

## Easter Sunday- Where do we find hope?

Most of us last Easter would have never imagined schools would be closed for a year, that churches would be closed for 10 months, that sporting events would not have fans for an entire season. Today a year later people are looking for stability, hope, and a place to belong. That is exactly what church provides; stability, hope, and a place to belong. A recent survey of American adults found:

- 68 percent long for prayer and emotional support.
- 44 percent are looking for a Bible-centered message of hope.
- 35 percent want to connect within the faith community.

We are so glad you are here this morning. Let me encourage you with this passage of scripture.

**1 Peter 5:6-9**, look again at verse 9

- People around the world and throughout history have really suffered. **How did they make it?**

### 1. They had Humility. Verse 6

In verse six Peter says, humble yourselves. The first step to beginning and strengthening your relationship with Jesus is to humble ourselves, to admit I need God. This was a tough lesson for Peter to learn. Peter was the outspoken, bold, self-sufficient disciple. **How did Peter learn humility?** Denied Jesus three times. Peter learned humility through his failure. Often humility comes on the back side of humiliation. When we fail, when we suffer our weakness is exposed.

- Corona
- Cancer
- Unemployment
- Divorce

Often, we live with the illusion of being invincible only to discover we are not as strong as we thought. We need God.

**1 Peter 5:5**, "God opposes the proud but favors the humble."

**Proverbs 22:4**, "The reward for humility and fear of the Lord is riches and honor and life."

**Proverbs 11:2**, "When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with the humble is wisdom."

**Proverbs 16:18**, "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall."

**Quote:** C.S. Lewis defined humility this way, "True humility is not thinking less of yourself; it is thinking of yourself less."

Peter says, humble yourself. I love that because I would rather choose to humble myself than for God to humble me. It is a gentle warning. Make a decision to admit your need for God before you find yourself in a mess.

**What do we need God for?**

- Salvation/ Easter/ But Jesus did not die to just get you into heaven
- New Life/ Easter/ Reunited with God/ God is producing His life in us.

Let's humble ourselves. Let's admit, I need God. Can you say that with me? **I need God.**

**How do we get God's help?** Be with-Become Like- Do what Jesus did

### 2. They had Faith. Verse 7

Peter says, give all your worries all your cares to God because He cares for you. That is so hard to do isn't it? It is hard to trust God with my problems, my relationships, my career, my kids, or my future. When Peter writes this, these people are being hunted down and murdered for their faith. They had life and death problems and Peter says just give it to Jesus. How could they do that? They believed God held their future.

### **1 Peter 1:3-7, 1 Peter 5:10**

They were not even afraid of death. They did not allow fear to control them. They were going to live for Jesus and trust the Lord with their future.

#### **Do you believe God holds your future?**

- Jesus in the garden. **Phil 2:5-11**

**Proverbs 3:5-6**

**Matthew 6:33**

**Jeremiah 29:11-13**

**Luke 23:43- Today you will be with me...**

**John 14:1-3**

**Where does this kind of robust faith come from?** Resurrection

Can we get to the place where we can say, God I trust you. Can you say that with me? **God, I trust You.** I need you and I trust you.

### **3. They had Community. Verse 8**

Peter says watch out, stay alert, be on guard. You have an enemy, the Devil who is looking for an opportunity to pick you off. After the year we have had can we acknowledge there is evil in our world? The Devil is real? He wants to destroy you.

**John 10:10, The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.**

**How do we protect ourselves?** We are better together.

I love to deer hunt and one of the things deer do and most pack animals do is they all keep watch. If you ever see a group of deer standing around, you will notice they all keep popping their heads up and looking around. They are all watching which makes them all safer. If they are sitting down in a group, they will sit so that they are each looking in a different direction.

**Plus, how does a lion hunt?** He or she tries to isolate one animal. In fact, I saw a video recently of a couple lions trying to attack a water buffalo. Well, that buffalo was not alone and his friends came to his rescue and ran the lions off. Alone, he did not stand a chance. In a herd he was safe even from a couple of lions.

When Jesus was arrested and Peter is surrounded by friends, he is ready to fight. When Peter is alone, he is overcome by fear, and denies Jesus to a teenage girl.

I can remember growing up, if I was at a party or at the beach and I had my friends with me, together we all had a lot of courage, in fact probably too much courage for our own good.

**That is what a church family should do.** When you are surrounded by other believers it gives us courage and someone has our back. **You cannot do this alone.** We need each other. Can you admit that. Can we say out loud, **I cannot do this alone.** We need each other. Tell your neighbor, I need you. Say to your second choice, I can tell, you need some help.

### **4. They had Maturity. Verse 9**

Peter says be strong in your faith and stand against the Devil. Remember, all over the world Christians are suffering. In other words, this is what they do to stand. They humble themselves; they trust God, they help each other and they grow up in your faith. Again, one thing I hope we have all learned is this. When I find myself in a crisis baby faith is not enough. When I find myself in a crisis going to church occasionally is not enough. When life begins to fall apart, I need to be able to get a word from the Lord.

**1 Samuel 30:1-6**

You will face moments in your life when you find yourself asking the question; how am I going to survive this? In that moment, and there will be more of them in our future than there has been in our past. In those moments, what will you do?

**1 Samuel 30:6, "David, strengthened himself in the Lord."**

**Luke 5:16, "Jesus often withdrew to the wilderness for prayer."**

**Testimony-** I was in seminary, my marriage was falling apart, my baby faith was not enough. I met Dr. Bennett and He began to teach me how to be with Jesus. As I learned to live in God's presence my heart and character began to change. In my marriage I started doing what Jesus did and it healed and transformed my marriage.

**How strong is your faith?**

**Romans 8:28-29**

**Easter- Resurrection Life**