



Text: Luke 24:21<sup>1</sup>

Title: Resurrection Hope -- A Hope That Will Not Disappoint

Date: March 23, 2008 – Easter Sunday

Place: First Baptist Church, Olds, AB

**“But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel.” Luke 24:21**

“But we had hoped....” Those four words are some of the saddest words in the Bible. “But we had hoped....” They speak of lost hope and the story behind the loss of hope is always a story of pain and disappointment, it’s the story of life in a broken world where we are subject to forces beyond our control.

Cleopas and his friend had been deeply impressed by Jesus and his ministry. They described him as...

**“a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people” Luke 24:19**

They had hoped that Jesus was the one prophesied in the Old Testament who would “**redeem Israel.**” (v.21) What they meant by that is found in a prophetic word that was spoken at the time of Jesus’ birth. Zechariah, speaking of Jesus, had said...

**“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us....” Luke 1:68-71**

Cleopas had hoped that Jesus would liberate Israel from their enemies, the Romans, and establish a kingdom of goodness and righteousness that would bring plenty and peace into the lives of the Jewish people. If anyone could do it, they thought, Jesus could!

His words had been revolutionary! Quoting from the prophet Isaiah, Jesus had said at the beginning of his ministry...

**“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are**

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission, All rights reserved.



**oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." Luke 4:18-19 (c.f. Isaiah 61:1-2)**

His deeds had been powerful! Jesus had stilled the storm with just a word from his mouth. He had miraculously provided bread to a crowd of thousands in the wilderness. With just a touch, he had healed the blind and those with leprosy and even raised the dead! If anyone could bring in the kingdom of peace and goodness, Jesus could!

But then came the cross.

This Jesus who they hoped would be the one to liberate the Jews from the Romans was handed over to those very same Romans to be crucified like a common criminal. What happened to the power? With a finger, he could have stopped the Roman soldier who whipped him – but he didn't! With a word, he could have brought all the legions of Rome in submission to his feet, but instead he allowed a small squad of soldier executioners to nail him to a cross! And with the nod of his head, he could have called down the armies of heaven to set him free from the cross – but he didn't! He did the unthinkable! He died! And their hope collapsed.

I want you to notice one important detail in the story of Cleopas and his friend. They knew about the resurrection, but they still lost their hope. This story occurs after Easter morning. These two men had heard the testimony of the women who had visited the empty tomb on Easter morning and had found it empty. (v.22-23) They had heard the testimony of the apostles who went to the tomb to confirm what the women had said. (v.24) They had heard about the resurrection from people they knew and trusted but the disappointment of the cross overwhelmed them.

Cleopas and his friend simply couldn't make sense of Jesus' suffering and death. It was the cross that had frustrated their hopes. This is where I connect with these two believers. In my experience it's hardship, and suffering, and the frustrations of life and yes, even the sorrow of death, which so often undercuts our hope.

How about you? **What steals hope from your life?**

Let me ask you this morning: **On what have you set your hope?** Is it subject to the forces of this world that are beyond your control?

Let me ask a second question: **Has hardship overwhelmed your hope?** Have the struggles of this world beaten down your hope?

We all need hope. Dr. Jerome Groopman of the Harvard Medical School has studied and written about the human need for hope. He said...



*"I think hope has been, is, and always will be the heart of medicine and healing. We could not live without hope." Even with all the medical technology available to us now, "we still come back to this profound human need to believe that there is a possibility to reach a future that is better than the one in the present."* © 2008

PreachingToday.com Ted De Hass, Bedford, Iowa; source: Rachel K. Sobel, "The Mysteries of Hope and Healing," U.S. News and World Report (1-26-04).

We need hope but we live in a world where even our most precious hopes can be frustrated, where hope can be snatched away in the blink of an eye. For the first decade of their married life, Lewis Smedes, a Christian author and theologian, and his wife, Doris, and hoped passionately for a child.

*I think we wanted a child more than we wanted anything else in the world, he wrote. So we hoped and prayed for ten long years. And then finally, after ten years, Doris became pregnant. We thanked God and drank a toast to hope.*

*One night, about six months into the pregnancy, something went wrong, and I called the doctor. He told me Doris was going into labor and to get her into the car and take her to the emergency room right away.*

*"I'll meet you there," he said. "Oh, yes; I have one more thing to tell you; I should have told you before. Your baby is going to be seriously malformed."*

*"Malformed? Seriously? How serious?"*

*"Very serious. It's up to you now to tell Doris on the way to the hospital."*

*Well, I told her. But we decided that we were not going to give up hope. No matter what the doctor said, we were not going to give up hope. So we kept on hoping all through the night.*

*At six o'clock in the morning, the doctor came to me with a somewhat embarrassed grin from ear to ear. He said, "Congratulations! You have a perfect baby boy. Come and see." I went with him, and there he was, yelling his head off, looking just like me--a perfect man-child. Praise God! We thought.*

*It's true. Never give up hope. Never, ever give up hope.*

*But two days later our baby was dead.*

As Smedes wrote...

*Hope can break your heart.* © 2008 PreachingToday.com Lewis Smedes, "Keep Hope Alive," Preaching Today, Tape No. 139.)



Where is your hope? In your children? In your family? In your abilities? In your friends? In your finances? Is it in your career or your education? It's fine to hope that...

- Our children will love good and productive lives
- We will enjoy our retirement years with our spouse
- I will graduate from my program and find a rewarding career
- My marriage will be long and mutually rewarding

But any of these things can be taken from us without a moment's notice. Let me tell you that if your ultimate hope is set in anything that is subject to the uncertainties of this world your hope is exposed to disappointment and frustration and you face the very real potential of losing your hope. We need hope and you and I need a secure source of hope that will never be disappointed.

The resurrected Jesus came alongside these two despairing, hopeless disciples on the road to Emmaus and he reoriented their hope to a foundation that was secure.

**“O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.”  
Luke 24:25-27**

It was Jesus' suffering that had derailed the hope of Cleopas and his friend and so Jesus explained to them how suffering had always been a part of God's plan of redemption. Luke tells us that Jesus covered a vast amount of Scripture. He could have taken them through Genesis 22, Psalm 22 or Isaiah 53. But wherever Jesus took them, his point was to establish the basic understanding that God's plan had always been...

### **Suffering then Glory**

#### **The Cross then the Resurrection**

As Jesus explained this principle from the Scriptures, Cleopas and his friend experienced a rebirth of hope. They were able to put Jesus' suffering into the context of his resurrection. Cleopas said to his friend...

**“Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?” (v.32)**

This Easter morning, I want to open some Scripture to you. I hope they speak into your hearts. This Easter morning I want us to make sure that our ultimate hope is grounded in the same Scripture principle. The resurrection of Jesus



Christ is our promise that glory awaits us but we need to understand that the pattern of our lives will follow the pattern of our Lord...

**The resurrection of Jesus is God's promise to us that even though we experience suffering now, there is glory waiting for us.**

The Apostle Peter told us that...

**“after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.” 1 Peter 5:10-11**

The Apostle Paul put it this way...

**“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.” Romans 8:18**

I want to share with you a testimony of a fellow believer who is living the reality that Paul describes. He wrote...

*Recently my wife and daughter and I were reading Psalm 37. When we came to the fourth verse—“Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart”—I asked if this was true for me.*

*I am crippled by Lou Gherig's disease, ALS, which is a progressive and fatal neurological illness. In the eight years I've had ALS, it's taken my voice and robbed me of the use of my limbs. It also forced us out of our lovely home.*

*Is the promise of fulfilled desires true for me and for the millions of other believers who have had their plans and dreams shattered? Yes, it's true—exceedingly so. I desire a healthy body, and Jesus promises me a body that is powerful, incorruptible, glorious, and spiritual. I desire a home that is beautiful and spacious, and he is preparing such a home for me in a city whose builder is God. I desire a world without crime, lies, or violence, and he promises me a world where righteousness dwells. I desire to be with those I love, and he promises that I will be caught up together with them forever. I desire an end to my sorrow, and he promises me fullness of joy in his presence.*

*I desire a heart so filled with love that there is no room for sin, and he promises to make me like Jesus when I am in heaven. I desire a ministry, and he promises I will serve him eternally. I desire a voice with which to praise him, and he promises I will sing before his throne.*

*Most of all, I desire to see him, and he promises I will always behold his face. He will keep his promise to give me the desires of my heart.* (© 2008 PreachingToday.com

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Where is your hope this morning? Is it in a secure place? Is it in the promise of God that is found in the resurrected Jesus?

If you have never put your hope in Jesus Christ, I invite you to do so today. If you want a foundation for hope in your life that can hardships and frustrations this world throws at us, then I invite you to put your faith in the resurrected Jesus.

If you're a believer and you've allowed the frustrations of this world to overwhelm your hope, I invite you on this Resurrection Day to re-establish your hope on the solid ground of the glory that awaits us in Jesus.

Rico Tice is a minister in England and the creator of the *Christianity Explored* Bible study. The first funeral he ever conducted of a young person was of a musician by the name of Stuart Spencer who died of cancer in his 30s. Stuart was a deeply committed Christian and he and Rico were close friends.

*In his last visit with Stuart, just three days before he died, Rico risked asking a tough question. Because of their friendship, Rico was very emotional about Stuart's impending death and he blurted out a question before he had a chance to think about it. "Stuart," he asked, "what's it like to die?"*

*Tice will never forget his answer. Stuart said, very calmly, "Rico, Christ is risen. He is risen." Stuart Spencer knew that Christ had risen and so he knew what he had to look forward to beyond death.* (© 2005 Rico Tice, *Christianity Explored* Session #6 "The Resurrection")

I love the truth declared in the song that we're about to sing as we conclude our celebration of the resurrection. Keith Getty & Stuart Townend wrote...

**In Christ alone my hope is found  
He is my light my strength my song  
This Cornerstone this solid ground  
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm  
What heights of love what depths of peace  
When fears are stilled when strivings cease  
My Comforter my all in all  
Here in the love of Christ I stand**

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I invite you to put your hope in Him today.

- **Prayer & Invitation to Prayer**
- **Final Song:** In Christ Alone
- **Benediction**