

# Defending the Faith (Part 2)

**Doubt and disappointment don't have to lead to deconstruction—they can lead to deeper revelation.**

**This is why we are Defending the Faith! And Peter tells us how...**

*1 Peter 3:15 ESV "... 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."*

**Last Week:** How can you believe that the Bible is historically accurate, inspired by God, and still relevant today?

Today I want to address one of these hard questions:

**How can you believe a loving God exists when there is so much evil, pain and suffering?**

**There's hope in Jesus—even when life hurts.**

*1 Peter 3:13-22 GWT Who will harm you if you are devoted to doing what is good? 14 But even if you suffer for doing what God approves, you are blessed. Don't be afraid of those who want to harm you. Don't get upset. 15 But dedicate your lives to Christ as Lord. Always be ready to defend your confidence in God when anyone asks you to explain it. However, make your defense with gentleness and respect. 16 Keep your conscience clear. Then those who treat the good Christian life you live with contempt will feel ashamed that they have ridiculed you. 17 After all, if it is God's will, it's better to suffer for doing good than for doing wrong. 18 This is true because Christ suffered for our sins once. He was an innocent person, but he suffered for guilty people so that he could bring you to God. His body was put to death, but he was brought to life through his spirit. 19 In it he also went to proclaim his victory to the spirits kept in prison. 20 They are like those who disobeyed long ago in the days of Noah when God waited patiently while Noah built the ship. In this ship a few people—eight in all—were saved by water. 21 Baptism, which is like that water, now saves you. Baptism doesn't save by removing dirt from the body. Rather, baptism is a request to God for a clear conscience. It saves you through Jesus Christ, who came back from death to life. 22 Now Christ has gone to heaven where he holds the honored position—the one next to God the Father on the throne. Angels, rulers, and powers have been placed under his authority.*

**The existence of evil and suffering points to the existence of God and not the absence of God.**

- Evil exists because God created humans with a free will because a free will leads to real love.

**Suffering and death are a result of human rebellion not God's design.**

*Romans 5:12 NIV Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned.*

*1 Peter 3:18 GWT. This is true because Christ suffered for our sins once. He was an innocent person, but he suffered for guilty people so that he could bring you to God. His body was put to death, but he was brought to life through his spirit.*

*Heb. 7:24-25 NIV because Jesus lives forever... he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.*

*v14-15 ... Don't get upset... make your defense with gentleness and respect.*

- **You could say:** "I don't pretend this is easy. Suffering hurts. Death is heartbreaking. I wrestle with it too. But the God I trust is the God who bled and died for a broken world. That's the God I believe in."
- People may debate your theology, but they can't deny your story.

**How do you trust God when it hurts?**

- **Dedicate your life to Christ as Lord.**
- **Suffer for Him, with Him, or through Him—because He suffered first for you.**

*v. 17-18 "... if it is God's will, it's better to suffer for doing good than for doing wrong (you will be blessed) 18 This is true because Christ suffered for our sins once. He was an innocent person, but he suffered for guilty people so that he could bring you to God..."*

*Romans 5:7,8 GWT Finding someone who would die for a godly person is rare. Maybe someone would have the courage to die for a good person. 8 Christ died for us while we were still sinners. This demonstrates God's love for us.*

**Remember the Resurrection – it gives us hope that pain won't last forever.**

*His body was put to death, but he was brought to life through his spirit... Now Christ has gone to heaven where he holds the honored position—the one next to God the Father on the throne. Angels, rulers, and powers have been placed under his authority.*

**His final word on the Cross spoken through his agony and pain was this: It Is Finished!**

*1 Peter 3:21 GNT "... was a symbol pointing to baptism, which now saves you. It is not the washing away of bodily dirt, but the promise made to God from a good conscience. It saves you through the resurrection of Jesus Christ."*