

# Easter: A New Hope

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[ 0 : 00 ] Good morning, Watermark. Jesus is alive. I don't know about you, but that makes me excited.

And that is a truth that has brought hope to millions, maybe even billions of people over the past 2,000 years. It's an incredible truth that Jesus is alive.

And this morning, I want to talk with you guys about hope. Hope is right at the center of our human existence. There was a guy named Joseph Addison.

He was a British writer in the 17th century. And he said, there are three grand essentials to happiness in this life. Number one, something to do. Number two, something to love.

And number three, something to hope for. All of us want something in life to hope for. If you look through the news, even this week, hope is a prominent theme that we've seen.

[ 1 : 08 ] And if you go to the CNN website, down at the bottom of the page, there's an article about finding hope in the aftermath of the attacks in Brussels. Because we see that our world needs something.

Our world needs hope in light of all the disaster going on. And each of us looks for hope in different places in our lives.

For many of us, it's our jobs. We hope that we can get that promotion. We hope that we can have a certain level of success. We hope that we will be able to provide for our families through working hard.

We hope. We hope. For others of us, it's relationships. We hope that someday we can find that special someone.

We hope that we can settle down. We hope that we can have kids to carry on our legacy. We hope. For the kids here today, how many of you have hope for the Easter egg hunt after service?

[ 2 : 11 ] Oh yeah. Yeah. We're going to run around. We're going to go crazy collecting eggs so we can get the most candy. Because we have hope that candy will satisfy that craving in our life that nothing else on earth can.

We all hope. And if you're here today and you're not quite sure what it is that you're hoping for, a simple test is just fill in the blank in this sentence. I will be happy when whatever goes in that blank, that is your hope.

All of us have something that we are hoping for. But this morning I want to ask you, what is the nature of your hope? What is it about your job or your husband or your children or the candy and the Easter eggs that makes you believe that it is worth you putting your hope in?

Is it a reliable hope? And what I want us to see is that Jesus is the only hope that will never disappoint us.

And he is the only place that it is worth it for us to put our hope today. So we read this passage from Luke, chapter 24, verse 13.

[ 3 : 31 ] I want to look at this passage and see in this passage how we need to see Jesus as our hope today. The passage starts out with two guys walking along the road. I don't know if you've ever seen like a Charlie Brown Christmas.

But you know there's this scene where Charlie Brown is sort of like walking along, dragging his feet, his shoulders slumped over, his head down. It's got this little music playing like... I picture that being what these guys are doing as they're walking down the road.

I'm sure they didn't have like the soundtrack going on, but they were sad. It had been a rough few days. They had been following this guy for years, hoping that he was going to rescue their nation. And instead of rescuing their nation, the complete opposite had happened. He had been executed as a traitor, executed by the very ones that they had hoped that he would overthrow. Their hope

was crushed.

And as they're walking down the street, a stranger walks up to them and says, what are you guys talking about? And it says they stood still and looked at him looking sad.

[ 4 : 45 ] It's like as pathetic as it gets, right? Like, what's going on, guys? Like, oh. And they're like, are you the only guy around here who doesn't know what's happening?

Like, apparently the magnitude of what had happened to Jesus had just spread far and wide across that area. It's like, imagine September 13th, 2001. You're in New York City and you walk up to someone and you're like, why the long face?

It's like, have you been living under a rock? Our whole world, everything that we've been hoping for has just been destroyed. We thought that we had security in our financial institutions, but we learned that those can crumble to the ground in minutes.

We thought that our city was a relatively safe place to live and thousands of people just got killed. We thought that our future was secure and we realized that was all a lie.

And in a similar way, these men, they're saying we had hoped in Jesus. We had hoped that our future was secure in him and it has all come crumbling to the ground.

[ 5 : 53 ] He's dead. He's been killed. Our hope, it's gone. And Jesus jumps in on the conversation and asks them to explain more about this Jesus guy.

So they begin telling Jesus about himself. And it becomes clear as they explain that their hope had been built around Jesus.

They saw his death as the end of their hope and they were going home to rebuild the broken down pieces of their life.

They say during this conversation that they had thought that he would be the one to redeem Israel. For an Israelite in those days, the word redeem was connected with a specific event in history when God had rescued the Israelites from being slaves in Egypt.

He had taken them out miraculously from this foreign ruler that was oppressing them and set them free. And during these days, they were living under Roman oppression and they were waiting for a savior to come to set them free from Rome.

[ 7 : 07 ] And they thought that Jesus was that one. They thought that he was going to raise up an army and rescue them. And he had not. And now they were left facing the future, living under this Roman rule.

Because Jesus did not meet their expectations of what he would do. Their dreams were crushed. I want to ask you today, what would it take to crush your hopes?

You know, I think we place our hopes in a lot of things in this life that we think can hold us and sustain us. But they're things that if we look closely at them are incredibly fragile.

I would venture to guess that there's no one in this room who couldn't have their entire world flipped upside down with a simple phone call this afternoon. Hey, your wife or your kid had an accident.

You need to get to the hospital now because we don't know how long they have. Hey, we just found out that one of the board members has been embezzling money from the company. We're bankrupt.

[ 8 : 22 ] You have no more job. Simple things that can cause our hopes to crumble. If they are built on things that cannot last, our hopes can be destroyed in an instant.

And as we're going to see, Jesus is the only hope that can never fail us. An interesting side note, there's some cool things in this passage that point us towards the truth of this story.

The fact that they mention Cleopas by name means that Luke's original readers could go back and actually cross-reference whether Luke is telling the truth because they have this guy, Cleopas, they could go talk to and be like, was Luke telling the truth about you?

And I think for many people in our world today, we look back 2,000 years, we're like, well, they were gullible, they were stupid, like, they didn't know about science. They could have been fooled into believing someone rose from the dead, of course, even if it didn't happen.

But if you look at it, Cleopas and his friend, they actually say, like, we've heard that the tomb is empty. Some people are saying that maybe he's alive, we don't buy it.

[ 9 : 40 ] Like, they didn't just jump in and say, oh, the tomb is empty, he must be alive. They're like, no, the tomb is empty, someone probably stole the body because that's how tombs get emptied.

And that's just common sense.

People don't come back to life, right? And so even here, we see skepticism from these followers. Even though they've heard that maybe there's a chance that he's alive, they don't want to believe it because they know that doesn't happen in the real world.

We've already had our hopes disappointed once and we don't want it to happen again. And so they decide, we're not going to hold on to that hope. We're not going to expect that he's going to come back because we've already lost him once.

If we lose him again, that would just, that would be even worse. And after hearing these guys' explanation of who Jesus was and what they expected of him, Jesus comes in.

I love his response right here. Oh, foolish ones. Slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Wasn't it necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?

[10:51] He's like, guys, the cross was the whole point. That's why Jesus came to the earth. It was all about the cross. It was all for the cross.

You totally misunderstood what was going on. You totally, you thought you were looking at one thing and you were watching something totally different. What you thought was defeat was actually ultimate victory.

And he then unpacks from the entire Old Testament, passage by passage, look, here's where it talks about Jesus coming and saving us. Here's where it talks about him suffering.

Here's where it talks about him coming back after he suffered. Probably the most incredible Bible lesson that had ever been given in history. Like, wouldn't you love to be a fly on the wall as Jesus is just walking down the street explaining to them about himself from the entire Old Testament?

And yet they still, they still don't quite get it. They finally reach their hometown, which is about seven miles outside of Jerusalem. And they say, all right, this is, this is our stop.

[12:00] And Jesus acts like he's going to keep going further, but they're like, no, no, no. Come in, stay with us, eat a meal. You can have a safe, warm place to stay for the night. And he says, okay. He comes inside.

They sit down to eat. And it says that he blessed the bread. And as he blessed the bread, their eyes were opened. And they saw that it was Jesus. And we don't know how their eyes were open, whether it was like something about the way that he prayed or whether God just like miraculously revealed it to them at that exact moment.

But all we know is in that moment, they saw Jesus. The things they had heard with their ears, they now saw with their eyes. And they knew this isn't just some story.

This is the truth. Yes, Jesus was killed and that crushed our hopes, but he is not dead. He is alive. He is alive. He is not dead.

He is alive. And in his resurrection, he has conquered death. The hope that we thought we had lost, we have now regained and found.

[13:09] And it says that they go back to Jerusalem, another seven-mile journey. And, you know, on the way from Jerusalem, you know, it was the Charlie Brown walk. On the way back to Jerusalem, it doesn't tell us how they went, but I'm guessing there was a little bit more skip in their step.

I'm guessing they were probably jogging a little bit because they had good, amazing news to share with everyone in Jerusalem that their hope that they thought they had lost was not lost at all. It was found.

They probably ran down the street doing cartwheels in their excitement. And they headed back. They found the disciples and they said, we've seen Jesus.

He is alive. And the disciples said, yeah, Peter saw him too. We know. Isn't this amazing? They had a little celebration with each other, rejoicing in the truth that the grave could not conquer Jesus.

Death could not hold him down. He was alive. Their hope that they thought was lost was found never to be lost again because Jesus had conquered over death.

[14:28] They found their hope. And today, almost 2,000 years later, I want to ask you, where is your hope today?

jobs can change or be lost in an instant. Families are awesome.

But again, tragedy can strike in an instant. Anything in this world that we can set our hopes on can fail us in an instant.

But what we see here is Jesus coming back to life, conquering over death once and for all, proving for all time that he has accomplished victory over the grave.

And not just victory over the grave for himself, but it's a victory over the grave that he offers to his people. A rescue. A rescue. Salvation.

[ 15 : 33 ] So if you're here today and you're not a Christian, my encouragement to you today is to place your hope in Christ.

The Bible tells us that God created us for a relationship with him. And that each of us has turned away from him. Each of us has rebelled.

Each of us for our rebellion deserve death. each of us have chosen to make ourselves enemies of God. And what happened on the cross is that Jesus came and he bore the death that we deserved. He offered us forgiveness that we don't deserve. He offered us a new life that can only be ours as a gift.

but it's a life that all we have to do is ask and it will be ours. And so I encourage you if you are here today and you have never trusted in Jesus and his death and resurrection to give you a new relationship with God, please do that today.

[ 16 : 46 ] Do that right now. And if you're here today and you're a Christian, you know, jobs are great, families are great, but none of these things can be our ultimate hope in life.

If we are hoping these things more than we are hoping in Jesus, our hope will at one point or another fail us. what does it look like, what does it mean for you to place your hope in Jesus today? What does it look like to reprioritize your life so that you're truly building your life around the one thing that cannot and will not ever fail you?

You know, the resurrection is a historically verifiable objective proof of the fact that God loves us, of the fact that God has conquered over the grave, of the fact that there is nothing that can separate us from God's love.

And he's inviting each of us today to come in to experience that relationship with him, to experience the joy that comes from that relationship with him because Christ is alive.

[ 18 : 13 ] He is not in the grave anymore. His body has not been stolen. He has come back to life. That's why we celebrate today.

That's where our hope is today. Let's pray. Father, we thank you for your love. We thank you for the cross.

We thank you for your grace. We pray that today we would find our hope in the resurrection. We pray that we would see the amazing love that you have for us, the amazing promise held out to us, and the fact that Christ is no longer in the grave, but he is alive.

Help us to love you more. Help us to trust you more each day. In Jesus' name, Amen. Amen.