

1 Peter 1:3-9
Resurrection Hope

Introduction (before scripture reading):

I. Good morning!

II. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!

III. Easter is particularly meaningful for us this year as Christians because Easter is the basis of our hope and joy and resilience in these unusual days. . .

IV. For our Easter sermon this year, I'd like for us to turn to 1 Peter 1:3-9.

A. Peter is writing to a persecuted church. . . this is a church enduring much more hardship than we are at the moment.

B. The world as they knew it had collapsed. . . families were being separated, father's and church leaders were being imprisoned and killed, Christian businesses were being boycotted. . . it was dire times.

C. And Peter's letter comes to these suffering Christians as an ointment for their souls. . . an encouragement and exhortation to stay strong and resilient. . . to keep perspective and focus on the prize.

1. And the key to Peter's letter, the basis of his teaching to be resilient in the face of suffering is based on the **living hope we have because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. because of Easter**

a) Peter, an eye-witness to Jesus' resurrection. . . will come back to Good Friday and Easter over 13x in this short letter.

V. So, at this time I'd like to hand it over to **Ivan** and **Kaethe** Biskup. . . who will read the sermon passage for us this morning. 1 Peter 1:3-9

Introduction (after scripture reading):

VI. Pray

VII. What is your hope?

VIII. I want you stop and think for a moment about what you hope for in the midst of this Corona Crisis?

A. Christians are called to be people of Hope. Easter is the reason for this Hope.

1. We are told in scripture that we should :

a) **Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.**

b) So What is your hope?

c)The Christian should so radiate hope that those around them are compelled to ask the reason for their hope.

d)In the context of the suffering this church was enduring at the time. . . it is clear that these early Christians remained steadfast and hopeful in midst of these great trials, great suffering, great loss and great pain. . . Hope was their greatest Apologetic.

(1)So it should be with us as well. . .Are you prepared to give a reason for the hope you have?

i)If someone were to ask you to give the reason for your hope, what would you say?

ii) Well, it really depends on how you define the word hope.

IX.Because Christians have a very unique definition of Hope.

A.Generally in our society the word “hope” is used to express a wishful thinking, a preferred outcome, but at the end of the day the end result is uncertain, wishy washy, without real substance. . . maybe it happens, maybe it doesn't.

1.I hope it doesn't rain tomorrow. . . I hope I get that job. . .I hope this corona virus. . . I hope the preacher doesn't talk too long this Easter?

2.Many people in this Corona Crisis have this type of hope right. . . think about it?

a)What is the hope of everyone?

(1) The overwhelming “hope” that I hear about and read about is that we will beat this thing, a vaccine will be discovered and everything will eventually what?

i)Go back to normal. . . . right?

b)That is the prevailing hope. . . that routines return, economy picks up, stability and predictability will all go back to normal. . . so we can all get back to consuming more than we need and entertaining ourselves once again.

(1) Hope, for most people, is really more a preferred outcome, a wishful thinking. . . for the world around us, “hope” is not a reliable thing we can count on. . . it is more sentimental feeling. . not something to base your decisions on today.

X.In contrast, the Biblical definition of hope is connected to certainty. . . *"Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see."*

A.What is the Bible's definition of hope? What is it that we ought to be sure and certain about?

B. Did you know that with pretty much 100% accuracy, when the NT refers to Hope, the authors mean the future resurrection?

1. Not hope for a safe present. . . or hope for healing here and now. . . or hope for success in my business. . . or hope for relational harmony. . . or hope for my best life now. . . NO. . .

C. Whenever a NT author speaks of Hope the implied reference is without exception to the future resurrection of the dead.

XI. Let me show just a few examples of how the NT connects hope to the resurrection:

A. When Paul is speaking to the Thessolonians, what does he remind them of the difference Christ makes for those who grieve?

1. Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. For we believe that Jesus died and rose again. —1 Thess 4:13-14

B. Or in Romans 8, when Paul speaks of creation groaning and waiting for the return of the Lord, look how he speaks of this hope:

1. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. For in **this** hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently. Romans 8:22-25

XII. So, in our passage when Peter wanted to give the church in Rome a perspective in the midst of their trials and their suffering, he wrote them this:

A. 3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, 5 who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

XIII. Look at this term in vs 3, Peter says we have been given a "living hope" through the resurrection of Jesus.

XIV. Notice here that Peter adds an adjective to hope. . . not just any hope, but a "living hope". . . somehow indicating that the hope we have, this resurrection hope is alive and active. . . a sort of dynamic, engaging living object.

XV. Like the Word of God is alive and active, so also is the hope we have in the resurrection.

A. This living hope is not just a future goal or destination, rather it is somehow also informing and shaping our present circumstances.

B. We are making decisions today based on what we know to be true about the future tomorrow.

C. A living hope **through** the resurrection of Jesus. . . this means when Jesus stepped out of the grave, he brought with him a completely new way of living. . . a new way to relate to God. . . a new creation came in tow as he left the tomb on that first Easter morning.

1. Peter, an eyewitness to the first Easter, is hitting upon the fact that this Resurrection hope, this living hope, is different than any other type of "hope" we can have in this world.

a) It's not like our typical understanding of hope this sort of wishy-washy preferred outcome or wishful thinking. . . maybe it happens, maybe it doesn't, who knows?

D. Peter is saying, "no", we have a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus.

1. A hope that is not just a preferred future, but rather a guaranteed future that informs the way we live in the present.

a) Imagine you knew what would happen tomorrow. . . it would definitely inform the way you lived today. . . the decisions you make the things you did or didn't do.

b) It is with this kind of certainty and confidence on which we can bank on with this living hope: We read in vss 4-5:

(1) this hope will never perish, spoil or fade. This hope is kept in heaven for us, shielded by God's power.

c) That is not a sentimental kind of hope. . . rather it is as sure as God himself.

(1) This glorious future that awaits us is indeed better than the best this present life can ever give us.

(2) Our hope in this Corona Crisis is not that things will return to how they were. . . in fact that would be the worst possible outcome. . . that everything would return to how things were. . . that we would not be changed by this current crisis and go back to living the way we used to live.

(a) No, our hope is not that things will go back to normal. . . our hope is that Christ is coming soon!

i) Our hope is a firm and steady faith, that believes God's future is eternally better than this broken present.

(a) We need to absorb that truth into our hearts. . . if we are going to give a reason for the hope within us.

XVI. Look now at vss 6-9 as Peter applies this living hope to our present suffering. . . how does this living hope shape our present circumstances.

A. 6 In all this (i.e. living hope) you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. 7 These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. 8 Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, 9 for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

XVII. Peter, turns and applies this living hope to the our present circumstances:giving us 5 practical ways this living hope gives meaning to our present trials/hardships.

A. First in vs 6: Suffering pulls us out of the present and into a better future.

1. 6 In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.

a) So here Peter contrasts the **joy** we have in our future resurrection (in THIS you rejoice, the THIS refers back to our living hope) with the **grief** we endure now in our present suffering.

(1) As Paul says we can be sorrowful yet rejoicing at the same time.

b) We rejoice in the future because that is eternal and lasting and our suffering is real, but it is temporary.

c)So we can rejoice, because suffering pulls our hopes and dreams away from THIS present life and redirects them towards a better future.

XVIII.But honestly think about it, how can you be truly happy in this life when it is so full of such brokenness and injustice?

A. Three quarters of the world lives in poverty. . . how can you truly be happy here when such injustices govern the day?

B.How can you be happy in a world where every year there are an estimated 125,000 abortions per day.

C.How can you be happy in a world where Cancer kills randomly. . . where diseases like the Corona virus destroys life.

D.Where wars ravage the earth. . . where injustice and famine and human strife are so prevalent.

E.This world is not where we place our hope and security and happiness. . . . it is a broken a world. . . it would be folly to say this is our best life now as things are the way they are.

a)Suffering pulls us out of the present and redirects our vision onto God's better future . . our living hope.

XIX. Secondly, we can rejoice in the midst of our suffering because suffering refines our faith.

A. Look at vs 7: These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire

1. Suffering is a necessary part of becoming who God intends we become.

a) Through suffering our faith becomes pure and refined.

(1) So, although it is painful and unpleasant we can rejoice in the outcome because of this living hope.

2. Peter here uses the image of gold being refined.

a) Illustration:

(1) In the refining process, the intense heat and fire doesn't only burn away the dirt on the exterior. . . but the extreme heat draws out the impurities that lie deep within the gold.

b) So, also, suffering doesn't just purify us from those superficial and obvious sins in our life, but it also draws out what is really deep down in our hearts. . . those sins hidden deep within us that we don't even know about. . . this is what comes out in our suffering.

This is happening to many of you right now in this crisis. . . deep things are coming out. . . deep wounds. . . deep fears. . . deep hurts. . . deep sins being exposed.

(1) Suffering draws those out so that we can repent from them. . . turn away from them. . . be made aware of them.

(2) where before we were ignorant to how deeply entangled we were in our sin or fear or anxiety.

(3) So, we can rejoice in the midst of suffering because it is necessary in order for us to be made pure and free from sin's grasp over us.

(4) suffering refines us. . . what deep things are being brought out for you?

XX. Thirdly, and sticking with the gold analogy, Peter seems to indicate that suffering allows us to treasure and value Christ's true worth.

A. Look what he says here in the middle of verse 7: your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes. . . 8 and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy

1. *Gold will eventually perish, but here we see that our faith endures.*

2. Not only does suffering enable us to delight in God's future. . . but we can also delight in what we already have here and now in the present. . . .

a) because we have something more valuable more precious than Gold.

b) Our faith gives us immediate access to God our father. . . this is what Jesus purchased for us on the cross. A relationship with the creator God.

c) So suffering produces an environment where we get to taste and see that our relationship with Christ can be so satisfying when things in this life are painful and wrong.

d) And so suffering/trials/hardships allows us to treasure what we have in Christ now. . . it forces us to run to Jesus. . . to taste see that He is enough. He is sufficient. He is all we need.

(1) I don't know about you, but there have been times in my life, where the closeness I've felt with God through singing worship songs in the middle of my darkest times. . . gives me more joy than any relationship, friendship, material comfort this world can offer.

(2) Suffering allows us to drink deep from the well of God's presence, stripping us of all distractions, so that we can find satisfaction in Christ today. . . as He floods our soul with inexpressible and glorious joy.

XXI. Fourth reason we can rejoice in the midst of our suffering because suffering allows God to receive glory.

A. Look at vs 7 as a whole: 7 These (trials) have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith. . . may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

B. God gets glory when His people suffer faithfully. . . when our faith is on display God is lifted up, exalted, glorified.

C. When people can see that God is our source of joy and peace and security in the midst of our trials. . . people will be drawn to God.

a) Suffering is therefore an opportunity for the sufficiency of Christ to be on display for others to see how awesome Jesus really is.

2. When in moments like we live in now, when we can display the surpassing value of Christ. . . people will be drawn to this Jesus.

3. The greatest witness for those who don't know Jesus is to see with their eyes when a believer suffers well. . . when through our suffering, the Joy of the Lord shines through. . . to witness the truth that the world can take our health, and our possession and our relationships. . . but nothing can take away our joy in the Lord.

(1) If the World can see that in you, then hearts will turn to God again.

b) We can rejoice in the midst of our suffering, because suffering gives a platform for God to be glorified.

XXII. Finally, we can rejoice in the midst of our suffering because suffering produces salvation.

A.8 Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, 9 for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

1. We can rejoice in our suffering because it is a part of God's way of saving us. . .

2. Suffering is a key means God uses to save us. . . He redeems suffering for our good. What Satan means for harm, God intends for good.

a) What does James say:

(1) 2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. 4 Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. — James 1:2-4

3. What we must endure now in this life, the trials we face today, the brokenness we must endure. . . the pain we go through now . . . is producing in us the necessary work of salvation.

a) God allows us to endure suffering precisely because he loves and cares for us. . . often we may believe that God has forgotten us or God doesn't love us when we go through hardships. . . but actually the opposite is the case.

(1) If you **do not** suffer and do not face hardships. . . then, this is when I begin to wonder about God's love for me.

b) The author of Hebrews says that if we **DON'T** suffer then we are not legitimate children of God!

(1) Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. . . God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. — Hebrews 12:7,10-11

(2) The fact that we must endure hardship in this life is in fact evidence of God's love and concern for you.

(3) The sin in us and our patterns of behaviour are so vile and destructive that in God's mercy He allows us to suffer here for **short time**, so that we might not suffer for **eternity**. . .

Conclusion:

So, we have this living hope:

vs 3-5: A living hope: where God's future informs and shapes our present.

4. vs 6-9: This "Living Hope": gives suffering a meaning and a purpose

B. Because of this living hope, we can rejoice in the midst of our suffering because God has a glorious plan for our lives.:

1. God has something for us to learn in our trials and suffering. . . yes even in this Corona Crisis, God wants to wake us up to eternal things. . .

a) Suffering pulls us from our attachments to this life. . . it draws us to set our hope in eternity.

b) Suffering refines us and exposes those areas of ongoing sin in our hearts.

c) Suffering allows us to treasure and value Christ's true worth here and now.

d) Suffering provides a platform for God to be glorified in us, so through us the world can see how awesome God is.

e) Our temporary Suffering here and now produces eternal salvation within us.

XXIII. One last question: How can you have this hope?

a) How can you tap into and experience this living hope?

2. Peter says in verse 3: we must be "born again" **into** this living hope.

a) Peter is connecting this living Hope to our "new birth" in Jesus.

b) Without this new birth, unless you have been born again, one can not have access to this "living hope". . .

B. In bring in this idea of "new birth" Peter is referring back to Jesus' exchange with Nicodemus in John 3. . .

1. Let me summarise the gist of their conversation.

2. Nicodemus, a Jewish rabbi, who is really captivated by Jesus' teaching comes to Jesus one evening under cover of night to enquire on how one can have access to eternal life, this kingdom of God Jesus speaks of. . .

(a) So, this is important, Nicodemus is asking how can we have access to God's forever kingdom. . . which in Jewish thinking meant the resurrection.

b) Jesus says to him one must be born again through a spiritual rebirth.

c) That God's Spirit, the tangible presence of God, must penetrate our hearts and make us new from within.

(1) And Nicodemus asks how can this happen?

(a) And this leads Jesus to probably the most famous verse in the whole bible:

i)“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.— John 3:16-17

3.Easter is all about Jesus bridging the gap between God and Humanity. . .

a)On the cross Jesus takes man’s sin with one outstretched hand and God’s anger with the other outstretched hand and absorbs them into his person. . . perfectly divine and perfectly human reconciled together on the cross.

(1)According to Jesus, we too can have access to this living hope

i)As Jesus says, “whoever believes in Him will have eternal life.”

(b)That is why in vs 5 of our passage, Peter writes: *through faith we are shielded by God’s power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.*

(2)Only then, when we have placed our complete trust in Jesus will we be born again into a **living hope.**

(a)This is why it is important for you to be listening for God’s voice as God’s Spirit speaks to you heart during this current crisis. . . He is reaching out for you this morning.

(b)If you have been far from God. . . God wants to use this crisis to speak to you. . . to call you back to him.

(c)He is your maker, your creator and he planted eternity in your heart. . . he designed you to hear his voice and feel his love for you in the Easter message

(d) So Today, if you hear God’s voice, do not harden your hearts. . but turn to Jesus and fall on your knees at the cross and come back to God.

XXIV.Today can be a new day for you. . . a new start is possible, because through Jesus Christ we have a living hope.