

Making a Case from Weakness

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This week I preached on 1 Peter 3:13 - 22. It's a passage that I don't think gets enough attention in apologetic discussions. When Christians talk about apologetics we often skip right to the "prove it to be true" stage. What we miss, however, are the theological underpinnings of why and how we are to make a case for our faith. This is unfortunate, to say the least, because it's led us to pursue a course of apologetics based on triumphalism rather than weakness. 1 Peter 3, however, is pretty clear that Christians are more naturally attuned to make a case for our hope from a position of weakness - by doing good, keeping their heads down, and making their case for the Christian hope through the brilliance of what they did - not by what they won politically or how strongly they argued. I believe that we need to heed Peter's advice and begin making our case from this position of weakness, rather than strength. In this world where Christian assumptions are going to be challenged - it doesn't do any good to keep trumpeting how we need to get back to where we were "in charge." We aren't "in charge" any more - and I don't think that's a bad thing. Here's a quote from my sermon on Sunday about my call to start an apologetic from a position of weakness...

Now, I don't think that Christians in this country are suffering persecution. It's hard to make that case when the last two Presidents kept running around talking about their personal faith in Jesus Christ. What I am saying is that we are living in an environment where our assumptions will be challenged, and we need to be ready for that. If we encounter a moment where this happens, we can't afford to immediately get offended and make a big stink (like one woman did when her Starbucks coffee cup had a quote from an atheist on it). After all, how do we feel about people we perceive as whiners? Do we want to listen to them? Of course not, they're annoying! And if people perceive us as being "whiny" when our beliefs get challenged, no one is going to listen to us. On the other hand, if we can be gracious and respectful in those moments when our Christian assumptions are challenged, maybe we won't convince people that they are wrong, but maybe we'll keep them from being nasty towards Christians in the future because they realize, we actually can be pretty-decent folks.

Read more at: <http://wezlo.blogspot.com/2007/05/this-week-i-preached-on-1-peter-313-22.html>.