

WHERE IS YOUR HOPE?

Good morning and welcome. For more than the usual numbers, this is a day where spiritual hope is emphasized more than other days. That is because today is a day known as Easter, a holiday designed by man to commemorate the resurrection of Jesus. Many will pause from their usual weekly schedules and consider the coming and life of Jesus on this day. In times past we have addressed scriptural concerns with the observation of this holiday – simply stated, it is not found in scripture. But that is not our subject this morning.

However, the subject of the death, burial and resurrection IS found within the pages of scripture. The death, burial and resurrection of Jesus are CENTRAL to our faith. And we are given instructions as to HOW we are to remember these events. They are associated with becoming a Christian (baptism is an act related to the DBR of Jesus – Romans 6:3-4), and when we assemble – our weekly observance of the Lord’s Supper (1 Corinthians 11:23ff). We also remember these occasionally in our songs, prayers and preaching.

AND, they are the source of our hope, which is what I want to talk about for awhile this morning. The subject of hope ought to be very important to the Christian for many reasons. It is why we live as we do and are willing to sacrifice for our Lord and one another. And when we are facing troubling times, our hope helps to sustain us. So I have decided this morning (and next week) to address the subject of HOPE. This morning I want to address what this hope is and why we need it. Next week we will address what that hope can do for us. It is my hope that these lessons will encourage us as we deal with these extraordinary times, where we are not able to assemble as normal.

I. What is hope?

- a. Hope is a well-grounded expectation of something yet future. Sometimes the word is used as a verb (e.g. “I hope to come to you shortly”), or as a noun (the object of our hope, e.g. “the hope that is set before us”).

Years ago, an article in Guardian of Truth Magazine described hope as “the happy combination of desire plus expectation.” The article then observed, “Many of us desire things we never expect and most of us expect things we never desire. Hope, however, is the combination of desire and expectation.”¹

For Christians, hope means we have something better waiting for us when this life is over. There is something better than this life which is often filled with disappointments, struggles and troubles.

- b. **Passages about hope** – The Bible has much to say about this subject. The word is found about 75 times in each testament. Many of these texts give us a good grasp of what our hope involves. And there are other passages that emphasize its importance. Consider:
 - i. **Romans 8:24-25**, *For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.* Here we learn that hope is based upon something we have not yet seen or fully realized
 - ii. **Hebrews 11:1**, *“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for...”* It is what gives our faith meaning or purpose. If there is no hope, why believe?
 - iii. **1 Corinthians 13:13** – Now abide faith, hope, love... - Paul in this text is emphasizing the importance of love, but he notes how faith and hope also are to abide in us. ALL three of these foundational to our Faith (objective). I will touch on these a little more in my lesson this afternoon.

¹ Willis, Mike, Hope: [The Anchor of the Soul](http://www.truthmagazine.com/archives/volume33/GOT033268.htm), Guardian of Truth, October 19, 1989. XXXIII: 20, pp 610, 630-31
Online: <http://www.truthmagazine.com/archives/volume33/GOT033268.htm>

- iv. **1 Thessalonians 4:13** – notes that Christians do not sorrow as others who have no hope. It gives us purpose as we face life. This text also notes that our hope ought to make us different than those of the world, who live without hope.
- v. **Hebrews 7:19** – contrasting the Old law with that which Christ established, the writer describes it as *a better hope*. A study of the book of Hebrews shows how everything IN CHRIST is better than without Him. It is because of Christ (which we shall see) that we have hope.
- vi. **2 Timothy 1:12**, a passage that doesn't use the word hope, but you find what it there. Note Paul's confidence as he faces departure from this life.

II. What gives us hope

- a. Another way of saying this is to ask WHAT is the SOURCE of our hope. Where we find hope is what makes us as Christians – Christians! It is one of the qualities that ought to set us apart from the world. As Paul noted in Ephesians 2:12, *Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.* (11-13)
1 Thessalonians 4:13 notes that *we do not sorrow* (concerning those who have fallen asleep) *as others who have no hope*.
- b. SO, what are some sources of our hope?
 - i. **God's Word** – Colossians 1:23 – Paul challenged these brethren saying, *...if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from **the hope of the gospel** which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven,...* The gospel is where we learn and respond so that we can have hope. Earlier in vs. 5, Paul spoke of the hope laid in up in heaven, which they had heard in the word of the truth of the gospel. Psalm 119 is a psalm devoted to God's word. It is the longest psalm consisting of 176 verses. It is about the word of God and its impact in our lives. At least 8 times the word "hope" is used, with the expression, *"I hope in Your word"* (or "ordinances") is used 5 times. Romans 15:4 – while we are not under the LOM, Paul notes these things were *written for our learning that we through the patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope*. When we are discouraged, may we turn to God's word, and believing may we find it a source of hope.
 - ii. **God Himself** - Though God's word, we learn of other sources of hope. There is God Himself - Romans 15:13 describes Him as the God of hope. 1 Peter 1:21, speaking of God raising Jesus from the dead, *gave Him glory so that your faith and hope are in God*. May God be a source of hope so that when we are dealing with our troubles we can turn to Him casting all our cares upon Him – because He cares (1 Peter 5:6-7)
What He has done for us – 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17, *Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace, comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work*. WHEN we think our salvation, and the many other things He has done for us – we ought to hope in Him. 1 Peter 1:3-5 describes our living hope that He given us..
 - iii. **Jesus coming to this earth** – 1 Timothy 1:1 – *God our Savior and the Lord Jesus Christ, our hope*. As we read about all that Jesus did, the way He lived, His purpose, His sacrifice, we find reason to hope in Him.

The resurrection of Jesus – while we could focus on many different things Jesus did, let's consider one that is specifically tied to our hope – His resurrection.

Note again 1 Peter 1:3 - we have a living hope through His resurrection.

Ephesians 1:17-20 – Paul's prayer that they might know the hope of His calling...worked in Christ when God (the Father) raised Him from the dead...

The resurrection is worthy of our consideration. It is THE event that distinguishes the Christian faith from ALL OTHER world religions. There are many false world religions, and even agnostics and skeptics that believe Jesus lived and even died (most believe He was crucified). Many see Him as a good man and moral philosopher. But the resurrection is exclusive to Christianity.

That is why skeptics will try to disprove the resurrection of Jesus. If you disprove it, there is no Christian faith – PERIOD.

In the book of Act, virtually every sermon appealed to the resurrection of Jesus. AND that act was the catalyst both for rejection and acceptance.

When we talk about defending our faith, if we can establish the resurrection (and the evidence in favor of it is extensive), we prove so many things. Here's a partial list: Establish the resurrection you prove:

1. There is a God – that defeats atheism.
2. Miracles exist – the resurrection is the ultimate miracle
3. Who God is – remember, ONLY the Christian faith accepts the resurrection. If Jesus was raised, the YHWH is the One True God
4. The Bible is the Word of YHWH – If we establish who God is, we ought to consider that which is His message. There is plenty found withing God's word that validates it as the word of God. Included in this are prophecies which POWERFULLY establish who the Designer is. Add to this the unity of scripture, its foreknowledge and accuracy, you have every reason to consider the Bible as God's word.
5. The resurrection also establishes that Jesus IS who He claimed to be – our Savior. While we read about this in the Bible, again there is powerful evidence that appeals to this.
6. IF Jesus is who He claimed to be, then we need to follow the New Testament, because He nailed the Old Law to the cross (and arose) – Matthew 5:17-20, Colossians 2:13-14
7. If we follow the New Testament, we learn that Jesus is the ONLY way to heaven - John 14:6, Acts 4:12
1 Corinthians 15:19 – our resurrection,
8. In the New Testament, we also learn HOW to come in contact with His blood, thus how to be saved – Acts 2:38, Romans 10:9-10, 6:3-4, Galatians 3:27-28
9. In the New Testament, we also learn HOW to stay faithful and how to live morally. We find therein WHY we need to remain faithful. Revelation 14:13, etc.
10. AND, all these things give us hope! Paul in 1 Corinthians 15 addressed our hope in the resurrection. After establishing that Jesus DID arise, he notes what it means if He did not. Then in 1 Corinthians 15:16-19 he concludes that we have no real hope if there is no real resurrection.

So much more could be said about the resurrection and our hope, but I hope that what has been said will encourage us to confidently affirm that Jesus did arise and so will we.

- iv. ***He is returning*** – one of the themes of scripture is end times. We do not know when He is going to return (2 Peter 3:10-13 tells us it will be as a thief in the night), and there is much debate about what will be involved in His return.

But as Christians, when we look at this troublesome world, we live our lives with hope

BECAUSE we know He's coming back and on the other side of that return is something so much better.

Acts 1:11, after the apostles watched Jesus ascend to heaven, they saw an angel who said that He would return in like manner as He went up. 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 speaks of His coming and the comfort we have in that.

1 Peter 1:13, says, *Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;*

1 John 3:1-3, when He is revealed we will be like Him, *and everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.*

And thus, we are called upon to live with hope. We do so because we know that this world is not our home. We are but pilgrims (1 Peter 2:11), whose citizenship is in heaven (Philippians 3:20).

The people of this world live without hope (Ephesians 2:12). All they have is what this life has to offer them, and as we have seen in these times, that is SO UNCERTAIN! That is why all that this life has to offer is vanity (emptiness and grasping for the wind). But that is not the child of God. IF we are living faithful lives in service to Him, we have every reason to live with hope, no matter what is going on around. So what about you? How is your hope? Think about it!