Resurrecting Hope

# Easter Sunday 2024

## (1 Peter 3:18)

We must realize that the events from Palm Sunday to Resurrection Sunday are the most significant events in all of redemptive history. From the joy of his triumphant entry to the horror of Jesus betrayal and arrest; the brutality of his trial and his resulting crucifixion and death; the past seven days give us hope because they show us that sin and death will never prevail.

Early on the first day of the week, Jesus rose from the dead, bursting forth from the silence of that cold and lifeless tomb. The apostle Paul tells us that it’s in this hope that we are saved. He said,

“If you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved” (Romans 10:9).

And it’s because of my hope in the resurrection that I stand before you today declaring the triumphant and ultimate victory of Christ’s sufferings by his resurrection from the dead.

The title of my message today is resurrecting hope and my goal this morning is to resurrect hope in you. And so, as the children planted a seed in your soul, I want to water it with the word of God, watching as God makes it grow and blossom and bear fruit in your life and in the life to come. As Jesus said to those who were following him,

“I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit… fruit that will last” (John 15:16).

In other words, whatever challenges, circumstances, or situations you are walking through today, at home, at school, or on the job; the Holy Spirit wants you to understand how to overcome life’s greatest challenges.

You see, just as Jesus was victorious over his suffering, we can press through difficult circumstances following his example and be victorious as well. Resurrecting hope is about how we respond to challenges in our lives as the Bible tells us,

“We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that our suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us… (Why?) Because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit whom he has given us” (Romans 5:2-5).

And so, we are resurrecting hope, but hope that is seen is not hope at all, because nobody hopes for what they already have.

In other words, we can rejoice in suffering knowing that it is like a seed planted. And nowhere is this illustrated as graphically or as powerfully as it is in the sufferings of Jesus Christ who said,

“Unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies it remains only a single seed, but if it dies, it produces many seeds” (John 12:24).

And so, his fruitfulness, his effectiveness in ministry was deeply rooted in his greatest humiliation, being treated unjustly, and it was actually in his suffering that he accomplished the most.

That’s what Peter tells us today in our focus verse, in first Peter, chapter three. In verse eighteen he tells us,

“For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit” (1 Peter 3:18).

And so, Jesus was a seed planted, and through his suffering, he achieved his greatest victory. You see, even though the religious leaders fabricated lies and bribed false witnesses to bring about his conviction, even Pilate declared,

“I find no basis for a charge against him" (John 19:4).

And yet, they still found him guilty, and condemned him to death.

In spite of his innocence, he suffered greatly at the hands of the Jews, and the Bible says,

“Christ died for sins” (1 Peter 3:18).

Which is the ultimate extent of suffering, you can’t suffer any more than that, and even though there was no sin in him the Bible says,

“God made him who had no sin to be sin for us” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

And so, Jesus died for sins, but they weren’t his sins, because as the Son of God he was holy and righteous. He was the ultimate Passover lamb without blemish or defect, and he willingly gave himself as an offering for sin, our sacrifice, because the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23).

All of this is incredibly significant, because Jesus entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, the tenth day of the month, the very same day the people were selecting their Passover lambs. And then, on the evening of the fourteenth day, Jesus celebrated the Passover meal with his disciples. As he took the unleavened bread, he taught his disciples that it represented his own body which the following day would be bruised and bloodied for their sakes. Then he took the cup of wine which was a symbol of joy and redemption and taught them that it represented his blood that would be shed for them. And then he said,

“Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me" (1 Corinthians 11:25).

Later that evening as Jesus prayed in the garden of Gethsemane just outside of the city, he began his time of suffering, sweating great drops of blood, before being arrested, condemned, and unjustly executed.

What is so magnificent about this is that Jesus died for the sins of others and not himself. He died for you and me and not only that, but the Bible says,

“Christ died for sins once for all” (1 Peter 3:18).

This Greek word translated “once” stands out, it is set apart as unique as his resurrection, because there is nothing else like it. I did a little research and in the original Greek language this word means “one time, numerically or conclusively.”

The Vine Commentary goes even deeper describing this word as a perpetual validity that does not require repetition (W.E. Vine Commentary).

In other words, you could say that Christ dying for sins is never to be forgotten, always to be celebrated, but never to be repeated again.

That’s why the new covenant is so much better than the old covenant, because the law couldn’t do what Jesus did. His sacrifice was better than any other sacrifice, it was complete, and it was sufficient to provide atonement for the sins of the world. The book of Hebrews says in agreement,

“Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people” (Hebrews 9:28).

This concept would have been revolutionary, amazing, something entirely new for the Jewish people, because they literally slaughtered tens of thousands of lambs each Passover and they repeated it every year. And so, for centuries their fathers have offered sacrifice after sacrifice after sacrifice for their sins, and now all of a sudden, Jesus Christ, the Son of God died for sins once for all (1 Peter 3:18).

In other words, there is no further work of Christ, no blood being poured out in heaven, because he offered himself as a complete and sufficient sacrifice. He died one time, dying for sins once, and it was comprehensive, it was complete, and it was absolutely sufficient. Jesus is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29). Not just some of them, but all of them, past, present, and future. That’s why we worship him like we do; declaring with all the angels of heaven,

“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise” (Revelation 5:12).

Because he was the ultimate sacrifice, it was once for all, his suffering was comprehensive, and his blood was sufficient, so that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life (John 6:40).

This was his plan from the beginning of time, from the foundation of the world, as he came to seek and save that which was lost. And so, he was very intentional and purposeful as he came, born of a virgin, born without sin, to offer himself as a sacrifice for our sins. Jesus took our place, as our substitute,

“The righteous for the unrighteous” (1 Peter 3:18).

And so, Jesus suffered and died in our place, the sinless one for the sinful, the righteous for the unrighteous, “To bring you to God” (1 Peter 3:18).

In other words, he brought us to God as our great high priest, the great mediator between God and man, offering himself as the righteous one for the unrighteous, satisfying God’s penalty for sin as was required by the law.

And so, in that one moment, as our sins were nailed to the cross with him, the world was darkened because he who had no sin became sin for us. Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, our great trailblazer, our pioneer, brought us into fellowship with God. The phrase, “to bring you” literally means to introduce someone or to provide access to someone, which is exactly what Jesus did because he said,

"No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6).

And so, he came not only to show us the Father, but to bring us into the presence of the Father, and in his name, he gives us greater access to the Father, because he is the way and the truth and the life (John 14:6).

That is the good news of Jesus Christ, that is the gospel, he came to bring you to God. He died for your sins once, one time for all of your sins, one time for all people, so that when you believe and put your faith in him, he will bring you into the presence of God.

In other words, when you come to him acknowledging your sin, understanding that you have fallen short of his glory, and expressing your desire to be reconciled to a holy God, Jesus makes the connection. He is our mediator, our Great High Priest, and he introduces us to his Father. He can do this because he is the Son who was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit (1 Peter 3:18).

Darkness came over the whole land for three hours as he took our sins upon himself. Luke tells us that he said,

"Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last” (Luke 23:46).

The earth quaked and rocks split apart. Those who had hoped that Jesus was the Messiah fell into despair, because they thought their hope had died with him.

Jesus was dead, he was really dead, physically dead, the innocent victim of a violent judicial murder. Even the soldiers testified that they did not break his legs because he was already dead. And so, they pierced his side with a spear and the fact that he was dead was evident because of the congealed blood and water that gushed out.

A few of his followers took his body down from the cross and laid him in a cold and lifeless tomb, they wanted to honor him and prepare his body for the grave, but what they didn’t realize was that it was only Friday and Sunday was coming.

“Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance” (John 20:1).

Seeing that Jesus wasn’t there, she went and told the others. Peter and John came running to see what had happened and Peter testified,

“He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit” (1 Peter 3:18).

Some of you might say, “What does all of this mean for us today?” Well, let me assure you that it makes all the difference in the world, in this life, and for eternity, because God did something for us that we were incapable of doing for ourselves. He became one of us, Jesus was God in the flesh, born of a virgin, so that he didn’t inherit the sin nature of an earthly father and could be the perfect sacrifice for the forgiveness of our sins. The Bible says,

“Through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death” (Romans 8:2).

That is good news, the best news ever. Those who receive him, who believe in his name, the Bible says,

“There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1).

And so, my question for you today is do you belong to him; are you in Christ Jesus? In other words, have you put your trust in him, surrendering and giving your life to the service of the one who gave his life for you?

If you haven’t, would you repent of your sin and turn to Jesus today receiving his forgiveness?

Right now, today, you can be freed from condemnation, free from the power of sin, not because you deserve it, not because you are so good, but because Jesus is so good. In fact, he said,

“I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die" (John 11:25-26).

And so, the resurrection is not just what he did, it’s not just what he does, but it is who he is. He is the resurrection and the life and when you come to him believing your sins can be forgiven and you can be made brand-new.

This is the gospel, the good news, this is what the Bible says,

“Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said” (1 Corinthians 15:3-4, NLT).

“He was seen by Peter and then by the Twelve. After that, he was seen by more than 500 of his followers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died” (1 Corinthians 15:5-6, NLT).

“Then he was seen by James and later by all the apostles” (1 Corinthians 15:7, NLT)

That is the good news of Jesus Christ. The tomb is empty, Jesus is alive, sin and death have been conquered, and that magnificent truth of the resurrection changes everything. We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God because even now he is resurrecting hope in us.

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