

Sermon Series: Hope Secured in These Crisis Times

April 19, 2020

Sermon Title: Hope (another name for Jesus) Has Made Reservations for Me in My Eternal Home

Introduction: The girls driving their 4-wheeler into the neighbors ditch. There was a look of worry on their faces behind their nervous laughter. If they could see into the future of how we used the tractor to lift it out of the muck and see the calm face of their father who laughed at their foolishness, all worry and fear would have vanished. It's the same for everyone who has faced major surgery. "Doctor, can you tell me exactly if I will make it through this open heart surgery successfully and I will have a full recovery?" Every doctor would like that crystal ball wouldn't he?

Main point: Our assurance of an extremely rewarding, happy, blessed, thrilling, future in heaven with Jesus and the Father is enough to remove all our fears of death and disease, and hell for sure.

Scripture:

1 Peter 1:3–5 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. (ESV)

1. Happy Christian's hearts overflow spontaneously with praise. **Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!**
 - Tell God how blessed he is. Tell Him he has the moral purity you desire, the patience, the love. Tell Him how much you appreciate His wisdom and timing and sovereignty in your life. Tell Him how much you appreciate His grace and His election of you.
 - It is very hard to allow fear to bubble to the surface of any heart when the bubbles of praise are coming fast to the surface.
2. Grateful Christian's hearts overflow with incomprehensible thoughts that God showed us mercy. **According to his great mercy,**
 - We had been once imprisoned by our sin. **Romans 11:32 For God has consigned all (both Jews and Gentiles) to disobedience, that he may have mercy on all. (ESV)** The word consigned means shut in. God in His wisdom allowed the concrete walls of our sins to keep closing in on us as individuals until we discovered there was no way out except to throw ourselves at the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - At some point in your life, whether young or old, you realized that you could never pay for your transgressions. How do you pay somebody back for the hurt that you caused them? Can heartache be measured in dollars? It is when you started to feel guilty for

that sin and the hundreds of others that you realized there is no escape. God was responsible for making you feel that way so that he could show you his mercy.

- What does all of this have to do with hope? Everything! Let's illustrate. If you were guilty of a crime sufficient to put you on death row and your execution date was just days away, and unlike the President who could pardon you with a stroke of his pen, He decides instead to sign an executive order sending himself to the electric chair on your behalf. This is incomprehensible is it not? So the day arrives and you know at 3 p.m. he will die and you go free, why on earth would you worry about not getting your lunch that day? Simplistic? Perhaps. But comparable? Absolutely. Why on earth would one worry or be afraid of a beheading, or any other persecution the enemy threatens against us? You want to complain on the day your freedom was purchased that your lunch was cold!!!

3. Amazed Christian's hearts can hardly believe that God overrode our stubborn resistance to be saved. *he has caused us to be born again*

- Consider every non-believing heart to be like a fortress or like a walled castle. The walls were high and thick with signs all around saying "Keep out God!" "You are not welcome here". If God were human he would have obliged, but he didn't. Instead he started building a bridge to cross the moat and an embankment to scale the walls of our stubborn resistance. Miraculously, as Jesus says in John 3, the wind of the Spirit blew through the openings in that wall and began to reveal the beauty of God's mercy and love.
- The word for "caused us to be born again" is a Greek word that implies that God at a certain point in time birthed us. Not physically, but spiritually. He's the one who worked so hard to overcome our stubborn resistance and bring us into the family of God and then adopting us as His own.
- James says it this way: *(James 1:18 ESV) Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.*
- Now is when mature Christians should start asking "Why me?"

4. Buoyed Christian's hearts are lifted up by a resurrected Jesus. *to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,*

- Christ is our living hope. The alternative is a dead hope. Let's consider this. Dead Buddha? Dead stock market (actually called a Bull market). Dead real estate market? Dead relationships such as estranged children, broken and dead marriages through divorce. Dead America, could soon be. Dead earthly future? Possibly.
- It is so easy for our hearts to get weighed down. We had expectations that were never fulfilled, desires that never came to fruition. Here's how David felt so often:
 - Psalm 6:6–10 I am weary with my moaning; every night I flood my bed with tears; I drench my couch with my weeping. My eye wastes away because of grief; it grows weak because of all my foes. Depart from me, all you workers of evil, for the LORD has heard the sound of my weeping. The LORD has heard my plea; the LORD accepts my prayer. All my enemies shall be ashamed and greatly troubled; they shall turn back and be put to shame in a moment. (ESV)

- How did David know the Lord had heard his prayer? Because his spirit changed. He asked for help and before he got it, he believed that God had his best in mind. I like David Prager and he was asked about prayer. His response: He is less concerned about what God can do for him than what God wants of him to be for God. That simple adjustment in our prayer life will change our attitude. And,
 - With God's help our spirits are lifted. He is alive. He knows what his children need. We see how his wisdom is revealed in our lives but not getting what we wanted but getting what we needed and we are so much better for it.
5. Confident Christian's hearts are ensured of their future reward. to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading,
- It is **imperishable** – death cannot destroy it
 - It is **undefiled** – sin cannot taint it
 - It is **unfading** – time cannot erode it.
6. Secure Christian's hearts have certainty that nothing can take their salvation away. who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (ESV)
- Romans 8:28–30 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified. (ESV)

Application

What does it mean to conquer?

Ephesus: Revelation 2:7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.' (ESV)

Smyrna

Revelation 2:11

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who conquers will not be hurt by the second death.' (ESV)

Pergamum

Revelation 2:17

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it.' (ESV)

Thyatira

Revelation 2:26

The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations, (ESV)

Sardis

Revelation 3:5

The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels. (ESV)

Philadelphia

Revelation 3:12

The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name. (ESV)

Laodicea

Revelation 3:21

The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne. (ESV)

Conquer your fears by faith