

PREPARED

Hope on the Ropes

Andy Stanley

Scripture: 1 Peter 3:13–15; 1:3, 13, 21; 3:15–18; 1 Corinthians 15:14

Idea: We need a short answer to the question of why we've chosen to follow Jesus.

Introduction

1. Today, we're beginning a new series entitled *Prepared: Defending your faith* without losing your **mind**.
2. One of the most frustrating things about being a Christian is those moments when people ask you a question about what you believe or question something you believe, and if you had **15 minutes** of undivided attention, you could give an answer—not to convince them, but to at least leave them with something to think about.
3. Or if they would read a **book** or listen to a podcast . . . but they aren't going to . . .
4. But you don't get 15 minutes. You get 15 seconds. And in most cases, they aren't really all that interested; they're just curious or taking a shot.
5. Your father-in-law and sister-in-law always say the same thing every time religion comes up. It's the same argument, same comment. They tell the same story about that church they went to, once . . .
6. It's so frustrating because you are confident, but they **throw you off balance** or bait you into an **argument**.
7. You leave feeling **stupid**.
8. People generally don't take shots at **Jesus**—just church and the Bible. Everybody likes Jesus.
9. Then, every once in a while, you talk to someone who is sincere—who really wants to **know**—and you talk and talk, around and around. You realize you are making it really **complicated**.
10. So, I want to take a shot at helping you know what to say when there's little **time** and even less **interest**.

We get a little help from the first post-resurrection evangelist, Peter, an ex-businessman turned Jesus follower, who bailed in the end. He lost faith. He denied even knowing Jesus, and then jumped back in to become the leader of the church in Jerusalem. And you know what re-energized him? An empty tomb and a resurrected Lord. He writes to first-century believers . . .