

## Easter Means Hope

### 1. Following Jesus' crucifixion, two of his followers lost all hope.

"That same day two of Jesus' followers were walking to the village of Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem. As they walked along they were talking about everything that had happened. As they talked and discussed these things, Jesus himself suddenly came and began walking with them. But God kept them from recognizing him. He asked them, 'What are you discussing so intently as you walk along?' They stopped short, sadness written across their faces. Then one of them, Cleopas, replied, 'You must be the only person in Jerusalem who hasn't heard about all the things that have happened there the last few days.' 'What things?' Jesus asked. 'The things that happened to Jesus, the man from Nazareth,' they said. 'He was a prophet who did powerful miracles, and he was a mighty teacher in the eyes of God and all the people. But our leading priests and other religious leaders handed him over to be condemned to death, and they crucified him. **We had hoped he was the Messiah who had come to rescue Israel.** Then some women from our group of his followers were at his tomb early this morning, and they came back with an amazing report. They said his body was missing, and they had seen angels who told them Jesus is alive! Some of our men ran out to see, and sure enough, his body was gone, just as the women had said.'"

Luke 24:13-24 (NLT)

**Note:** When we focus on our problems, it's easy to lose hope.

"Hope deferred makes the heart sick..." Proverbs 13:12 (NLT)

"I am losing all hope; I am paralyzed with fear." Psalm 143:4 (NLT)

**Life Application:** We need to put our hope only in God.

"Why am I discouraged? Why is my heart so sad? I will put my hope in God! I will praise him again— my Savior and my God!" Psalm 43:5 (NLT)

**Note:** Jesus kept His identity hidden to help his followers discover what they really believed.

"The purposes of a man's heart are deep waters, but a man of understanding draws them out."

Proverbs 20:5 (NIV)

### 2. Jesus found his dejected followers and gave them hope.

#### A. Jesus gave them hope from God's Word.

"Then Jesus said to them, 'You foolish people! You find it so hard to believe all that the prophets wrote in the Scriptures. Wasn't it clearly predicted that the Messiah would have to suffer all these things before entering his glory?' Then Jesus took them through the writings of Moses and all the prophets, explaining from all the Scriptures the things concerning himself... Suddenly, their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And at that moment he disappeared! They said to each other, '**Didn't our hearts burn within us as he talked with us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?**'"

Luke 24:25-34 (NLT)

**Life Application:** God's Word gives us Hope.

"You are my refuge and my shield; your word is my source of hope." Psalm 119:114 (NLT)

"I am counting on the LORD; yes, I am counting on him. I have put my hope in his word."

Psalm 130:5 (NLT)

#### B. Jesus explained that He had to suffer and die in order to give us a right relationship with God.

"But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's condemnation. For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son. So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God."

Romans 5:8-11 (NLT)

**Life Application:** Now nothing can separate us from the love of God.

"And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of

hell can separate us from God's love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 8:38-39 (NLT)

### 3. The hope of Easter is contagious

“And within the hour they were on their way back to Jerusalem. There they found the eleven disciples and the others who had gathered with them, who said, ‘The Lord has really risen! He appeared to Peter.’”

Luke 24:33-34 (NLT)

“This same Good News that came to you is going out all over the world. It is bearing fruit everywhere by changing lives, just as it changed your lives from the day you first heard and understood the truth about God's wonderful grace.” Colossians 1:6 (NLT)

**Life Application:** God is giving us an amazing opportunity to share the hope of the gospel.

“But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect...”

1 Peter 3:15 (NIV)

“I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.” Romans 15:13 (NLT)

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