

# Easter Hope

April 12, 2020

## Introduction:

We are living in a time that was once imagined only by writers of horror and science film authors. There is so much fear and despair confronting us daily as we endure the challenges of living with covid-19. As we think about celebrating Easter this week, I am reminded of the fear and despair that the disciples experienced on that first Easter. The resurrection of Jesus from the dead is a message of hope for today and gives us hope for a better tomorrow.

## Jesus declared that He would die and be resurrected from the dead

When Jesus told of His impending death, He also always spoke of His resurrection.

### The religious leaders understood that He would be raised from the dead after three days.

Jn 2:18-22 The Jews then said to Him, "What sign do You show us as your authority for doing these things?" Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews then said, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" But He was speaking of the temple of His body. So when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken.

Mt 12:38-40 Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to Him, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You." But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet; for just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Jn 12:34 The crowd then answered Him, "We have heard out of the Law that the Christ is to remain forever; and how can You say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up'? Who is this Son of Man?" (see Jn 12:27-36)

Mk 14:57-58 Some stood up and began to give false testimony against Him, saying, 58 "We heard Him say, 'I will destroy this temple made with hands, and in three days I will build another made without hands.'"

Mt 27:62-63 Now on the next day, the day after the preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered together with Pilate, and said, "Sir, we remember that when He was still alive that deceiver said, 'After three days I am to rise again.'

### He clearly taught His disciples this truth

Mt 16:21 From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day. (Mk 8:31; 9:30-32; Lk 9:22)

Mt 17:9 As they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, "Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man has risen from the dead." (Mk 9:9-10;

Mt 17:22-23 And while they were gathering together in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men; 23 and they will kill Him, and He will be raised on the third day." And they were deeply grieved. (Mt 20:18-19; Mk 10:32-34)

Mt 26:31-32 Then Jesus said to them, "You will all fall away because of Me this night, for it is written, 'I will strike down the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered.' But after I have been raised, I will go ahead of you to Galilee." (Mk 14:27-28)

## Fear can lead to unbelief and hopelessness

The disciples were in great fear, grieving in sorrow and despair on the morning of Jesus' resurrection. Although Jesus had often spoken of His death and resurrection, they either failed to remember this or didn't understand what He said. Their response to the news of His resurrection wasn't what we would expect. Notice their reaction:

Mk 16:9-11 Now after He had risen early on the first day of the week, He first appeared to Mary Magdalene, from whom He had cast out seven demons. 10 She went and reported to those who had been with Him, while they were mourning and weeping. 11 When they heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, they refused to believe it.

Mk 16:12-14 After that, He appeared in a different form to two of them while they were walking along on their way to the country. 13 They went away and reported it to the others, but they did not believe them either. 14 Afterward He appeared to the eleven themselves as they were reclining at the table; and He reproached them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who had seen Him after He had risen.

Mt 28:16-17 But the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had designated. 17 When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some were doubtful.

Lk 24:11 But these words appeared to them as nonsense, and they would not believe them.

Lk 24:41-43 While they still could not believe it because of their joy and amazement, He said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" 42 They gave Him a piece of a broiled fish; 43 and He took it and ate it before them.

Jn 20:24-25 But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples were saying to him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."

Jn 20:26-29 After eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst and said, "Peace be with you." 27 Then He said to Thomas, "Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing." 28 Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" 29 Jesus said to him, "Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed."

## Easter – the resurrection of Jesus Christ is a message of hope

**Paul** was imprisoned and on trial for **the hope of the resurrection** (Ac 2:26-27; 24:6, 15, 21; 26:6-8; 28:20; Col 1:5)

### **Tribulation can lead to despair, hopelessness and grief**

2Cor 1:8-9 For we do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of our affliction which came to us in Asia, that we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life; 9 indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead; (Ac 27:20)

### **We live in a fallen world subjected to futility and suffering**

Rom 8:18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. (Rom 8:18-23)

### **We are to live with hope in suffering**

Rom 5:1-5 ... we exult in hope of the glory of God ... we also exult in our tribulations ...

### **Hope enables us to have perseverance**

Rom 8:24-25 For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.

### **How we receive hope**

#### **God's Word**

Rom 15:4 For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope (Col 1:5; Ps 119:81).

#### **Through our relationship with God:**

##### **Father**

Rom 15:13 Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing (1Pt 1:21)

##### **Son**

1Tim 1:1 ... God our Savior, and of Christ Jesus, who is our hope (1Cor 15:19)

##### **Holy Spirit**

Rom 15:13 ... so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Rom 5:5; Gal 5:5)

#### **Praise and worship**

Rom 5:1-2 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. (Rom 12:12)

#### **Grace**

2Thes 2:16 Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace,