

## **A LIVING HOPE!**

(John 20:10-18; 1 Peter 1:3-5)

### **I. WELCOME / READINGS / OPENING PRAYER**

A. Welcome

B. Today's Two Texts

<sup>10</sup> So the disciples (Peter and John) went back to their own homes. <sup>11</sup> But Mary stood outside by the tomb, weeping. Then, as she was weeping, she stooped down *and looked* into the tomb; <sup>12</sup> and she saw two angels *dressed* in white, sitting in the place where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and the other at the feet. <sup>13</sup> They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She answered them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I don't know where they have put him." <sup>14</sup> Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing *there*, but didn't realize that it was him. <sup>15</sup> Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Who are you looking for?" Then Mary, thinking that he was the gardener, said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him off, tell me where you have put him, and I will *come and* get him."<sup>3</sup> <sup>16</sup> Jesus said to her, "Mary!" Turning around, Mary said to him in Hebrew, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher). (Pause) <sup>17</sup> Jesus said to her, "You cannot hold onto me,<sup>4</sup> for I have not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, and *to* my God and your God.'" <sup>18</sup> So Mary Magdalene came to the disciples, declaring, "I have seen the Lord!"; and she related to them the things he had said to her. – John 20

<sup>3</sup> Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who, according to His abundant mercy, has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead; <sup>4</sup> to an inheritance that is incorruptible, undefiled, and that will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup> who are kept by the power of God, through faith, for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. – 1 Peter 3

C. Opening Prayer

### **II. INTRODUCTION**

A. The Story of Freddie Steinmark (Reading)

B. Lessons to Learn

1. Man is wired for hope (HSL)

*There are three grand essentials to happiness in this life: something to do, something to love, and something to hope for.* – Joseph Addison

2. But there is a Problem: In our fallen world, hope faces many hurdles!

- Many hopes are never realized
- Others are briefly realized, only to be dashed
- And ALL hopes must come face to face with what the Bible calls the Last Enemy, which is death: (Reading: The Fear of Non-Existence)

For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but because of him who subjected *it* in hope . . . Rom. 8

C. This raises a GREAT QUESTION: Who or what can give mankind *a living hope*: a hope that will be realized; a hope that will never be dashed; a hope that can confidently face even the Last Enemy, which is death?

D. Today's text gives us a GREAT ANSWER: God can, through the life, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ!

### III. OUR TEXT: A LIVING HOPE

<sup>3</sup>Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who, according to His abundant mercy, has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead; <sup>4</sup>to an inheritance that is incorruptible, undefiled, and that will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup>who are kept by the power of God, through faith, for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (so rich, so inspired!)

### IV. NINE THINGS GOD WANTS US TO KNOW ABOUT OUR LIVING HOPE

A. It is awakened and sustained by the new birth

*Who . . . has caused us to be born again to a living hope . . .*

- There are Five Ingredients to the New Birth
- (1) A beloved but spiritually dead sinner, enclosed in a prison-house of mortality and hopelessness (“ . . . having no hope and living without God in the world.”)
- (2) The approach of The Spirit of God
- (3) The approach of the Gospel of God (HSL)
- (4) The miracle of SEEING: The deity of Christ, the atoning death of Christ, the resurrection of Christ— and how all this meets our deepest spiritual needs: pardon, righteousness, and eternal life (HSL)

Jesus was delivered up for our transgressions, and raised up for our justification. – Rom. 4

<sup>8</sup>And when he has come, he will convict<sup>1</sup> the world concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment: <sup>9</sup>concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; <sup>10</sup>concerning righteousness, because I am going to my Father and you see me no more; <sup>11</sup>and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged. – John 16

- (5) The miracle of SURRENDER, the Sealing of the Spirit, and the experience of release from the prison-house of sin into a new world of “eternal good hope” and joy!

B. It is a living hope, not a dead one . . .

- This world is filled with hopes, many of which are vain, *and all of which will die*
- The living hope that Peter is speaking of is a hope that 1) brings *life* into one's heart (HSL), and 2) can NEVER die
- How exactly is this hope begotten in our hearts? Peter tells in his next point:

### C. This hope revolves around the Resurrection of Jesus Christ

... *through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead* ...

- An example of this works: The case of Mary Magdalene
- And it was the same for: John at Jesus' tomb, the 2 disciples on the road to Emmaus, the 11 to whom he appeared, Thomas who put his hands in his wounds, etc.
- The resurrection is at the heart of a living faith and hope: 1) It vindicates Christ's teachings, 2) his claim to deity, 3) and his perfect righteousness; it teaches us 4) that his death was for our sins, 4) that he defeated death not only for himself, but also for all who believe in him! He said so himself:
- <sup>21</sup> Then Martha said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. <sup>22</sup> Yet even now I know that whatever you ask of God, God will give *it to* you." <sup>23</sup> Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." <sup>24</sup> Martha said to him, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." <sup>25</sup> Jesus declared to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even if he dies. <sup>26</sup> And everyone lives and believes in me—to all eternity he will never die.<sup>4</sup> Do you believe this?" <sup>27</sup> She said to him, "Yes, Lord, I have believed that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world." – John 11
- What the skeptic says: "All well and good, but how can you be sure the resurrection really happened?"
- Response #1: Evidence (HSL)

"I have been used for many years to study the histories of other times, and to examine and weigh the evidence of those who have written about them, and I know of no one fact in the history of mankind which is proved by better and fuller evidence of every sort, to the understanding of a fair inquirer, than the great sign which God hath given us: that Christ died and rose again from the dead." – Prof. Thomas Arnold, Chairman of Modern History, Oxford University (Fl. 1830)

- Response #2: Willingness (e.g., the moth to the flame; Lee Strobel) (HSL)

### D. This hope includes the hope of an *eternal* inheritance

... *to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that will not fade away* ...

- No more death, no more decay, no more futility and hopelessness

<sup>18</sup>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. <sup>19</sup>For the deep longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. <sup>20</sup>For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but because of him who subjected *it* in hope, <sup>21</sup>because<sup>5</sup> the creation itself also will be delivered from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. <sup>22</sup>For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. <sup>23</sup>And not only *the creation*, but also we ourselves who have the first fruits of the Spirit: Even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for *the* adoption, the redemption of our body. <sup>24</sup>For in hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is not hope, for who hopes for what he *already* sees? <sup>25</sup>But if we hope for what we do not see, then with perseverance we wait eagerly for *it*.

E. This hope includes the hope of heaven up above

*... reserved in heaven for you ...*

- Acts 1: After Jesus arose, he ascended into heaven: It exists!
- This is the destination of the spirit of the believer in Jesus, if he dies before Christ's return (e.g., the thief on the Cross)
- The hope of "Going Home" (Reading)

F. This is a sure hope

*... who are kept by the power of God ...*

- "When a person is born again, why doesn't God just take him home?"
- Answer: There's work to do! <sup>17</sup> *Now the Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." So let the one who hears say, "Come!" And let the one who is thirsty come. Yes, let the one who so desires take the water of life without cost!*
- But as we walk through this world, working for the Lord, enduring various trials and temptations, we do so with great confidence: We WILL reach heaven, for he WILL keep us in the faith. Our hope is sure.

*... being confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus. – Phil. 1*

(You are ) eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>8</sup> who also will establish you till the *very end, so that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.* <sup>9</sup> *God is faithful, through whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. – 1 Cor. 1*

G. This is a hope that requires faith

*... who are kept by the power of God through faith ...*

- He keeps us in the faith, *but we need always to exercise and strengthen it!*

H. This hope includes the hope of a new, heavenly world up ahead

*... who are kept by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*

- Acts 1: The angel promised that he would return just as he left! (And so did the Lord)
- The Consummation: The Return of Christ, the Resurrection of the dead, the Last Judgment, the Lake of Fire, the creation of the New Heavens and the New Earth, the eternal home of the redeemed.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the former heaven and the former earth *had* passed away; and there was<sup>1</sup> no longer *any* sea. <sup>2</sup> And *then* I saw the holy city—New Jerusalem—coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice coming from the throne, saying, “Look, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will tabernacle with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them. <sup>4</sup> He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death and mourning and crying and pain shall be no more, for the former things have passed away.” <sup>5</sup> Then the One seated upon the throne said, “Look, I am making all things new!” And he said, “Write *this down*, for these words are trustworthy and true.” – Rev. 21

I. This hope begets a heart of worship, a heart filled with gratitude, joy, and praise . . .

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to **His abundant mercy** has caused us to be born again to a living hope . . .*

- As we grow in understanding of our faith, we realize that our eternal good hope is altogether a gift of God’s mercy and grace. And gratitude for this grace is the burning heart of all true worship.

I really love how in John 17 Jesus prays to God and speaks of the disciples, in effect, as gifts from the Father. He says, "You have given them to me and I have not lost one of them." I am taken by that so much, that he thought of his disciples, and by extension today, he thinks of us, as gifts to him. THAT IS REMARKABLE, UNBELIEVABLE...THAT HE SHOULD THINK WE ARE GIFTS?! HE is the gift! *He is the one we should be thanking and we do...but we can never really thank him enough.* – Lisa Lantz.

We shall be to the praise of the glory of his grace. Eph. 1

<sup>20</sup> Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, <sup>21</sup> to Him *be* glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

<sup>9</sup> After these things I looked, and suddenly I beheld a great crowd that no one could number, *filled with men and women* from every nation (from *all* tribes, peoples, and languages), standing before the throne and before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes, and *holding* palm branches in their hands. <sup>10</sup> And with a loud voice they were continually crying out, saying, “*Ascribe* salvation to our God—to him who is seated upon the throne—and to the Lamb.” <sup>11</sup> Now all the angels were stationed around the throne, the elders, and the four living creatures; and the angels fell face down before the throne, and they worshiped God, <sup>12</sup> saying, “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and *thanksgiving* and honor and power and might *belong* to our God, forever and ever! Amen!”

## V. CONCLUSION: GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAINS!

- The resurrection of Jesus Christ is a true historical event
- It is an off-the-scale meaningful event
- It gives hope to all who put their trust in the Risen One, hope for this life, for the next life, and hope for all eternity
- The Resurrection, which seals and certifies the atoning death of Christ on the Cross, is Good News: the greatest news anyone at any time in any place could ever hear!
- So, as for Christmas, so for Easter, let us go tell it on the mountains, that Jesus Christ is Risen Today!