

Structure For: Resurrection Hope and Purpose: 1 Cor 15:19-20

Easter Sunday Festival Service

Sunday April 21st, 2019

Text: 1 Corinthians 15:19-20

¹⁹ If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. ²⁰ But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

Exegetical Statement

In this section of his letter Paul is reminding them of the Gospel he preached: that of first importance died for the sins of all men, was buried, and rose again-all in fulfillment of the Scriptures. He appeared to His disciples, to others including 500 at one time, and last of all to him. He is chiding them as some deny the resurrection of the dead. If that was true then what are those people still doing holding to the Christian faith. If there is no resurrection than all are lost. Those who see Christ as a benefit and reason for hope that is for this life only are to be pitied more than all other men. But the fact is He is raised from the dead as firstfruits, and we are the harvest that will follow Him. We were the harvest of Adam and Eve's sin, by his hand death came to all. But by Christ's hand comes the resurrection from the dead. In Adam all are separated from life by death. But in Christ all are brought back from death to life everlasting. All this will happen in the order as decreed by God. Christ first, then at the consummation of all thing- the Last Day-when Christ comes again, all that are in Him by faith will be raised. Then Christ will have abolished all earthly authority and rule and will entrust the kingdom to the Father. Until then he reigns even now until all who stand against Him are brought into total subjugation to Him, the last enemy being that which is abolished on the Last Day-death.

Focus Statement:

Jesus came to restore mankind to an eternal relationship that we had before the Fall. We were created to live with Him forever. To restore this relationship, it was necessary for Him to suffer and die in our place. By the work of His hands we are brought back from the separation from life and from God that is death. We are restored to a new relationship with Him now, brought back from the eternal separation of death to a life lived with Him by faith now and in His presence on the Last Day.

Function Statement:

Why it's important to know:

The unbelieving world does not recognize that Jesus once walked the earth. But He is the Jesus of their own imagining: Hippie Jesus, pacifist Jesus, philosopher Dali Lama Jesus. Even Christians see Him as the "break glass in case of emergency" Jesus, who we look to and pray to when we are in trouble but put Him back on the shelf when we are done. All these will send us to the fate that the work of our hands and Adam's hands made for us: eternal separation from our Creator.

What the hearer should do as a result:

Rightly understand that Christ did not come to restore us to a life lived on this earth. He came to guide us and lead us through the troubles and strife caused by sin to the eternal peace of life everlasting. Our hope is not in this world but in Him and the eternity yet to come.

Subject Sentence: Hope in Christ and His work of restoring eternal life

What Do You Hope For in This Life?

The things we hope for in THIS life:

If I was to ask you what are you hoping for what would you say? Perhaps that all your guests come to your Easter dinner, there is enough food, they all get along, there are some Facebook worthy picture opportunities, they help clean up, and leave in a timely manner. If you're Ron Jonas it might be that someday you can show everybody that 10-point buck you are always dreaming about. Perhaps you are hoping that your tax return will come in time as you already have big plans to spend it. Or maybe it's that the IRS won't notice your late return. Maybe its plans for the future, where you will live and what you will do.

No one hopes or plans for disaster and loss, but they come unasked for:

I'm pretty sure that none of you would say you hope that disaster comes your way. That a big dose of trouble lands on your doorstep this morning. That some natural or man- caused disaster would strike your house or your possessions. That you or someone you love is visited by sickness or death. Those are things none of us want to happen. And we will place our hope in whatever might be offered in this world to keep these things away or prevent them from happening.

What Happens to all our hopes in Adam

Disaster and loss and sadness has come upon your life and mine:

But the truth of the matter is all of us have some kind of disaster waiting in the wings of our life. I know its true because I've seen and heard about the way that these things have already touched you. And they have touched my life as well. Hope all you want that things will get better or stay better in this world because that's not what's in store. Things can and I pray will be good for a while. But forever and always? Well, yourself and your progenitor Adam and Eve are working against that.

By the work of Adam's hand and our own pour forth consequences of our sins:

In our Epistle Lesson Paul explains that because of the work of Adam and Eve's hands: Eve taking the forbidden fruit from the tree, and Adam taking that fruit from Eve's hand, knowing that the LORD had told him never to do this; that work has condemned us all. But we can't blame it all on them. We continue that work of disobedience to this day. It's in the very way we look at our lives now, and in the things we hope for. They are usually centered on us and on this life now here on this earth. It's in the way we choose to please ourselves even if it's at the expense of how God has commanded us to live: putting Him first, others second, and then ourselves. Because we are so corrupt to the core by sin, these instructions on how life is to be lived from the one who created us just seems and sounds wrong.

What do we have in this world to put our hope in?

So in the end what are we putting our hope in? What is the end of the story for each one of us because of our our disobedient nature inherited from Adam and how we act them out? It's not a better life, not even life at all. It's death. It's eternal death. But our Creator God who Himself came down to become man in Jesus Christ created us in the hope for so much more.

[Show Video: Falling Plates]

How our Hope is restored in Christ

Christ came to restore you to a relationship of love with Himself:

The Creator came down and became man in order to restore a relationship with His creation whom He loved. He came to restore a relationship with you. He took all your sins, all your disobedience and died for them on the cross. All those works of Adam that you and I do are held against us no more. We still do them. But Christ in His suffering and death paid the price and made annulment for all of them. Our God is holy, He is perfect. To have a relationship with Him you must also be perfect. And that's what Jesus has made you by faith.

Through our faith relationship we are given a hope that covers us now:

It's a relationship that starts when you are given faith and believe in the Gospel. It continues throughout your life here on earth. It does not take away those times of disaster, troubles, loss, or even death. We still have that disobedient heart within us. Our sinful actions and the actions of the unbelieving world around us all cause the painful losses and death that we all experience. But when we experience them in relationship with Christ these things hurt, but we are not left without hope. He is our hope.

The resurrection extends our hope beyond this world into the perfection of the next:

In His resurrection He defeated all of our enemies, all those things in life that seek to hurt and harm us. And because He rose again, we too one day will rise again with Him. In Christ we have eternal life restored to us once again. He desires that the relationship He is establishing with you now continue on for eternity. But what is only a dark reflection now will on the day He returns explode into the glorious full reality. A world were there is no more tears, no more sorrow, no more loss, no more tragic disappointments, no grief over what we have worked hard enjoy being taken from us or wasting away with sands of time. No more babies dying still born, no more abortions, no more lives being cut short by disease and death. Nor more war, no more killing, no more abuse, no more anger. No more hopelessness.

Christ came to restore you to perfect and starts that with restored relationship:

Christ came, He died, and rose again to open the door to an eternity that is beyond our imagining. Take the best day you ever had in this life and increase it exponentially to infinity and you will still come up short. It's better than any day you've ever lived in this life and, it will go on being so forever. It will be an eternity lived with each other and with the God who became man all to have a relationship of love with you. That's something to put your hope in.

Conclusion

There is nothing wrong with having hopes and dreams for what may come in this life. After all this life you have now is a gift from God. But realize that pain and sadness, sickness and sorrow, loss and suffering will come your way too. These are not gifts from God. They come from your sinful actions lived out in a broken and fallen world. Not a place to put your hope in. Instead let your hope rest in the Creator who once made all things perfect. Who came down and began the work of restoring all to perfection in His life, death and resurrection. Put your hope in Him, that the work He has begun in you by faith. It will be brought to completion on the Last Day when He returns. Put your hope in His resurrection as it is the open door to your own resurrection and restoration to perfection. To a life lived in a perfect world, a brand-new heaven and new earth that will never become tainted or spoiled again because you will never become tainted or spoiled again. Place your hope in the relationship He has created in you by faith, is keeping alive in you now, and will bring to complete fruition in the age to come. Put your hope in Jesus. Amen.

Alleluia! Christ is risen!