

Renewal - Part 4

John 20:19-31

A renewal of hope when we are:

1. afraid.

2. suffering.

- *Luke 24:46-47*

3. waiting.

- *Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-5*

4. doubting.

- *John 11:16, 20:28, 30-31*

love.learn.live.

westvalleychurch.com



West Valley Church
5/25/25
Casey Wilkerson

Renewal – part 4

Hope

Pastor Div shared last week about faith and one thing he said, was how hope comes from faith. What do we hope for? How is our hope renewed because of Jesus? God renews our hope in lots of areas in our lives. Jesus conquering the grave offers us a renewal of hope. The death of Jesus would bring a renewal of hope for the disciples, and it does for us too. So to start, let's see how the disciples were doing shortly after the death of Jesus. Will you stand with me as I read our main passage of Scripture this morning from John 20:

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven." Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe." A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. (John 20:19-31, niv)

One thing we can see from this passage is that Jesus conquering the grave offers:

A renewal of hope when we are:

1. afraid.

John writes "when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders."

The disciples had seen what the Jewish leaders did to Jesus, so here they are locking the door, meeting in fear that they might be next. Would they be punished for being associated with Jesus? Would they be arrested for following Jesus? Would they be put through the pain and suffering that they saw Jesus go through? They had lots of reasons to be afraid. When Jesus was arrested, what did the disciples do? They ran! Later when Peter was asked if he knew Jesus, he denied it, three different times. The disciples were fearful that as a follower of Jesus, they would endure the same as Jesus.

So the disciples locked the doors and stay inside, afraid of what could happen to them next.

Ever wonder to yourself, “what could happen?” I lose sleep over things I worry about, a lot of times it’s out of my control. I’ll have scenarios in my mind that could happen. Or conversations that I think will happen, and multiple outcomes and how I’ll handle it or what I’ll say, and if they respond this way, I’ll say this. Does anyone else do this?

I’m seeing my oldest, Judah like me more and more. Judah likes to play “what if...” He always has. Not always negative stuff either, sometimes just fun. “Dad, what if we drove a monster truck to school...”

Sometimes, I’ll think all about what could happen, and lose sleep over something I am afraid to deal with and then it ends up being not that big of deal. I wonder if the disciples later looked back and thought, I can’t believe we were so scared at first....

I used to think “why are the disciples hiding?” Come on! It was Jesus. Did they forget all the things Jesus had done for them? And with them? Teaching them, healing people, bringing Lazarus back to life? How could they forget what all He had done?

We do the same thing. We forget what Jesus has done for us. We forget what others have done for us too, instead it’s what have you done for me lately? What has Jesus done for me lately? He died on the cross, and thanks, and you’ve been a big help the last year for my family, and thanks, but I need help now. We forget how we see God at work in our lives every day. It’s easy to forget how God has helped us, or comforted us.

Which is why a baptism service is so special. When we lose hope because we don’t think about what God has done lately, our hope can be renewed when we hear other ways that God is working. Two weeks ago we celebrated what God is doing in the lives of many in our church with baptism. We got to hear what God was doing in their lives and celebrate with them. Hearing and seeing lives changed should renew our hope. If we forget what Jesus has done in our lives, it can help to hear what He is doing in someone else’s life.

The disciples had good reason to be afraid. We have good reasons to be afraid too. God wants to renew our hope in Him. And remind us that Jesus conquered the grave so we could have hope. It is easy to lack hope for the future or what could happen when we are afraid, and God wants to renew our hope. He wants to renew our outlook on the world; the world He gave his Son to die for.

Jesus conquering the grave also offers a renewal of hope when we are:

2. suffering.

Jesus suffered so we wouldn't have to. That doesn't mean we don't. People suffer in all sorts of ways, and not all physical pain like the wounds Jesus had. If you look it up online, "I suffer from..." you'll see answers like "depression, anxiety, insanity, insomnia, and interestingly enough sleepwalking."

My kids suffer when I say its bedtime. Or if I don't let them have a snack between lunch and dinner. "I'm starving!" Well, you had lunch an hour ago. Or my favorite is after dinner, "I'm hungry" so Alyssa and I will say what's still available from dinner, "I'm not hungry for that, I'm hungry for dessert".

Complaining and whining is not suffering. We live in a broken world and there is real suffering. You might be really suffering. We can have hope in our suffering because Jesus loves us and knows what we are going through. He knows how hard life is, He lived it. He doesn't leave us to go through life by ourselves. When he met with his disciples, he showed them it really was him. He really had wounds from the pain he endured for them, for us.

Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side.
(John 20:27)

His wounds were real, his pain, his suffering was real. Was it worth it? To Jesus, it was His love for us that was greater than anything. He was willing to suffer because He knew the result of his suffering.

When we had our Lenten service a few months ago, people got to hold large nails and see the cross with a big crown of thorns on it, thorns over three inches long. I remember my kids holding the nails and saying, "that would really hurt", yea it would, that's kind of the point. Jesus suffered because of His love for us. God the Father suffered watching His Son in pain. It wasn't a quick painless death. It was dragged out and included being beaten and whipped, and even mocked by others.

Jesus suffered for us. We may still suffer, in fact, Jesus said we will face hard times, but Jesus overcame, and our hope in Jesus means we can overcome too.

He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. (Luke 24:46, niv)

Jesus knew he was going to suffer. But He knew it would be worth it. He would suffer, AND, because of that, the forgiveness of sins would be preached to all nations. His suffering meant hope for everyone.

Following Jesus doesn't mean you never suffer, but it does mean you never suffer alone. When Jesus came to see the disciples, and he showed them his wounds, it wasn't to tell them that they would never endure anything like this. It was a reminder of what Jesus went through and conquered for them and for us too.

Jesus conquering the grave offers a renewal of hope when we are:

3. waiting.

Following Jesus means sometimes we are just waiting. We pray and we wait. We wait for an answer, or we get the answer, but wait for what's next. Or we wait for God's timing. Sometimes we are waiting and we don't even know what for. God renews our hope while we wait. Our hope for the future. And our hope for the unknown.

Jesus shows himself to the disciples, but Thomas wasn't there. Thomas would wait a week until He would see Jesus. A week of hearing everyone else say how amazing it was that Jesus was back.

My junior year at college, my friends loved sharing about freshmen year and how much fun it was. It became a good joke for them, because I wasn't their freshmen year. I transferred as a sophomore. "Remember freshmen year when we went ice blocking and Chris got hurt?" Nope, I wasn't there. "Yea you were". No really, I wasn't there. Thanks for reminding me about all the fun I missed out on. "Hey Casey, remember when...oh wait, sorry."

So Thomas had to wait a week. A week of hearing about what he missed.

A week of waiting and regretting that he wasn't there to see Jesus. A week of waiting to see Jesus really was alive, would Thomas see Him too? Thomas had to wait. A little later, the disciples would all have to wait, for a gift. Later Jesus would tell them about a gift they would receive, but they had to wait for it. Going back to what I read earlier from Luke 24:

I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high." (Luke 24:49, niv)

Luke writes in Acts 1 a few more details:

On one occasion, while he (Jesus) was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." (Acts 1:4-5, niv)

Disciples had to wait for a "gift" from heaven. God had promised this gift. They would be clothed with power from on high. That sounds pretty great. Definitely worth the wait, but still tough to wait for.

Being a follower of Jesus means we have to wait. Sometimes we don't know what we are waiting for. I doubt the disciples understood what being "clothed with power from on high" means. Sometimes, we know what we are waiting for, but we still have to wait for God's timing. Waiting is hard.

I remember hearing growing up, "Casey, I got you a present." What is it? "You'll see, at Christmas." It's not very nice, so naturally it's something I do to my kids. "Bought you a birthday present today." "What is it?" You have to wait; it's not your birthday.

Waiting is not easy.

The disciples had to wait. Sometimes we have to wait. God renews our hope while we wait.

Last thing for today is that Jesus conquering the grave offers a renewal of hope when we are:

4. Doubting

Thomas is known for his doubt. Maybe a little pessimistic too. When Jesus got word that Lazarus was sick, He wanted to go back to Judea to help, earlier Jesus had almost been stoned to death there, so Thomas was not thrilled Jesus wanted to go back. But he was willing to go, John records Thomas saying to the rest of the disciples:

“Let us also go, that we may die with him.” (John 11:16, niv)

This may sound strange, but I want to encourage you to be like Thomas. He’s known for his doubt. Not the typical role model for most people, I know, but hear me out.

He was a doubter.... was. His doubt led to stronger faith. Our doubt can too. Doubting God means, questioning Him, and if we are questioning God, we are looking for answers and if we are looking for answers, we are growing in faith. Jesus can handle your doubt. Faith can be made strong in our doubt; hope can be renewed in our doubt. It was for the disciples, and it can be for us. When Thomas finally saw Jesus, he says:

“My Lord and my God!” (John 20:28, niv)

“My Lord” was referred to Jesus other times in the New Testament, but it only happens after the resurrection. Jesus was accused of being God, but “my God” is first confessed here by Thomas.

God wants to renew our hope in our doubts because doubt can lead to stronger faith. What did Pastor Div say about faith last week? You have to have faith, so you can have hope. Hope is patiently waiting on what you believe in (from Div Sunday). So if you want hope renewed, it starts with what you believe in? John ends chapter 20 by telling you what to believe, it’s the point of what he wrote:

Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.
(John 20:30-31, niv)

Written so we will believe, so our faith can grow, so we can have hope. Our faith and hope can be renewed because of what Jesus did. The disciples were different people after Jesus’ resurrection. They went from being afraid and doubting, to being the ones who spread His message all over the world. John wrote this down so we would believe. So if you have been afraid, suffering, waiting, or doubting, Jesus offers hope.

Prayer

Pray for those afraid, suffering, waiting, and doubting. Pray for Hope.

Benediction

We now have a “next steps” card if you want more info to help you with what your next steps are: in faith, in church, in following Jesus or anything else. You can drop off completed

cards so our pastors can get in touch with you and if you're new to following Jesus, you can pick up a "next steps" packet to help you.

Please stand for these words from Paul as we go:

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13)