

## Finding Hope in Jesus

Today we celebrate Resurrection Sunday, also known as Easter Sunday. It is a glorious day that reminds us of the events that took place 2000 years ago in Jerusalem. This day we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. This leads us to share this message of finding hope in Jesus.

We are going to look at the events of the day and the seemingly hopeless situation the followers of Jesus found themselves in. We will compare their hopelessness to the hopelessness of the world today. After that, we will share the hope that they found in Jesus and his resurrection. That same hope is what we can have today.

### The world is searching for hope

Looking around the world today we see hopelessness in people's eyes everywhere. The current global pandemic regarding COVID-19 or coronavirus that has us all sheltering in place in our homes. The rapid spread of this virus is enough by itself to zap many people's hope. The precautions and dire preventative measures being prescribed by experts and governments can bring real fear to people and remove hope from. This is not the only thing that can take away our hope.

Some are receiving a cancer diagnosis for the first time and some are receiving it for the second, third, or fourth time. They thought they had cancer beaten, but here it is back again. There are also people around the world starving because there is no food or clean water. They are watching their children die of starvation or from diseases carried in dirty contaminated water.

Of course, we cannot forget the wars and the persecution that is happening around the world. There is so much bloodshed and a lack of peace and goodwill everywhere it seems.

Any of these things can cause anyone to feel hopeless and not know where to turn. It is so easy to lose our hope. The disciples, Jesus' own followers, also lost hope almost immediately after his crucifixion on a Roman cross 2000 years ago.

### The disciples lost hope after the crucifixion

Let's read Luke 24:13-21

Luke 24:13-21

(13) Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. (14) They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. (15) As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; (16) but they were kept from recognizing him. (17) He asked them, "**What are you discussing together as you walk along?**" They stood still, their faces downcast. (18) One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, "Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" (19) "**What things?**" he asked. "About Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. (20) The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; (21) but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place.



The disciples didn't know what was going to happen to them after Jesus was crucified. They scattered once he died on the cross. Some even scattered before he was nailed to the cross. They left when he was arrested. Their focus was shifted from Jesus to themselves and their own situation. They dwelt on their own predicament and loss and this is what drowned out the hope from their life.

Many returned to what their old self and life. We can read later on that Peter had returned to fishing. These two were traveling back away from Jerusalem lamenting their situation and not knowing what to do next.

### The resurrection happens

Where did the disciples find hope again? The resurrection happened. The women find the empty tomb when they went to anoint Jesus' body with perfume and oil. The angels there said, "Why do you look for the living among the dead?" Let's read Luke 24:1-9.

#### Luke 24:1-9

(1) On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. (2) They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, (3) but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. (4) While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. (5) In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? (6) He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: (7) **'The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.'**" (8) Then they remembered his words. (9) When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others.

The angels encouraged them. They reminded them of what Jesus had told them. This got them out of thinking about what had happened and looking back toward Jesus and what he had taught them. They received some hope. They went to share this with the others who were gathered and to give them hope. But it didn't. This is an important point. You cannot force hope onto someone. They must be willing to have hope. If you are not searching for hope, you will not find it. If you only look at past failures, current situations, and unfortunate circumstances, you will not find hope. Let's read Luke 24 11-12.

#### Luke 24:11-12

(11) But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. (12) Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.

The disciples and the others had set aside what Jesus had told them and taught them. They took their focus off of Jesus and centered it directly on themselves and their situation. I'm sure many were asking, "Am I next to be crucified?" But, something in Peter caused him to run to the tomb and see for himself. He must have still had a glimmer of hope. He saw the empty tomb for himself and wandered away wondering to himself what had happened. At least he was thinking about more than the death of Jesus.

### Jesus appears

Now we return to the two disciples who were walking on the road to Emmaus. Remember, Jesus was walking with them but his identity was concealed from them. When they reach Emmaus they invited



him in for a meal and to rest for the night because it was late. It was then they realized who had been walking and talking with them all afternoon. Let's read Luke 24:28-35.

### Luke 24:28-35

(28) As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if he were going farther. (29) But they urged him strongly, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them. (30) When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. (31) Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. (32) They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?" (33) They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together (34) and saying, "It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon." (35) Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.

### The Disciples Now Understood

They now understood the miracle that took place. Jesus reminded them of who he was and is. If you read the entire text of their walk with him you will read how Jesus taught them from the beginning all the way through the prophets and reminded them of what he was going to have to endure, all for their benefit.

They now understand Jesus' teachings up to this point. They now have a deeper understanding of Jesus' life, ministry, and mission. They also now know what they must do. They must go tell the others. They must share their newfound hope. The hope that Jesus had always taught them about was now possible again. It was even more than possible, they now knew they could always have hope because Jesus had beaten death, Hell, and the grave. He rose victorious. He is their Messiah and Lord. Their problem was in their personal thinking and what they thought the Messiah's coming would look like and what he would do. God's plan was different.

You can continue reading and you will see that thousands witnessed Jesus after his resurrection. He continued to perform miracles and teach the ways of the kingdom of Heaven. He then ascended to Heaven to be at the right hand of God until it was time to come and call us all to meet him in the sky.

### Conclusion

We find hope in Jesus. He is the source of all our hope. There is no other name in Heaven and on earth that has the power to save us from our sin and return us to a right relationship with God. He is the only way. His is the only plan for the redemption of mankind from sin. Are you searching for hope this Easter? Look to Jesus. Have you lost your hope and given up on Jesus because of something that has happened at the hand of someone in the Church? Look to Jesus. Have you never had lasting hope? You need Jesus.

We receive lasting hope by putting our focus on Jesus. We keep our hope by staying focused on Jesus and making Him our personal Lord and Savior.

Maybe today you are asking, "How do I make Jesus my personal Lord and Savior?" It is not enough to believe Jesus existed. It is not enough to believe Jesus was raised from the dead and is in Heaven with God waiting to return. Satan, the devil, even knows and believes that. Knowledge and belief are not



enough. We must accept his sacrifice as sufficient to pay for all our sins once and for all and we must make him Lord of our life as well. To do that, just ask him. Bow your heart and submit your will Jesus. Ask him to receive you. Ask him to be Lord of your life. Allow him to direct your paths. Listen for his voice. Let's read this last piece of scripture, John 10:24-30.

John 10:24-30

(24) The Jews who were there gathered around him, saying, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly." (25) Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The works I do in my Father's name testify about me, (26) but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. (27) My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. (28) I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. (29) My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. (30) I and the Father are one."

We encourage you to pray and ask Jesus to be your personal Lord and Savior. If you pray that and make Jesus your personal Lord and Savior, congratulations! Welcome to the family of God! Now tell someone! Please tell us, also! We have a link at the top of our website that says, "I said Yes! to Jesus". Go there and let us know who you are and where you are. We would love to celebrate with you and get to know you.

We stand on Jesus' promise to return as our ultimate hope.

