

EASTER SERVICE 2022

SERMON: WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOUR HOPE DIES?

4-17-22

OPENER:

Today we celebrate the most long awaited and glorious event in the history of the world. It is the day that changed everything. On that day my life changed. Your life changed. The destiny of man changed!

I. WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOUR HOPE DIES?

The night before the crucifixion, on his way to pray in the garden, Jesus spoke this to his disciples.....

Matthew 26:31-35“Tonight all of you will desert me. For the Scriptures say, ‘God will strike the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’ ³² But after I have been raised from the dead, I will go ahead of you to Galilee and meet you there.”

³³ Peter declared, “Even if everyone else deserts you, I will never desert you.”

³⁴ Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, Peter—this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny three times that you even know me.”

³⁵ “No!” Peter insisted. “Even if I have to die with you, I will never deny you!” And all the other disciples vowed the same.

That very night Jesus was arrested by Roman authorities, tried before Pilate, severely beaten and flogged and then crucified. His body was placed in a tomb and Roman guards were standing watch.

JESUS WAS DEAD.

Every disciple fled and hid that night that Jesus was arrested. Everyone deserted Him.

Peter and some of the others watched Jesus’ crucifixion from a distance. He watched the sign hung above his head that read “King of the Jews”. He watched the soldiers gamble over his outer robe. He heard Jesus cry out, “My God, my God why have you forsaken me?” He watched the sword pierce his side. And then he heard Jesus cry out again and say, “It is finished” It was then a heavy darkness came and an earthquake shook the entire land.

JESUS WAS DEAD.

(I have a question for everyone here in this auditorium)

WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU HOPE DIES???

**WHEN YOU STAND AND WATCH THAT PROMISE THAT YOU HAD HOPED IN FALL
DEAD BEFORE YOUR EYES.**

**> WHEN SICKNESS COMES AND DRAINS YOUR BANK
ACCOUNT AND YOU WONDER IF YOU’LL MAKE IT.**

- > WHEN YOUR MARRIAGE IS HANGING ON BY A THREAD AND IT SEEMS LIKE DIVORCE IS THE ONLY ANSWER.
- > WHEN YOU FACE THOSE SLEEPLESS NIGHTS WORRIED ABOUT WHEN YOUR REBELLIOUS CHILD WILL RETURN HOME.
- > WHEN THAT CLOSE FRIEND ABANDONS YOU, TURNS THEIR BACK ON YOU.
- > WHEN THE CRISIS IN YOUR LIFE SEEMS BIGGER AND DARKER THEN ANYTHING YOU HAVE EVER FACED BEFORE.
- > WHEN YOU CAN'T MAKE SENSE OF THINGS. YOU THOUGHT THE LORD WAS LEADING YOU, BUT YOU HAVE BEEN LED RIGHT INTO A STORM.
- > WHEN EVERYTHING SEEMS TO CRUMBLE AND FALL AROUND YOU. AND WHAT YOU HAVE BELIEVED AND WORKED SO HARD FOR HAS SHATTERED TO PIECES AT YOUR FEET.
- > WHEN YOU ARE LEFT ALL ALONE. IT SEEMS THAT NO ONE CARES, NO ONE SEES YOU.

IT'S EASY TO LOSE HOPE WHEN DARKNESS COMES.
WHEN EVERYTHING HAS BEEN SHAKEN.

WHEN PANIC GIVES WAY TO DESPERATION.
AND WE CRY OUT TO GOD, "TAKE THE PAIN AWAY".
"CHANGE THIS SITUATION. ANSWER LORD!"
BUT HE DOESN'T. HE DOESN'T ANSWER THE FIRST TIME, NOT THE SECOND,
AND NOT AGAIN.

WHAT DO WE DO WHEN OUR HOPE DIES?
JUST LIKE THE DISCIPLES, WE SCATTER.
WE RUN AWAY FROM JESUS.

SO OVERCOME BY OUR OWN
FEARS AND DOUBT WE DESERT HIM.

JUST LIKE THE DISCIPLES WE DISTANCE
OURSELVES FROM HIM.

Peter and the others had all confessed that no matter what they faced they would never forsake the Lord. But they did. And we do too.

- >We confess our doubt instead of our faith in His power.
- >We give way to disappointment instead of standing on His word.
- >We don't feel like He will come through and save us like He said He would.

AND JUST LIKE PETER WE SAY, "I DON'T KNOW HIM."

“I THOUGHT I KNEW HIM, BUT I REALLY DON’T.”

II. SOMETIMES GOD’S SILENCE IS PART OF HIS RESCUE

Romans 8:28 And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.

For three days, Jesus lay in the tomb. For three days the disciples met and mourned over him. Trying to make sense of all that they had witnessed. Hid out for fear of the authorities. For three days there was silence.

Questions filled their hearts and mind that they had no answers to. They sat in confusion and shock. They had a different picture of their Lord than what they had just witnessed. They saw him strong and powerful. They believed him to be their deliverer, their savior. But he had done nothing. He seemed powerless.

Why had they believed? Had they been fooled? They had put their trust in Him. Given him their lives. Followed him. Loved him. But there was more going on that way they could see.

CAN YOU BELIEVE THAT GOD SEES A BIGGER PICTURE THAN WHAT YOU CAN SEE?

CAN YOU BELIVE THAT GOD KNOWS THINGS THAT YOU DON’T KNOW?

**SOMETIMES OUR PICTURE OF GOD IS HIM STANDING THERE WATCHING AS WE STRUGGLE IN PAIN AND HE DOES NOTHING.
WE HAVE A PICTURE OF GOD IGNORING US.**

**WE SEE GOD WATCHING OUR PAIN, SEEING OUR ANGUISH, HEARING OUR CRIES, BUT MAKING THE CHOICE
TO DO NOTHING.**

These thoughts and questions tumble around in our brain during times of pain and distress:

Where are you God?

Do you see me?

Do you care?

BUT JUST WHEN WE THINK GOD IS POWERLESS THAT IS WHEN HE DOES HIS GREATEST WORK.

III. IT IS ALWAYS THE DARKEST JUST BEFORE THE DAWN

The third morning at dawn Mary Magdalene and the other Mary prepared spices for Jesus’ body. They knew the tomb was secured and locked, but they thought maybe the guards would move the stone to let them prepare his body for

burial. Jesus burial had been so rushed there had not been time. It was only right that he be buried properly. They had to try.

But as they arrived at the tomb, they saw the stone rolled away and when they looked inside an angel was sitting inside the tomb and said "Why are you looking for the living among the dead? He is not here. He is risen. Go and tell the others."

They ran to tell the disciples the good news and what they had witnessed and seen. And Peter and John ran to the tomb.

Was it true? They thought....Has the Lord risen as He said?

**WE NEED TO RUN TO THE EMPTY TOMB.
LOOK UPON THE EMPTY GRAVE CLOTHES AND REALIZE ONCE AGAIN THAT
WHAT HE SAYS ALWAYS COMES TO PASS.**

**WE NEED OUR FAITH RENEWED THAT NO WORD, NO PROMISE OF GOD WILL
EVER FAIL.**

**HE WILL NEVER LEAVE US - FORSAKE US.
HE WILL FOLLOW THROUGH WITH WHAT HE HAS SAID.**

**NO MATTER WHAT HAS HAPPENED OR WHAT WILL HAPPEN THE
RESURRECTION TRUMPS IT ALL!**

**THE WORLD IS ENVELOPED IN A DARKNESS SUCH AS ONE WE HAVE NEVER
SEEN BEFORE.**

**WAR IS THREATENING OUR NATION.
INFLATION IS RAPIDLY RISING.
HATRED - FEAR - VIOLENCE IS EVERYWHERE.
THERE SEEMS TO BE CRISIS AT EVERY TURN.
OUR ONLY HOPE IS IN JESUS.**

**BUT JUST AS IT IS ALWAYS THE DARKEST JUST
BEFORE THE DAWN.
JESUS WILL ANSWER! JESUS WILL MEET OUR NEED!
JESUS WILL KEEP HIS PROMISES!**

**JESUS IS WITH US! HE HAS NOT ABANDONED US!
AND NO MATTER WHAT DARKNESS WE FACE. HE IS THE LIGHT THAT DAWNS
UPON OUR HEARTS!**

**HE IS IS ALIVE! HE IS NOT DEAD. HE IS NOT POWERLESS. HE IS HERE TO
SAVE US, KEEP US, FREE US!**

**WHAT DO WE DO WHEN OUR HOPE DIES?
WE BELIEVE IN RESURRECTION.**

**THAT GOD CAN RESURRECT AND RESTORE ANY SITUATION.
THAT HE CAN BREATHE LIFE INTO WHAT SEEMS
HOPELESS AND DEAD.**

- > YOUR MARRIAGE THAT HAS DECAYED CAN BE MADE NEW AGAIN.**
- > YOUR BROKEN HEART CAN BE MENDED.**
- > YOUR CRIPPLED FAITH CAN BE HEALED.**
- > HE CAN LEAD THAT CHILD HOME.**
- > HE CAN BRING COMFORT AND FRIENDSHIP TO CURE YOUR LONELINESS.**
- > HE CAN FREE YOU OF THE CHAINS YOU WEAR.**

- > HE CAN BRING JOY TO A MOURNING HEART.**
- > HE CAN TOUCH AND HEAL YOUR BODY AND MAKE YOU WHOLE ONCE AGAIN.**

CLOSING:

Psalm 145:18 - 19 The Lord is close to all who call on him, yes, to all who call on him in truth. ¹⁹ He grants the desires of those who fear him; he hears their cries for help and rescues them.

Today as we celebrate His resurrection, We need to remember the empty tomb. We need to put our hope in His resurrection. He is not dead. He is alive. We need to put our faith in the new life we have in Christ.

Instead of pulling away from Him and watching from a distance, we need to come close to him once again.

Instead of drawing away in disappointment and doubt we need to come near to Him in submission and worship.