

We Had Hoped
Sermon 4/26/2020
The Third Sunday of Easter

1 Peter 1:14 – 23
Luke 24:13 – 35

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Amen. As we heard last week, Easter is a week of weeks. That is the season of Easter is seven weeks long, and each week having seven days in it. This Easter we talked about how we are going to focus on the hope that we have through the resurrection. Last week we looked at this hope that is a living hope; why a living hope? Because Christ rose. He's alive and He is the one who gives us hope. Hope in the Bible is a guaranteed expectation or a declaration with a promise. Jesus gave us hope and He also gave us three additional things because of that hope. He gave us peace as He told his disciples; "peace be with you." He gave us a purpose. Just as His father sent Him, He said "I am sending you." And He gave them the Holy Spirit who would give them the power to proclaim the gospel message. As a result, we looked at what Peter had to say about all this in 1 Peter chapter 1; Peter told us to prepare your minds for action.

Well on this third Sunday of Easter, let's take a look at what Peter wrote following that call for us to prepare our minds for action. This is his prescription. He says, I quote: "As obedient children... just that beginning statement brings to my mind that song that we sing so many times and it is so beautiful; Children of the Heavenly Father. That is who we are. We are God's children. This is part of the hope, the guaranteed expectation, or the promise with the guarantee, we have that through Christ's resurrection we are not just mere mortals walking this earth or evolutionary by-products. We are not a bunch of modified apes. We are the children of God; and as the children of God, Peter says, again I quote: "Do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance." As He who has called you (that takes us back to the second gift that Jesus gave His disciples) He called them. He gave them a commission. He gave them a purpose. "As He who has called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct." What Peter is doing is quoting Leviticus 11:44 where God says, "As I am holy, you are to be holy." But again, we so often confuse that word holy in the English language with what it really means. Holy means set apart and so Peter is calling on them to be holy and set apart from their passions. What is passion? This is very interesting Greek word. It means an irrational learning or lust for what is forbidden. And so, we are not to be conformed to our passions or irrational wanting or lust for what is forbidden. Where does this passion come from? It comes from former ignorance. Now let's think about that word ignorance, what does it really mean? In today's day and age, we talk about ignorance being a lack of

knowledge, but that is not the definition of ignorance. Ignorance is a lack of truth. I believe that is part of our problem in society, especially as we are going through this Easter season. We think that knowledge is the answer to everything. The knowledge that is imparted to us by society, the knowledge that is imparted to us by higher education; but what does that knowledge teach us today? Well, we see it right now so very clearly with this coronavirus. It teaches us trust the government, and trust in yourselves. What does the truth of God's word tell us? Trust in God. Do you see what Peter is saying? It hasn't changed one bit. He was writing to the people of the 1st century, telling them don't trust what society is telling you. That is your former ignorance. You didn't have the truth, but now you have the truth. Then he continues; "and if you call on Him (that is God) as Father, who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile.

Now let's focus on that word fear for a moment. You're going to feel like maybe this is a Greek lesson today, but it's such a key word. The Greek word is Phobos, it is the word that we get our word phobia from. In Greek that word Phobos, has a three-part definition to us. It is first of all, that which causes fear, dread or terror. Oh, that kind of sounds like our definition of fear. But it continues; it's a wholesome dread of displeasing another; and in this case it's God. The third part; fear influences the disposition and attitude of one who is guided by trust in another; and in this case that would be God. So, when Peter writes conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile. He is saying, 'let the fear, that terror and dread of the God who's going to judge the world, influence your disposition and attitude because you do not want to displease Him; rather you want to trust Him. And he says, 'conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile.' What is exile? Well it's the reality that we are strangers in a strange land. Heaven is our home. We are children of the heavenly Father, and the land we live in, is a land of futile ways. We tend to put our trust in wealth or silver and gold as Peter says; and this is handed down to us from our forefathers. It's again being taught and we're passing it on to trust yourself, trust the government, develop for yourself a plan to accumulate wealth; and all will be well.

That is not where we put our hope. We put our hope in God and that's why Peter writes; "you have been ransomed." Something was paid for you; and what was paid for you? It was paid with the precious blood of Christ. We are kidnapped by sin and the power of the devil and he held us for ransom. The ransom was paid with the blood of Christ. Why? Peter says, so that your faith and hope are in God. That fear leads to faith and leads to hope. So, preparation (prepare your minds for action as Peter says) begins with do not. It begins with the law and we are not to be conformed to this world and its thoughts and its patterns. But he follows it right up with the

gospel and tells us what we are to do. What are we to do? Peter tells us; “be born again through the living and abiding Word of God. Living, God's alive! He's not dead. He who spoke the word, is alive. This is not like we see today in so many history classes, and I guess civics classes are almost gone; but I was always taught that the constitution of the United States is a living document. And I was told that that means it's constantly evolving. Well I'm going to tell you something, the word evolving doesn't really exist in the Bible. This concept of evolving and constantly changing, does not exist. In fact, when we hear the living and abiding Word of God; it's living because it's spoken by God, who is alive and abiding well that's Malachi 3 verse 6 where God says I the LORD do not change. He abides by His word. He stays true to His word. His word does not change, and that is what brings us to that Easter afternoon.

There's two disciples or followers of Jesus, who had been in Jerusalem for the Passover feast. That was one of the three great festivals. So, the population of Jerusalem had exploded over this weekend. They're traveling on the road to Emmaus. They are heading home and they are talking about what had happened. Luke says, “they were talking with each other about all these things.” What are these things? If we go to the verses immediately preceding it, we see Jesus is crucified, He dies, He's buried, He is in the tomb for three days. Or on the third day, I should say, the women get up in the morning, they go to the tomb, they find it empty, they see a vision of Angels, the Angels give them a message, “He has risen, remember how He told you?” And they went back and told the disciples, who were gathered together in fear; and Peter and John ran to the tomb and had witnessed the empty tomb. This is what they were talking about.

Then Jesus comes up to them and He says, “What is this conversation that you were holding?” And they stood still looking sad. Then one says, “are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?” Again, remember Jerusalem exploded in population at this time it grew over 10 times in size. It's kind of like where I grew up, the little town of Bishop on the eastern Sierra, and well yesterday, the last Saturday in April is supposed to be the opening day of fishing season. The population of Bishop is normally about 4000 but on opening day of fishing season it becomes 40,000. Well this is what happened at Passover. And you know what if someone catches a state record fish, every one of those 40,000 people know it. Because they have a big thing down at the City Park and everybody brings the fish they caught, and there's a contest for the biggest fish. in whatever. Everybody knows what's happening and that's what's happening here. “Are you the only visitor Jerusalem who does not know these things?” Jesus' response is, “what things?” And so, they tell Him; “Concerning Jesus of Nazareth. A man who was a Prophet, mighty in deed and Word; delivered by the religious

leaders to be condemned, crucified, he died, he was buried. Now listen to what they say to Jesus. "But we had hoped." There's our word; but we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. In other words, we thought he was more than all those things. Now there is this troubling word out, women went to the tomb, they found it empty and they said they had a vision of Angels. And the Angel said He is risen, and then Peter and John, the disciples ran there, and they found it empty. We don't know what is going on. Listen carefully now what Jesus says to them. Please listen very carefully because I'm going to emphasize one word that Jesus uses three times. He says to them, "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.

I hope you caught the little emphasis there on that magnificently huge word, all. It's a 3-letter word, used three times by Jesus. Please remember in the Bible three is the number of God. I think there's a big God message here. What did Jesus do? He took them back to scripture. He went back to Genesis and He reminded them of the fall when Adam and Eve sinned. God promised that through the seed of the woman Satan would be crushed but he would be bruised. He brought them back to the flood that God does not wink at sin. No there is judgment for sin. He took them back to the patriarchs; to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the covenant promise that through Abraham, Isaac, Jacob the Messiah would come. He then took them to Moses, the book of Exodus and the law. The Law which shows us that we fall short of the glory of God, the law that condemns us and tells us the wages of sin is death. Then He went to all the prophets who spoke about how God would provide. I saved you, a Messiah and told us what He would look like what He would do where He would be born and exactly what would happen to Him. He would be stricken, smitten and afflicted because all of our sin would be put on Him and He would make payment for them. Then when Jesus sat down to dinner with them and He broke the bread it hit them that it was Jesus and He fulfilled all the scripture and they then were prepared. They ran back to Jerusalem, about a seven-mile run, to tell the disciples. When they got there, they found out Peter had also seen Jesus and there was great joy because then Jesus himself came.

Prepare. Prepare your minds for action. How do we do this? We do not be conformed to this world and its teachings and its hopes. Rather what we do, is we prepare to be born again through the living and abiding word of God. That is exactly where Jesus took those two disciples who still were not. They said, "we had hoped." And then after meeting with Jesus, they have hope. The hope was with them and they went to share that hope with the disciples. You see, because of the resurrection, that phrase 'we had hoped' becomes we have real hope. The promise of God that He

would send His son to crush Satan's head, to be stricken, smitten and afflicted, to take all of our sins on Himself and then overcome the payment of sin; death (that's the Law) through His resurrection. And now He gives us that promise. That just as He rose from the dead, He who has the power to raise Himself from the dead, will raise us from the dead. That is our hope. Again, remember, in the Bible, hope is much more than hype, it's true. We have that guarantee and it is promised by God. And a promise by God is much better than for instance, we put our hope in the almighty dollar, because it stands with the full backing of the United States government. Our eternal life, our resurrection is promised by the Creator of the universe, who has ransomed us, redeemed us, and made us His children, Children of the heavenly Father.

In our Savior's Name, Amen