

“Hope for Life 1 Peter 3:15

Life Sunday 1-21-18

*“Abortion is not a sign that women are free, but a sign that they are desperate.”* On this quote, both pro-life and pro-choice sides agree, according to its author, Frederica Mathewes-Green. She is a pro-life feminist author and speaker and the wife of an Eastern Orthodox priest. In a new You Tube video she asks, “If 2700 American women each day are having abortions they don’t want, then why are they? She discovered that 80-90% of them said that if just one person had supported them, their child would be alive. The Pregnancy Care Centers, like one you will about later, are for many women, that one person.

What that one person offers is hope. What is hope? I we say, “I hope it rains,” we know we might not get the rain we are “hoping” for. That’s not how the word “hope” is used in the Bible. There, hope is confident assurance, not wishful thinking. It is not an abstract concept, but an encouragement that moves people to belief and better choices. That is why Peter says, “But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy,

always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect.”

What is this hope in us? It is the certainty that we are reconciled to God, the Father, who out of love gave up his only Son to suffer the punishment of death for our sins. When He rose from the dead, He stripped away the power of sin, death. So Satan cannot condemn us. Our certain hope is that by faith we are clothed in Christ’s righteousness even now. We will not be ashamed to stand before God, no matter what we have done in our past.

Our hope is not only for the life to come, but also for the life we live now. People need this hope for those hard life and death choices.

People like those to whom Peter wrote--believers facing persecution. They had to be ready to answer objections to Christianity. When the Roman state ordered them to deny their faith, they had to be ready to defend their hope in Christ despite threats of prison and torture. Peter told them to have already thought about the answer for their faith.

As did the early Christians, we live in a culture of death, but we have a hope that is in us! We have life in Jesus Christ, the Lord of life!

That is our identity. There is no hope for those who have no identity in God. Without knowing the Lord of hope, there is no identity as parents, as spouses. Without God, a fetus has no identity; therefore, it is easy to choose abortion of an unwanted baby. Without God, the elderly have no identity; so when they feel no longer productive, it is tempting to choose assisted suicide.

Our identity as children of God gives us life and hope. We keep this hope alive by continuing to take in God's Word. When you hear and meditate on God's Word in Sunday worship and Bible studies God is preparing you to make a defense of the hope you have in your Savior.

Not that Jesus needs defending! He didn't even defend Himself while he was on trial before Herod and Pilate. He willingly took His sentence of death on the cross.

Yet, we have the privilege to make the case for hope through Christ's to anyone who asks you why you believe what you do. And so we give that answer, not to show

how smart we are, but that we may lovingly serve hope to those in need of what we have.

Watch for those opportunities in your daily life. The depressed neighbor next door needs to know Jesus has answers for life's troubles. That young woman looking for love in all the wrong places needs to know that in Jesus she will find all the love she really needs. The young couple overwhelmed by a surprise pregnancy and the terminally ill patient need someone to support them and give them hope.

Your witness will be credible as your life shows God's love. Share hope with gentleness and respect, and people will listen. The Word of God will empower you to do this. This will encourage and inspire others to want what you have.

One way share the hope is to invite your friends and neighbors to church so that they will get to hear the sweetest words they will ever hear this side of heaven—words that we sometimes might take for granted. They will hear their heavenly Father say to them through His called and ordained servant: "I forgive you all your

sins!” And in those words of grace,  
they will experience hope instead  
of despair, and instead of death,  
hope for life. Amen