

Hope Rises 1 Peter 1:3-4

For the disciples of Jesus, it had been a great week. Jesus had proven His deity over the course of 3 ½ years, time and time again. He had won the hearts of many people. He had put the religious leaders in their place. He had ridden into the city just a few days earlier triumphantly declaring He was the Messiah. But then He was killed, crucified, never to be seen again. That was a cold dose of disappointment. They thought He was the Messiah. They had invested their lives in Him, left their homes, given up their businesses.

But on that Sunday evening, as they were meeting together in a home, still hiding out, all of them were there except for one named Thomas. Jesus came and appeared to them and sat with them and talked with them. The Bible gives us a rather large understatement as it says in **John 20:20**, **“They were filled with joy when they saw their Lord.”**

But Thomas was not with them that evening. He had a hard time believing the resurrection could be true.

John 20:25 - “I won’t believe it unless I see the nail wound in His hands, put my fingers into them, and place my hand into the wound in His side.”

But that would change soon.

John 20:26-29 - “After eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst and said, ‘Peace be with you.’ Then He said to Thomas, ‘Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing.’ Thomas answered and said to Him, ‘My Lord and my God!’ Jesus said to him, ‘Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed.’”

Things change in a moment sometimes - for disappointment and for hope. They certainly did for these disciples.

What changed the disciples so dramatically from who they were after Jesus’ death to the bold preachers of the book of Acts who put their lives on the line and paid with their lives to proclaim Jesus as Messiah? The only answer that begins to make sense is the resurrection.

1 Corinthians 15:30-32 - “why should we ourselves be continually risking our lives, facing death hour by hour? For I swear, dear friends, I face death daily. This is as certain as my pride in what the Lord Jesus Christ has done in you. And what value was there . . . if there will be no resurrection from the dead? If there is no resurrection, ‘Let us eat and get drunk, for tomorrow we die!’”

1 Peter 1:3-4 - “All honor to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for it is by His boundless mercy that God has given us the privilege of being born again. Now we live with a wonderful expectation because Jesus Christ rose again from the dead.”

The resurrection gives us . . . just as it gave to Peter . . .

I. New Life - “being born again”

Romans 6:4 - “For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives.”

2 Corinthians 5:17-18 - “those who become Christians become new persons. They are not the same anymore, for the old life is gone. A new life has begun!”

II. New Hope - “wonderful expectation”

Hebrews 6:17-19 - “God also bound Himself with an oath, so that those who received the promise could be perfectly sure that He would never change His mind. So God has given us both His promise and His oath. These two things are unchangeable because it is impossible for God to lie. Therefore, we who have fled to Him for refuge can take new courage, for we can hold on to His promise with confidence. This confidence is like a strong and trustworthy anchor for our souls.”

1 Corinthians 15:14-19 - If Jesus did not rise from the dead, then . . .

- Telling people about Jesus is useless.
- Our faith in Jesus is useless.
- The disciples are all false witnesses.
- You are still in your sins - an enemy of God.
- We are the most pitiful people in the world.

But Jesus did rise from the dead, and the shocking truth of Easter is that it provides you the opportunity for a new life and a new hope that will not disappoint.

What does Easter mean to you?