

Victorious!

Victorious Over Despair The Third Sunday in Easter

Greetings in the name of our Savior Jesus: Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, It has been over 6 weeks since we last gathered for worship. Children have been out of school for over a month now. We have been under stay at home orders for over a month now. There is hope that there might be some degree of normality returning soon. There is hope!

The theme as you worship: It is hard to live without it. Hope, that is! Since the Garden of Eden God was concerned about his fallen creatures having hope. He gave Adam and Eve and their descendant a promise. That

promise was reiterated throughout the OT and meant to give all people hope. But, as it did so often for God's people in the OT, hope can turn to despair. Especially when we put our hope in the wrong things. The Christian journey is one of waiting on the Lord, but we wait with hope, our hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and his righteousness. God strengthen your hope during worship today.

Announcements: There will be a live, online Bible Study at 11:15 AM EST this Sunday morning. If you haven't already, check it out, you can join in and just listen in or join the conversation. Continue to check the website for updates and resources such as:

WELS Connection

Camp South

Helping those in need

Our church Leadership team is... working on a number of things at this time, among them:

a building project update

when we can gather again for worship

INVOCATION & INVITATION TO WORSHIP

M: Christ is risen!

C: **He is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

MORNING DIALOGUE

M: In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

M: God our father, each day is a gift of your grace.

C: **your mercies are new every morning.**

M: Guide our steps by the light of your Word.



C: Shield us from harm and keep us from evil.

M: Better than life is your love.

C: Put joy in our hearts and praise on our lips. Alleluia!

CONFESSION

M: Beloved in the Lord: let us draw near to him with a true heart and confess our sins to God our Father, asking him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

C: Holy and merciful Father, I confess that I am by nature sinful and that I have disobeyed you in my thoughts, words and actions. I have done what is evil and failed to do what is good. For this I deserve your punishment both now and in eternity. But I am truly sorry for my sins, and trusting in my Savior Jesus Christ, I pray: Lord have mercy on me, a sinner.

ABSOLUTION

M: God our heavenly Father has been merciful to us. He has sent his one and only son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sin. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

SONG

Lamb of God

♪ Your only Son, no sin to hide, But you have sent him from your side
To walk upon this guilty sod And to become the Lamb of God.

Refrain

**O Lamb of God, sweet Lamb of God, I love the holy Lamb of God!
Oh, wash me in his precious blood, My Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God.**

**2 Your gift of love they crucified. They laughed and scorned him as he died:
The humble King they named a fraud And sacrificed the Lamb of God. *Refrain***

**3 I was so lost; I should have died, But you have brought me to your side
To be led by your staff and rod And to be called a lamb of God. *Refrain***

Text: Twila Paris, b. 1958 © 1985 Straightway Music/Mountain Spring Music; admin. EMI CMG Publishing. International copyright secured. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

M: Let us pray.

O God, by the humiliation of your Son, you lifted up this fallen world from the despair of death. By his resurrection to life, grant your faithful people gladness of heart and the hope of eternal joys; through your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you, and the Holy Spirit, on God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

THE FIRST LESSON

Acts 24:10-21

Paul asserts that the hope he has is nothing different than what was spoken throughout the Old Testament

When the governor motioned for him to speak, Paul replied: "I know that for a number of years you have been a judge over this nation; so I gladly make my defense. ¹¹You can easily verify that no more than twelve days ago I went up to Jerusalem to worship. ¹²My accusers did not find me arguing with anyone at the temple, or stirring up a crowd in the synagogues or anywhere else in the city. ¹³And they cannot prove to you the charges they are now making against me. ¹⁴However, I admit that I worship the God of our ancestors as a follower of the Way, which they call a sect. I believe everything that is in accordance with the Law and that is written in the Prophets, ¹⁵and I have the same hope in God as these men themselves have, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked. ¹⁶So I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man.

¹⁷"After an absence of several years, I came to Jerusalem to bring my people gifts for the poor and to present offerings. ¹⁸I was ceremonially clean when they found me in the temple courts doing this. There was no crowd with me, nor was I involved in any disturbance. ¹⁹But there are some Jews from the province of Asia, who ought to be here before you and bring charges if they have anything against me. ²⁰Or these who are here should state what crime they found in me when I stood before the Sanhedrin— ²¹unless it was this one thing I shouted as I stood in their presence: 'It is concerning the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you today.'"

THE SECOND LESSON

1 Peter 1:17-21

Hope is restored when we remember that we are bought by the blood of Jesus and one day we will join him in heaven.

Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear. ¹⁸For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, ¹⁹but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. ²⁰He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. ²¹Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

SONG

In Christ Alone

♪ **In Christ alone my hope is found. He is my light, my strength, my song;
This cornerstone, this solid ground, Firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace, When fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
My Comforter, my all in all, Here in the love of Christ I stand.**

**2 In Christ alone—who took on flesh, Fullness of God in helpless babe.
This gift of love and righteousness, Scorned by the ones he came to save.
Till on that cross, as Jesus died, The wrath of God was satisfied;
For ev'ry sin on him was laid. Here in the death of Christ I live.**

**3 There in the ground his body lay, Light of the world by darkness slain;
Then bursting forth in glorious day Up from the grave he rose again!
And as he stands in victory, Sin's curse has lost its grip on me.
For I am his and he is mine—Bought with the precious blood of Christ.**

**4 No guilt in life, no fear in death, This is the pow'r of Christ in me;
From life's first cry to final breath, Jesus commands my destiny.
No pow'r of hell, no scheme of man Can ever pluck me from his hand;
Till he returns or calls me home, Here in the pow'r of Christ I'll stand.**

THE GOSPEL

Luke 24:13-35

The Gospel according to Luke, chapter 24.

Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁴ They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. ¹⁵ As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; ¹⁶ but they were kept from recognizing him. ¹⁷ He asked them, "What are you discussing together as you walk along?" They stood still, their faces downcast. ¹⁸ One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, "Are you only a visitor to Jerusalem and do not know the things that have happened there in these days?" ¹⁹ "What things?" he asked. "About Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. ²⁰ The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; ²¹ but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. ²² In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning ²³ but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. ²⁴ Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see." ²⁵ He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" ²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. ²⁸ As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus acted as if he were going farther. ²⁹ But they urged him strongly, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them. ³⁰ When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. ³¹ Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. ³² They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?" ³³ They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together ³⁴ and saying, "It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon." ³⁵ Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.

M: This is the gospel of the Lord.

THE MESSAGE

Luke 24:13-35

Theme: *Victorious Over Despair*

Hope is an indispensable quality in life. Couldn't we describe the entirety of the Christian's life to be one of hope?

Years ago the S-4 submarine was rammed by another ship and quickly sank. The entire crew was trapped in its prison house of death. Ships rushed to the scene of disaster off the coast of Massachusetts. We don't know what took place down in the sunken submarine, but we can be sure that the men clung bravely to life as the oxygen slowly gave out.

A diver placed his helmeted ear to the side of the vessel and listened. He heard a tapping noise. Someone, he learned, was tapping out a question in Morse Code. The question came slowly: "Is ... there ... any ... hope?"

This seems to be the cry of humanity: "Is there any hope?" Hope, indeed, is the basis of all human existence in Christ!¹ Especially for those in Christ, we have hope!

¹ Tan, P. L. (1996). *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times* (p. 564). Garland, TX: Bible Communications, Inc.

Today we meet two disciples whose hope was fading quickly. We call them the Emmaus disciples. They were walking home to the village of Emmaus on that first Easter Sunday evening. Jesus starts walking alongside them. They didn't recognize him and I think it is important to note verse 16, "They were kept from recognizing Jesus." They were talking about the events of Jesus' death and burial. They had hung out in Jerusalem long enough on Easter Sunday to hear the reports of the women and the angels and the empty tomb.

Yet, it says in verse 17, "their faces were downcast." Why? We don't have to guess. They tell Jesus. Picking up the reading in verse 21, "We had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel." Redeem means "to set free, to liberate." Their hope was that they would be redeemed, released, set free from Roman rule over them. This was a way of thinking that was woven into Jewish thinking back then. Remember the disciples, forty days after Easter, "Jesus, are you going to restore the kingdom of Israel?" (Acts 1:8) They had their hope in political freedom. There were those who had their sights set following Jesus because might mean economic freedom, free food, no need to work any more. There were those, even the disciples, who looked to improve their social status. Two disciples wanted to go from sitting in a fishing boat to sitting at Jesus' right and left on Judgement Day.

Whether their hopes in Jesus were for the right reasons or the wrong reasons, the ultimate reason their hope was fading is they were pretty sure Jesus was dead. For them, there was no hope, only despair because why? Because they had only believed the parts of Scripture they wanted to believe, the parts that met their preconceived notions about the Messiah.

"How foolish and slow to believe all the prophets have spoken" Jesus says. "Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself." Their eyes were opened to every word of Scripture. Their eyes were opened to see that it all centered around Jesus. The suffering and dying of Jesus, it was all intended by God from the very beginning. The rising of Jesus from the dead was all intended by God from the very beginning.

Because of preconceived notions, because they hadn't always paid attention to all of the Scriptures, their hope was in the wrong place.

Mr. Tabor is famous in Colorado history. He was a successful mining man, having made millions from his "Matchless mine" near Cripple Creek, Colo. He divorced his wife that he might marry a divorcee, Baby Doe. This illicit marriage became quite a social event of the early West. The President of the United States was invited to the wedding—and he came.

But soon misfortune overtook them, and Mr. Tabor lost his money. He died a broken-hearted and a poor man. Just before his death he gave "Baby Doe" this final admonition: "Have faith in the Matchless mine; never give it up; it will give you back all that I have lost." Baby Doe, the now forlorn and aging widow, took him at his word. She lived near, and guarded the Matchless mine for the next 36 years of her desolate life, and stayed near the mine, in the face of repeated court ousters and crushing adversity.

In 1935 she died in a dilapidated shack near the mine, her hopes never realized. Her life was a dismal failure and she came to a sad end because she put hope and faith in the wrong object.²

By God's grace we know Jesus didn't stay dead. We know he is alive. How many times don't we trudge through life murmuring like the Emmaus disciples, "We had hoped..." We had hoped... the test results would be different. We had hoped... the relationship would be repaired. We had hoped the stock market would rise and continue rising." So easily we become disappointed. As these days at home orders drag on, who hasn't found themselves every now and again slipping into disappointment or despair.

² Tan, P. L. (1996). [Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times](#) (p. 564). Garland, TX: Bible Communications, Inc.

Too often our hope is that God will redeem us, liberate us from financial struggles or social struggles or political circumstances. When our hope is set on things that God hasn't promised, we are always going to be slaves to disappointment, despair. Like the Emmaus disciples our faces will be downcast. We can be slow of heart.

What is the prescription for being "slow of heart"? For disappointment and despair? What will help us recover?

Look at what Jesus does for these two disciples on the Road to Emmaus. Even as they have had enough, as they walk home dejected, unsatisfied, confused, hopes dashed – Jesus shows up, and with such patience. He doesn't open their physical eyes to recognize him, he fixes their attention on the Word of God. He hides himself and comes to them in the Words of the Old Testament. He shows them from only Moses and the prophets, there is the Messiah. What a Bible Study it must have been as Jesus connected the dots for them. They who thought they knew the Scriptures, had heard, maybe even memorized the words of Moses, they have their eyes opened. Their eyes see Jesus in the Word. It wouldn't be until later that Jesus would let them recognize him with their physical eyes. But for now, their hearts burned with joy. Jesus confirms to them that the Messiah had to suffer, die and then rise from the dead. In doing so their hopes are restored. If all this had to happen and it is true, it has happened, then, then, Israel is redeemed. God's people are delivered free from sin and its consequence of death.

Certainly, a Bible Study they would never forget. Jesus is the master teacher. My dear friends you don't have anything less in the Words of God before us today. The Holy Spirit is powerfully at work in us keeping the flame of faith burning brightly with the same tool, the Words of God.

Who of us hasn't had times of hopelessness in life, a confusing spot in life. We go to church, we open up our Bible, a friend speaks the words and promises of God to us – God speaks to us, "I will be with you in the good times and bad, it will work for good," and we say to ourselves, "I've heard these things before. I know. I know." Then comes the darkness and things can't seem to get any worse, the hardship we can't imagine will be any worse and we get to be like the Emmaus disciples, kicking rocks on the road thinking, "Was my faith in vain? Maybe God's promises don't apply to me."

What is the cure, it is so simple, but it takes a lifetime to learn it: it is staying close to the Words of God. We should never imagine we know it all already or we've heard it all before. Our circumstances will constantly change and so you will constantly be finding new and wonderful applications to your life.

No matter how things turn out, whether we come out of this virus with health or weather there are darker days ahead, we should say, through cloud and sunshine the Christian can continually say: By God's grace I have faith, I believe in Scripture. I am baptized, a child of God, I have forgiveness and set free from sin. I have the God's promise of grace and mercy every morning. That is enough for me. I will wait on the Lord to deliver me from this dark world. One day he will. Whether it be the day he takes me to heaven or on Judgement Day, my eyes will see him and we will rejoice and praise him.

Our prayer needs to be similar to that of the Emmaus disciples in verse 29. Stay with us Lord. They didn't recognize Jesus yet, but Jesus had opened their eyes of faith to see wonderful things in Scripture. Jesus brought understanding about life's biggest questions. He answered the questions about sin, about forgiveness of sins, what God's purpose is for us in life.

The Christian's faith leads to hope and hope is always and only based in Scripture. Without hope in Scripture and the facts of what Jesus did in dying and rising, our hope is nothing more than reasonable presumption. Think about that for a moment. The world uses the word "hope" and what they mean is they've made a reasonable assumption. Scripture is not a reasonable assumption. It is facts that our sin is real and has consequences. The ultimate consequence was laid on Jesus. After he paid for sin he rose from death.

The whole of the Christian's life is one of waiting on the Lord. The Psalmist says, "Wait for the Lord, be strong, take heart. Wait for the Lord" (Psalm 27:14). While we do wait on the Lord, and we put our hope in the word, which is about Christ and Christ alone. When we do that we will find that we are not enslaved to schedules or finances or social

struggles or politics. We don't even need to be chained to worry over wealth and health and deadlines or even our own passing from this life. Instead we run to Word of God, in it our hope is found, it is ever found in Christ alone, may it be ever and always. Amen.

APOSTLES CREED³

I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

OFFERING

"On the first day of the week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money" –II Corinthians 16:2. Out of thanks to God, we set aside a regular offering to the Lord.

Peace Lutheran offers a secure Give by Text option. To donate via text, send the dollar amount you wish to give, including a dollar sign, to 888-314-2975. Example: \$40. You will receive a secure registration link.

THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

M: Lord Jesus Christ, as disease spreads around us in the world, we are reminded that we are strangers and pilgrims in this world; our real home is with you in heaven. Help us to keep our eyes on that heavenly goal and not to become distracted by the temporary things of this life which soon pass away. Everything else may change and decay, but you Lord, remain the same. Therefore we pray as we sing:

C: ♪ **Abide with me, fast falls the eventide,
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide.
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
help of the helpless, oh, abide with me. (v. 1)**

M: Lord, the struggle of this life is constant. The devil, the world and our flesh are no friends to your people. These enemies never stop trying to rob us of our faith and Christian joy. Because the danger is so real and the fight of faith so critical, be at our side every moment today and in the future. We do not want you to be an occasional visitor in our homes, but a permanent and honored guest. Come with your healing touch and remove the hardships caused by our sins. Come, Lord Jesus! Come to stay with us!

C: ♪ **Come not in terrors, as the King of kings,
But kind and good, with healing in thy wings,
Tears for all woes, a heart for ev'ry plea;
Come friend of sinners, thus abide with me. (v. 3)**

M: Lord Jesus, you know us better than we know ourselves. You know the rebellious patterns of our lives. Though you have smiled upon us with your grace, we have not always shown appreciation for your mercy. We have often gone

³ Public confession of what we believe is faith's response to God's saving Word. Today we confess the Apostles' Creed.

our own way, followed our own desires and gone places where we know you would not want to follow. Yet you have not left us. You have reclaimed us from the way of death, and restored us to your kingdom of life. Now, dear Lord, in all temptations that lie in the future, abide with us in your grace and help us to overcome. Be our guide and stay today and always, that we may serve you constantly and faithfully.

C: ♪ **Thou on my head in early youth did smile,
And though rebellious and perverse meanwhile,
Though hast not left me oft as I left thee,
On to the close, O Lord, abide with me.** (v. 4)

M: Lord Jesus, one enemy remains to rob us of life and salvation. Yet even this enemy you have defeated for us. You have destroyed the terror of death and robbed it of its victory. Abide with us, now, to the very end of life. Let your cross shine through the gloom of the last hour, so that we may see you on the other side – there lead us home. When we open our eyes in heaven, we will be free from the trouble and danger of this earthly life. Therefore, in life and death, we pray:

C: ♪ **I fear no foe with thee at hand to bless;
Ill have no weight and tears no bitterness.
Where is death’s sting, where grave thy victory?
I triumph still if thou abide with me.** (v. 6)

M: And now we pray with confidence, as you taught us to pray:

THE LORD’S PRAYER

C: **Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.**

BLESSING

M: The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look on you with favor and ✝ give you peace.

C: **Amen.**

— — —
FRUITS OF FAITH

Cumulative gifts given in April 2020:	\$13,910
Budgetary funds needed for April 2020:	\$14,056
Cumulative gifts given in March 2020:	\$14,019
Budgetary funds needed for March 2020:	\$14,056

Total cong. commitment for “Building Peace for the Future”:	\$159,942
Total gifts and pledges received to date:	\$162,054