



Sermon, Sunday April 16, 2023

“Living Hope”

SCRIPTURE: 1 Peter 1:3-9 ³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, ⁷ so that the genuineness of your faith—being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. ⁸ Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, ⁹ for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Introduction: Christians have living hope.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ!

Last week we celebrated together the victory of the Risen Lord over death. Also, to participate in the resurrection life that the Lord has given us, we have decided to resemble Jesus' character.

Today's text is the word that God regenerates us with the power through which Christ was resurrected from the dead, and through this we can fulfill our living hope. The living hope in today's text does not mean that we had it once and then disappear, but it means the hope that still has vitality in the past, present, and future.

So, the Apostle Peter said that the living hope is **“into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading”** (v. 4), and **“may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.”** (v. 7). Further, the Apostle Peter says that the living hope, which God has reserved for us in heaven, is the salvation of souls, and this is accomplished in Christ. There is a clear reason why the Apostle Peter speaks about living hope in today's text.

In fact, Apostle Peter wrote 1 Peter for the members of the Early Church who were discouraged and trembling in fear during extreme persecution. At that time, the Roman Empire forced Christians to worship the emperor, but Christians refused to worship the emperor, choosing instead extreme persecution. So, Apostle Peter wrote 1 Peter for the Christians of the Early Church who were discouraged and afraid during extreme persecution. Apostle Peter wrote a letter with confidence in the basis, content, and power of living hope to comfort and encourage discouraged Christians.

Christians have a living wish because they believe in the resurrection, are sure, and hope to participate in that life. Do you believe? Are you convinced that there is a living hope within us? If so, thank the Lord and rejoice that you have a living hope within you. Then, what is life lived in living hope?

Body: A life lived in living hope

1. Do not be discouraged by trials or tribulations.

A life lived in hope is a life that is not discouraged by trials and tribulations. **Verse 6 of today's text says, “In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials.”**

There are difficulties in the way we believe and follow Christ. The devil tempts or makes us sin to destroy us. Also, the devil makes us leave the life of holiness.

However, Christians who live in the living hope should not be discouraged; they should rejoice when trials and tribulations come. Of course, it is not easy to rejoice when experiencing trials and tribulations. However, for Christians, trials and tribulations are the means to achieve the maturity of faith.



That is why James said: **“Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”**(James 1:2-4). If we are in trouble, please remember the words of today's text and the words of James. Then, what is life lived in living hope?

2. We must be born again.

There is a new birth in a life that is lived in the living hope. Verse 3 of today's text says: **“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”**

For believers to be born again, they must imitate the life of the Lord and completely follow it through the help and power of the Holy Spirit. So today's text verse 8 says: **“Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy.”** Saints must follow the Lord we love and go the way He went. And on that road, we experience true happiness. Where do you think true happiness comes from?

What is clear is that we must realize that true happiness does not come from how rich or famous or powerful we are. Humans are imperfect. Therefore, the only way for imperfect human beings to achieve perfection is to walk the path Jesus walked with the help of the Holy Spirit. Human beings can enjoy true happiness only through walking with the Lord.

Last Monday I went to Davenport to see a pastor retiring from the Iowa Conference this June. And I heard about his 40-year ministry journey. Among his many stories I remember him saying, **“I wanted to become a happy pastor”**.

We often do our best in our lives of faith, thinking that we will be able to do something great for the Lord's kingdom and His work. However, in fact, there is nothing we can do for the Lord. The meaning of these words is not that living a godly and loyal life as a Christian is meaningless. For our excessive zeal often becomes either our righteousness or our seed of complaint. Rather, we learn about the meaning of joy and gratitude from the Lord through handling the Lord's work. Such experiences fill our inner being.

In that sense, the words of the pastor who was about to retire, **“I wanted to become a happy pastor”** sounded to me like he wanted to live to keep the purity of his faith rather than achieve something through his own efforts.

We think that a life that leaves great achievements in the world is important, and we think that a life that does not leave achievements is a less valuable life. But what is more precious than leaving behind many achievements is how happy we were in our walk with the Lord.

If we want to find the basis of our satisfaction in the things on the earth, we may be successful people by worldly standards, but we will not be able to walk with the Lord.

So, the Lord speaks to those who kept the purity of faith in today's text verse 7: “So that the genuineness of your faith—being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.”

The Lord promises that living hope will come true for those who overcome trials and tribulations and are born again and restore the purity of their faith. In other words, just as Christ was resurrected and glorified, we promise to share in the glory of heaven.

Then, what is the evidence of those who live with such a living hope?

The first is a life of joy and gratitude. With the grace of the Holy Spirit, I hope we all enjoy the blessing of being able to rejoice and give thanks even for small things. Second, the attitude towards suffering changes. It is not to complain and be discouraged about the hardships in our lives, but to wait for the Lord's will in anticipation of how He will work wonders in such circumstances. I hope that the evidence of this living hope will overflow in our lives.

Conclusion: May you overcome any temptations and tests with the word of the Lord and the hope of resurrection.



Now let's summarize today's message. Those who have living hope can be detached from their present life and can overcome any hardships (Romans 8:37-39).

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ! Be assured that Christ, who died and rose again, now sits at the right hand of God, and intercedes for us.

Romans 8:24 says, "**For in this hope we were saved.**" We are Christians who live in living hope because of the Lord's resurrection. Therefore, I hope that you do not fall under any temptations and tests but live by holding on to the Lord's word of promise and the hope of resurrection.

