.

That is where everything begins; it does not begin with you and me; it does not begin with thoughts of heaven, “pie in the sky in the sweet by and by.” Religion begins with who God is. Who is God; in heaven’s name, who is God?

Do you see what I am saying? “*Sanctify the Lord God.*” Consider, regard God to be holy. Proclaim God to be holy. How big is your God? I’m afraid that your God is too small. You need to do this in your heart. “*Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts. Come before His presence with fear and trembling and thanksgiving. God is in His holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before Him.*”

## A REASON TO HOPE

1 PETER 3:15 • HENRY T. MAHAN

---

Here is the second statement: “*And be ready (be always ready) to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason for the hope you have*” (of a relationship with such a God), the hope you have of a fellowship and communion with such a God, the hope you have of eternal life and entering into the glory of such a God.

What is your hope? Most everyone has some kind of hope. All the religious folks I know have some kind of hope, like the Israelites of old. These religious folks said, “*We have Abraham as our father; we have Moses and the prophets,*” that was their hope. They had a heritage religion and got it from their ancestors.

The Pharisees said, “*I just thank God that I’m not like other people. I’m not an extortioner, an adulterer; I’m not unjust; I fast; I tithe, I give alms to the poor*” and that was their hope.

The moralists said, “*I have kept all of these commandments from my youth up;*” that was their hope.

The religionists said, “*Lord, we have preached in your name and cast out devils. We did many wonderful works in your name*” and that was their hope. They thought that it would get them into the presence of this awesome, holy God, this high and great Potentate, “*Holy and Reverend is His name.*” That is how they thought they would get in. They preached in His name and did many wonderful works.

The fundamentalists say, “*I made a decision back when I was ten years old. They had a raid on the junior department when the hot-shot evangelist came to town. I got saved, I walked down the aisle, made my profession and I was baptized and joined the church and I hope to see you in glory.*”

What is your hope? Could I borrow your ears for a few moments and tell you about something that is so vital and so important? I’m talking about you having a sure hope, a scriptural hope, and a God-given hope.

I do know this; look at our text again: “*Sanctify the Lord God.*” In other words, give God the glory. Any hope that does not give God all the glory is not a good hope; I want you to remember that. Any place that your religion begins or ends, if it does not begin and end with God the “*Alpha and Omega, the author and finisher of our faith;*” that is what the Scripture says. So, any hope that you have that does not begin with God is a false hope.

“*Sanctify the Lord God. Who maketh thee to differ? What has thou that thou dist not receive?*” In heaven, the song is; “*Unto Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood. Sanctify the Lord God,*” give God the glory. I say, any hope that does not begin with God and continue in God and end with God is not of God. “*He is determined that no flesh shall glory in His presence.*”

## A REASON TO HOPE

1 PETER 3:15 • HENRY T. MAHAN

---

God said, *“Let not the rich man glory in his riches or the strong man glory in his strength, the mighty man glory in his might, and the wise man glory in his wisdom. He that glorieth, let him glory in this, that he knows me, that I am the Lord God.”*

*“Sanctify the Lord God in your heart.”* Any hope that is not a heart work is no hope either, *“for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness.”* That is what the Scripture says. God says, *“I will take that stony heart out and give you a heart of flesh,”* a pliable heart, a soft heart, and a heart that can receive impressions.

Your old cold, hard, dead heart which is like a stone. It is cold, hard, dead and lifeless. You can't even make a dent in the stone with a hammer. God said, *“I will give you a new heart.”* So, *“Sanctify the Lord God in your heart.”* That is where salvation's work is done.

Salvation's work is not pressing down an aisle, burning a candle, making a lot of signs with your hands or throwing water in your face. It doesn't matter if you wear certain clothes, the way you dress or do this, that, or the other.

Salvation is a heart work. *“God Almighty looks not on the outward countenance; He looks on the heart.”* That's right; He looks on the heart. *“God seeth not as man seeth. That which is highly esteemed among men, (in religion), is an abomination to God.”*

Most of today's religion is an abomination to the living God. It is an abomination to any intelligent person, especially to God. So, *“You sanctify the Lord God in your heart.”* This is a heart work.

This heart work is not shaking a hand or joining our church; it is in knowing God in your heart. The Scripture says, *“My son, give Me your heart. Keep your heart for out of it are the issues of life. Out of the heart the mouth speaketh.”* I could go on all day talking about these Scriptures that refer to the heart.

*“Be ready always to give an answer.”* Where are you going to get the answer? You will get the answer from the Scriptures. You don't get the answer from your feelings, experience, or the soul-winner that gave you the “Roman Road.”

You might have people ask you what you did; you be ready to answer. You might say, “I don't know what I did, go ask my soul-winning buddy, go ask my preacher.” No; I'm asking you, do you glorify God? Do you give God the glory? Do you ascribe to Him the credit?

You need to do it from your heart. You be ready *“always to give an answer, (yourself, out of the Word of God), to every man that asketh you a reason; Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.”*

His Word is the foundation of faith. Nothing is so because I think it. It is only so if God said it. *“If they speak not according to the Word of God it is because there is no light in them.”* That is what Isaiah said; *“There is no dawning or no morning, no glimmer of light if they speak not*

## A REASON TO HOPE

1 PETER 3:15 • HENRY T. MAHAN

---

*according to the Word of God.*” So, always be able to give a reason, a Scriptural reason and a Bible reason for your hope. What does God say?

Some think that they have to be baptized to be saved; it does not say that in God’s Word. Some think that there is a purgatory where some folks go and spend so many years. They think that if you pay them out, pray them out or plead them out that they are saved. It does not say that in God’s Word; where do you get that? Thinking is not the answer; what does God say?

Then, He says; “*Sanctify the Lord God in your heart; be ready (be able) to give always a reason, (a Scriptural reason), for your hope with meekness and fear.*” God rejects the proud! I’m so weary of proud religionists, arrogant religionists and haughty religionists. “They have the world by the tail on a down-hill pull” some people say.

They are so cock-sure and presumptuous; they think they have a corner on God and they own God. They are like the old Israelites that said, “*We’ve got Abraham*” and everybody else is going to hell. Oh, I tell you what, that is arrogance. This is such arrogance, such haughtiness and presumption that covers religion today. They have all the answers. It is hard to find a sinner isn’t it?

The hymn writer wrote:

**Here I raise mine Ebenezer  
Hither by Thy help I’m come,  
And I hope by God’s good pleasure,  
Safely to arrive at home.**

Some people think that I shouldn’t talk that way. They want me to say that “I am as sure for heaven as if I was already there.” Well, I am not already there! I’m not as sure for heaven as if I was already there. I have a hope. I have a good hope and strong hope, that hope is in Christ.

I will tell you this, “*Let Him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.*” That is what the Word of God says. “*Take heed brethren, lest there be found in you an evil heart of unbelief.*”

I know we are hedged about with the promises of God that give strength, courage and hope. Let me tell you something, we are hedged about on the other side with warnings, fearful warnings lest we presume. I will tell you this, the worst creature on this earth is a presumptuous creature.

What about your hope? What is your hope? The author of a good hope is God. I know that He is the author of anything good; “*every good and perfect gift cometh from God.*” A good hope is given to us; that is what the Scripture says, “*We have been given a good hope;*” that is the gift of God.

A good hope is by and through the grace of God. I’m going to give you six things that I want you to write down. I want you to consider them. If you want to, you can order this tape and you can listen to it again and again. You can share it with friends. This is years of experience of reading

## A REASON TO HOPE

1 PETER 3:15 • HENRY T. MAHAN

---

God's Word and preaching. I am not a novice; I have been preaching a long time in a lot of places all over the world. I know a little bit about the Scriptures.

My aim is the glory of God and my objective is to bring you to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. I don't want you to just have religion; "*I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection. I want to win Christ and be found in Him.*" I want to know the Son of God in redeeming love and in redeeming faith.

This I know and here is the reason just in case someone comes and asks me to give him a reason for the hope that I have of eternal life:

First of all: God plainly declares that "*we are born in sin.*" You can fight it if you want to. You can grit your teeth, gnash your teeth, bug out your eyes or clench your fists. You can do what you want to, we are "*born in sin; shapen in iniquity; conceived in sin, brought forth speaking lies.*"

We are sons of Adam; "*We have borne the image of the earth, earthy. We are children of wrath even as others.*" This is what the Word of God says; "*We bear the image of the earthy; we are children of wrath and we are under condemnation.*"

Now; a good hope is to be born again; that's right. Our Lord said, "*Except a man be born again, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God.*" God doesn't take the old flesh and the old man and reform him; He creates a new man in Christ Jesus.

There is a new birth, and a new creation. There are a lot of false ideas about the new birth. It is not a religious decision; the new birth is regeneration, the work of the Holy Spirit. I will give you some things about the new birth to study:

First of all: The new birth is of God; it is a work of God. "*We are born not of the flesh, not of the will of the flesh, not of the will of man, not of fleshly inheritance, (by blood relationship); we are born of God.*" It is God that begets His children.

Second: It is by the power of the Spirit; "*We are born of the Spirit and the Word of God.*" It is through the Word of God. "*We are born not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible seed by the Word of God which liveth and abideth forever.*"

This new birth is a new creature. John said, "*We have passed from death unto life (and we have evidence of it) we love the brethren.*" There is evidence of it. We are new creatures in Christ Jesus.

Sure we have an old nature, sure we have the old man, sure we have the old nature that we had before. We have the same eyes, the same ears, mouth and nose. We are the same person naturally and physically but we are new persons spiritually.

We have a new nature and a new heart. We are a new creature with new principles, a new family, new ideas, new objects, new motives and we have a new attitude.

## A REASON TO HOPE

1 PETER 3:15 • HENRY T. MAHAN

---

There is a conflict between that new man and that old man, but there is a new creature; our hope is to be born again. John Newton said, "I'm not what I ought to be, I'm not what I want to be, I'm not what I'm going to be but thank God that I'm not what I use to be." A man who has been born again can say that.

Secondly: The Word of God declares that we are sinners, plain-old-sinners in God's sight. Somebody said to a friend of mine the other day that he had been saved and he was no longer a sinner. Listen to me; you were born a sinner, you have always been a sinner, and you will be a sinner until you drop dead and they put your carcass in the ground.

*"A man that says he has no sin is a liar and the truth is not in him and he has made God a liar."* There is no such animal on this earth as a person without sin. Everybody listening to my voice has committed sin this day, in fact, this moment.

You don't love God *"with all your heart, mind, soul and strength."* You don't *"love your neighbor as yourself"* and that is sin. *"To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, it is sin."* You haven't given one of your coats to your neighbor; you have three or four coats and he doesn't have one. Go over there and give him two of yours, but you don't. You know that is so and I do too.

So, a good hope would depend on my sins being pardoned, forgiven, and put away. I have to have my sins pardoned. *"All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. There is none good, no not one. There is none that doeth good and sinneth not."*

*"God Almighty looked down from heaven to see if there was anybody that did do good and sin not."* He said, *"They are all gone out of the way; they are altogether become unprofitable."* I'm even talking about the preacher and parishioner, in the pulpit, the pew, and in the world; they are all sinners. They are all dug out of the same pit, taken from the same rock, and lifted from the same dung-hill. If it wasn't for God's grace they would all be right back there.

How can sin be put away? The Law won't put sin away; *"By the deeds of the Law shall no flesh be justified."* Works won't do it either; we are not justified by works. The Jewish sacrifices couldn't put away sin. Sin is hard to put away; it leaves a stain that is so deep, double-dyed, and red like crimson. How can you get it out?

Here is the answer: *"Once in the end of the world has He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself."* That is how sin is put away. *"The blood of Jesus Christ God's Son cleanseth us from all sin."* Did you hear that? That is what God's Word says.

Why do we argue with this? *"Christ bare our sins in His body on the tree."* He died that we may live; my sins, past, present and future are put away:

## A REASON TO HOPE

1 PETER 3:15 • HENRY T. MAHAN

---

**“O the bliss of that glorious thought  
My sins not in part but the whole.  
Are nailed to the cross; I bear them no more,  
Praise the Lord; it is well with my soul.**

You might say, “I believe that Christ died for our sins up to the time that we believe but after that we are responsible for it.” You are as sure for hell as Satan himself, *“because to offend in one point of the Law is to be guilty of the whole Law of God.”*

That’s exactly right; Christ put away all the sins of all believers, of all ages. They are liable for none; *“There is therefore, now, no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus.”* Sin is pardoned, *“In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sin”* by the death of Christ.

Thirdly: The Word of God declares that we must have perfect holiness and a perfect righteousness before the Law of God and before the presence of God. That is what we have to have.

How good does a man have to be to enter God’s presence? Being pretty good will not do; pretty good is not it; God can’t tolerate pretty good. Almighty God can only deal with perfection. He can only receive perfection and can only have communion with perfection.

So, what a man has to have to stand in God’s presence, the Bible says; *“is clean hands and a pure heart.”* What? Without holiness, immaculate holiness, no man is going to see the Lord, no man.

I know that you don’t have that and that is what I am saying, I don’t have it either, no other son of Adam has it but the Son of God has it. He said, *“Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and the Pharisees, (the best man that ever lived), you won’t enter the Kingdom of God.”*

Where can such holiness be found? Such holiness can be found in Christ. It can’t be found in us, *“our righteousnesses are filthy rags,”* but in Christ we have a perfect righteousness. I told you that we were born in sin, sons of Adam. *“By one man’s disobedience we were made sinners.”* By identification, imputation and impartation we were made sinners.

Even so, by the righteousness of Christ we are made righteous and holy by His obedience. That is why Christ lived on this earth as a man; *“He was born of a woman under the Law.”* He was subject to every Law of the home, the state, the Laws of God, and the Laws of the Tabernacle. He fulfilled every jot and tittle of the Law of God. Christ said, *“For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.”*

*“He didn’t come to destroy the Law; He came to fulfill it. Suffer it to be so to fulfill all Righteousness.”* So, in Christ, my Substitute, I have a perfect standing, a perfect holiness before God. That is what I am saying; if I am going to see God, my hope is this, that in Christ I have a perfect righteousness.



## A REASON TO HOPE

1 PETER 3:15 • HENRY T. MAHAN

---

It is not that I am doing the best that I can; I want to do the best I can. The best I can is not equal to God's demands and God's requirements. God has got to spit it out. To come short of the glory of God, even a little short, is too short. But in Christ I have perfect holiness.

Fourthly: The Word of God declares that God is Just; "*He will not clear the guilty.*" He just won't do it! Sin has got to be punished; it will be and it must be and it always has been. "*The soul that sinneth shall surely die.*" That is what God said, "*Sin when it is finished bringeth forth death.*" The Justice of God says, "Death to the offender." Every one of them is going to die.

A good hope depends on someone, whoever is able to take my place and die for me. Justice has to be satisfied enabling God not only to be a Saviour but also a just God and holy Saviour. Do you see that? In **1 Corinthians 15: 1 through 3** Paul says, "*I preached the Gospel to you; you heard it; you believed it, you received it, you stand in it and you are saved by it.*"

"*Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. He was buried and rose again according to the Scriptures.*" That was the very plea that Paul set forth in **Romans 8** when he said; "*Who can condemn me?*" There is no judgment; there is no condemnation; there is no demand that I die.

Why is this? The reason is because "*Christ died.*" That is substitution. You will never learn the Gospel until you learn two blessed words my friend, substitution and satisfaction. Christ is our substitute before the Law, before the justice of God, and before the holiness of God; who He is and what He did satisfied what we couldn't satisfy, for every believer, throughout endless eternity.

It is not how much He suffered, it is who suffered. Do you see what I am saying? It is not how much blood He shed; it is whose blood was shed. So, His death is effectual; I will never die because I have already died in Christ. The believer has already died under the wrath of God and the judgment of God.

Last of all: The Word of God declares that those who believe on Christ must continue in the faith; they can't quit. "*He that endureth to the end the same shall be saved, whose house we are if we continue in the faith and be not moved away.*" So, I will tell you; a good hope would be to be "*kept by the power of God and through faith*" in faith. You might ask me if I plan on continuing in faith in Christ; I say, by His grace.

I say in closing: The Word of God declares that one day I will die and they will bury my body and it will go back to the dust; "*To dust thou art to dust thou shalt return.*" How are you going to get out of the grave? You say that you have gotten out of your sins; you say that you have gotten out of the dung-hill and you say that you have gotten out of the old nature; how are you going to get out of the grave?

He will have to raise you. So; a good hope depends on the power of God raising me from the grave. "*He is able to change our vile bodies and make them like to His glorious body.*" He is my hope!