

Risen Hope

Discussion Notes- April 5, 2026

1. What is something that surprised you recently, in a good way?

This Easter, we explored what it means to live in Risen Hope. The sermon walked us through three movements; the Silence of Hope, when the disciples' dreams were crushed in the darkness following the crucifixion; the Shout of Hope, when Jesus rose on the third day and changed everything; and the Strength of Hope, the living, growing hope we now carry because the grave is empty. The resurrection wasn't just a miracle for the first century. It's the foundation of everything we believe and the anchor for everything we face. Because Jesus rose, hope is not a wish, it's a certainty.

Read Luke 24:15-17, 21 (ESV)

"While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, "What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?" And they stood still, looking sad... But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened."

In Luke 24, two disciples walking to Emmaus let those two heartbroken words slip out — "we had hoped." Past tense. Their hope had collapsed under the weight of the crucifixion. They had believed Jesus was the one, and now it seemed like that story was over. It's a deeply human moment, the kind most of us have felt when something we trusted in didn't turn out the way we expected.

2. What does the phrase 'we had hoped' reveal about what happens to our faith when circumstances don't go the way we expected?

Read Romans 8:11 (ESV)

"If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you."

The resurrection wasn't just a historical event to be studied, it was meant to be lived in. Paul reminds us in Romans 8 that the same Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead is alive in us right now. That's not a distant, theological idea. It's an invitation to let resurrection power meet us in our actual, everyday life and in the places where fear has taken root or discouragement has settled in.

3. What's one area of your life right now where you need to let the reality of the risen Jesus replace fear or discouragement?

Read Romans 5:3-5 (ESV)

"...we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us."

The sermon painted a vivid picture of hope starting in silence, almost undetectable, and then erupting into a shout on the third day. Paul's words in Romans 5 suggest that hope isn't

something that falls on us randomly. It is actually forged and built through endurance and character, often in the hardest seasons.

4. Do you think hope is something we choose, something we receive, or both? Why?

Read 1 Peter 1:1-5 (ESV)

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”

Peter doesn't call this a passive or fragile hope. He calls it a living hope. That word is intentional. It's hope with a pulse. Hope that grows. Hope is later described in the book of Hebrews (6:19) as a function like an anchor; something that holds us steady when everything around us is shifting. As we close, the question isn't just about what we believe in our heads, but what we're actually anchoring our lives to.

5. This week, where do you need to exchange a dead or dying hope for a living one rooted in the resurrection?”

Prayer Points:

- Pray for hope in the waiting.
- Pray for resurrection power in every day life.
- Pray for anchored hope no matter what the week brings.

Deeper Dive: The Impossible Made Possible

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the cornerstone of the Christian faith and it is also one of the most historically scrutinized events in human history. For those who want to go deeper, this section invites you to sit with the weight of what actually happened on that third day, why it was humanly impossible, and why it changes everything.

1. The Reality of the Death

Before we can fully grasp the resurrection, we have to reckon with the crucifixion. Roman crucifixion was designed to be certain. Soldiers were trained executioners, and death was verified before a body was released. Jesus was flogged, pierced through hands and feet, and a spear was driven into his side. John records that blood and water poured out which is a medical indicator that his heart had already given out. There was no question. He was dead.

Read John 19:33–34 (ESV)

“But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out.”

2. The Sealed Tomb

A large stone was rolled over the entrance, and by order of Pilate, the tomb was sealed with a Roman guard posted outside. This wasn't a precaution taken lightly. It was meant to be unbreakable. Disturbing a Roman seal carried the penalty of death. Humanly speaking, the tomb was as secure as any structure of that era could be.

Read Matthew 27:65–66 (ESV)

“Pilate said to them, ‘You have a guard of soldiers. Go, make it as secure as you can.’ So they went and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard.”

3. The Empty Tomb

On the third day, the stone was gone. The grave clothes were folded and left behind. The guards, trained Roman soldiers, were so terrified that they fell as though dead. No body was ever produced, despite every motivation the religious leaders had to do so. If the body had existed, the resurrection story would have ended before it began.

Read John 20:6–8 (ESV)

“Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed.”

4. The Witnesses

The resurrection wasn't a private event. Paul writes that Jesus appeared to Peter, then to the twelve, then to more than five hundred people at one time, most of whom were still alive when Paul wrote those words, meaning they could be questioned. He also appeared to James, who had been a skeptic, and ultimately to Paul himself, who had been actively persecuting Christians. These were not people predisposed to believe.

Read 1 Corinthians 15:6–8 (ESV)

“Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.”

5. The Transformation

Perhaps the most compelling evidence is what happened to the people who saw him. Peter, who had denied Jesus three times, preached boldly in Jerusalem weeks later, steps from where Jesus was crucified. James, the skeptic brother of Jesus, became a pillar of the early church and died for his faith. The disciples, who had been hiding behind locked doors in fear, became unstoppable witnesses willing to die for what they had seen. People don't die for something they know to be a lie.

Read Acts 4:19–20 (ESV)

“But Peter and John answered them, ‘Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.’”

Read Romans 1:4 (ESV)

“...and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Closing Reflection

The resurrection of Jesus wasn't a story invented by grieving followers. It was a world-altering event confirmed by enemies, skeptics, and hundreds of eyewitnesses; an impossibility that God made possible. And because it happened, the hope Peter writes about in 1 Peter 1 is not wishful thinking. It is a living, breathing, unshakeable reality.

Read 1 Corinthians 15:20 (ESV)

“But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.”

Discussion Questions:

1. Which aspect of the resurrection (the death, the sealed tomb, the empty tomb, the witnesses, or the transformation of the disciples) do you find most compelling, and why?
2. The disciples went from hiding in fear to dying for what they had seen. What do you think it would take for an experience to produce that kind of transformation in a person?
3. If the resurrection is true (and the evidence suggests it is) what is the one thing in your life that needs to change in response to that reality?