

Sermon – Show and Tell the Gospel: 1 Peter 3:13-22

Rev. Bruce Stanley www.waitara.anglican.asn.au

Today is show and tell. I've got three things to show you, and three things to say from this passage today.

PPT - III – Show and tell 1 – war medals – **“Know it”**

These medals belong to my great Uncle Christie, who served in Tobruk in WW2. It was a great honour to be given these to look after when he died. But to be honest, I don't know much about Australia's involvement in wars.

I know that we celebrate ANZAC day this week. I know the 25th of April marks the landing at Gallipoli as part of the plan to capture Constantinople and knock Turkey out of the war. I know that over 8,000 Australian soldiers were killed there. Most Australians know this because it's important to us as a nation – it's part of our history and our identity as Australians.

PPT – On our holidays last week, we visited the War Memorial in Canberra. And it was amazing. There was so much to see and I couldn't believe how little I knew about Australia's involvement in war.

But at the war memorial there were **tour guides** who could take you on a tour of the whole place. And they could answer nearly any question you asked. And because they were tour guides, you expected them to know the answers.

In 1 Peter 3:15, Peter talks to us as Christians. He says:

PPT – *“¹⁵But in your hearts set apart 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.”*

PPT – In other words, if Jesus Christ is important to you, **KNOW** what your faith is about! Always be ready to give an answer for that hope to everyone who asks you. Because being a Christian means that you are essentially a **tour guide** for the Christian faith. If you say you're a Christian, isn't it reasonable to assume that someone should be able to walk up to you and ask you about what you believe in? And shouldn't you be able to give them a reasonable answer?

Many of us stumble at this point. I know I did for many years. What do I SAY to someone when they ask me about my faith? And it's good to have something prepared to say to be able to explain your faith. A simple outline of Christianity – something like this – 2 ways to live, or a personal testimony.

PPT – My favourite is the 5 finger gospel – a way of helping me to remember the essentials of my faith – here it is very quickly:

1. Thumb – for hitchhiking: It means heaven is a **free** gift
2. Pointing finger for blame – but SIN is a problem for you and me – it mucks up our relationship with God
3. Big middle finger – God – He is loving and just – he loves us but he must show justice for our sin against him
4. Ring finger – for relationship – through a relationship with Jesus, we can be in a relationship with God again. Jesus offers to take our punishment, our justice, for our sin against God.
5. The little finger – the smallest of all – is for faith. It only takes the smallest amount of faith in Jesus to enter that relationship with God.

That's the 5 finger gospel. A simple way to remember our faith. I encourage you to learn something like this so you can be ready to share your faith. But when Peter talks about having an answer, this is only part of it.

PPT – Live

Peter is talking about our whole life – our words AND actions. **Knowing** our faith, and **Living** our faith.

Verses 15-16 – as we share our faith, Peter says –

PPT – *“But do this with gentleness and respect,¹⁶ keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behaviour in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.”*

PPT – graph picture

Some studies have shown that only about 7% of communication is about the actual words we use. 55% is non-verbal, like body language, and 38% is our tone of voice. The words you speak, *the gospel*, AND the way you speak, *with gentleness and respect*, AND the way you behave, *what you do*, are the three ways we communicate the gospel to people.

That’s what it comes down to. YOU may be the only Christian some people ever know. So YOU could be the only witness of the Christian faith. People hear **what** you say, hear the **way** you say it and they **see** the way you live – they put that all together – and THAT is your personal testimony to them about what Christian faith is.

If it were a mathematical equation, it would look something like this...!

PPT – “What you say” + “the way you say it” + “the way you act” = “your testimony”

III – Show and tell #2 – **“Live it”**

I love cars. So I do apologise to those who don’t, but...

PPT – Out of all the 13 cars I’ve ever owned, my pride and joy, even though I only owned her for 18 months, was my 1956 FJ Holden. Here she is... beautiful... I love cars. But not as much as some people.

PPT – Not enough to buy this McLaren F1 Veyron from Bugatti. The most expensive car ever made. It’s a W-16 – that means it’s two V-8s together, with four turbochargers generating 1001 hp. It hits 60 mph (that’s 100kph) in 2.5 secs., does the quarter-mile in 10.5 secs. and reaches its top speed of 252 mph (that’s 406 kph) in just 55 secs. It costs only \$1.25 million.

Now you would have to be a serious car lover to spend that money on a car. If you saw someone driving that car, what would it tell you about that person? That they’re rich, they like fast cars, they like showing off, they have a passion for cars, or speed,...

PPT – What does your life look like to people? What does it say about your faith? When people see your life, what do they see you as being passionate about?

When we look at the life of Jesus, it’s simple isn’t it? Everything he did honoured God, even to the point of dying on a cross for us. What about us? What does our life reflect? A passion for cars? A passion for family? A passion for work? For life? For knowledge? For success? Or a passion for Jesus? What is your **testimony**? How do you **live**?

So two things so far – we need to **KNOW** our faith so we can share it, but we also need to **LIVE** our faith in everything we do.

PPT – So one more thing. Down in verses 18-20, Peter reminds us how years earlier, the Spirit of Jesus, the Holy Spirit was at work warning people of the flood, by speaking through Noah. But only 8 people were saved. Why? Because people didn’t listen.

There are so many times when God speaks through his Spirit and people don’t listen – Pharaoh didn’t listen to God’s Spirit speaking through Moses in Egypt. The people of Noah’s time didn’t listen to the Spirit speaking through Noah about the flood. Even when Jesus came himself, and spoke by the Spirit, people didn’t listen – in fact they crucified

him. And today, when we share our faith, when the Holy Spirit speaks through us, many people don't listen. So why do we bother? Verse 20 – "God waited patiently" for the disobedient people to listen. God waited patiently.

PPT – III – Show and tell 3 – "Care"

This is my stamp collection. Some of it. I used to soak stamps off envelopes, buy them at the shops, get them from overseas, buy them at stamp shows. I have about a dozen albums of stamps and first day covers. But I don't collect them anymore. Why? Because it's a lot of work. It takes a lot of patience. Something I don't really have much of any more – time or patience! And it's very slow. It takes time to collect stamps properly. It can be frustrating, a bit boring, and you need a lot of patience to do it properly, and it can cost you a lot as well. The bottom line is: I couldn't be bothered any more.

PPT – Care

God is patient. God **bothers** with us. He actually CARES about us. The Spirit of God is at work every day, through people like Noah a long time ago, at work in Jesus of course, and now, is at work in **us** when we share our faith and our life with people. But letting the Spirit speak through us takes patience. Because some people don't respond straight away. Some people don't listen at all. Some people don't care. Sometimes it's very frustrating very time consuming and very costly. But the result is something we can't forget. For all that effort, all that work, all that suffering we might face, the self sacrifice, the frustration, the cost... the result can be **salvation**.

Today, we're not saved by surviving a flood. We're saved, verse 21 says, by Baptism.

PPT – "this water symbolises Baptism that now saves you... It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ"

What does that mean? If we get dipped, we get saved? No. Of course not. True Baptism is about the little finger that represents... faith in Jesus – a heart decision – a conscience turned to Jesus. Just like Noah. Noah was saved by faith. It took FAITH to listen to God and build an ark in the middle of a dry field!

Peter reminds us that in baptism, the "coming up" out of the water symbolises us sharing in Christ's resurrection. Eternal life with him. So here's a question to finish with - How did **you** come to share in Christ's resurrection? In eternal life? How did **you** come to have faith? It's the same answer for all of us: because God was patient with you.

If Christ is Lord of your heart, if your conscience is turned to him, then be prepared to give an answer for your hope – that means:

1. **Know** your faith – know what it means to be a Christian.
2. **Live** your faith – in the way you speak and the way you act.
3. **Care** about people enough to **share** your faith with them. And be patient.

Let's pray.