

Hope Restored

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Preacher: Matt Coburn

[0 : 00] I woke up this morning and out my window.

My azaleas and forsythia are in full bloom. And I felt hope well up in my heart. Spring always does this to me.

It restores my soul as I think about the promise of warm summer days. And the revealing and greening of the world. Hope is a wonderful thing, isn't it?

Have you ever considered how important it is to our life on a daily basis? I think hope is what gets us out of bed in the morning. It's a new day.

Hope is what allows us to ask someone else out on a date. Maybe this is the one. Hope is what drives us to plant gulps in the fall and seedlings in the spring.

[1 : 13] Maybe this year the squirrels won't eat all my strawberries. They probably won't. But maybe not. That's why we keep hoping. We keep hoping. But you know, hope is helpful in the day to day.

But it's also the thing that by many accounts gets us through the hardest things of life as well, isn't it? Martin Luther King, in the face of entrenched racism in America, the apparent setbacks of the civil rights movement, wrote this.

Even in the inevitable moment when all seem hopeless, men know that without hope, they cannot really live. In an agonizing desperation, they cry for the bread of hope.

Or listen to the words of Nurse Grace Chu-Hui-Nen Chi, who writes in her paper, *The Role of Hope in Patients with Cancer*.

Overall, hope is probably the single most important element in the lives of patients and family members struggling with the diagnosis of cancer.

[2 : 22] Therefore, enabling and maintaining a sense of hope in patients with cancer are essential for assisting them in battling illness. And how important hope is when facing the most terrible things of this world as well.

Listen to the words of Meyer Hirsch, a survivor of the death camp in Auschwitz. If there is only a spark left in you, then you have to cling to it.

A person can survive for a few days without eating, but he can't survive without hope for more than that. I think if we're honest, we recognize that hope is one of the most important things.

And I think that if I could sit with you for a cup of coffee, you would say, yes, I want hope. Again, hope is hard to hold on to, isn't it? Just as I woke up this morning and seen there was the promise of sunshine to bless our flowers and make them pretty, it rains.

My hope was doubted a little bit. Of course, there are much more serious things that doubts our hope as well. We get overwhelmed with the evil and suffering in this world, even in our own city.

[3 : 43] We despair of ourselves, the ways that we are unable to be better than we actually are. And in our fight for hope, we see the danger of empty optimism.

We don't want to be fools. So easily we fall into cynicism of building walls in our hearts against the vulnerability of hope.

So in this reality, our need for hope, and also the challenge that it is to hold on to, we face this question. How can we find hope?

A hope that we can't hold on to? Well, friends, the good news is, it's Easter. And this is exactly what the message of Easter speaks to us about this morning.

We're going to look in the book of Luke, chapter 24, starting in verse 13. That's on page 831 in your pew Bible. If you want to turn there with me, we're going to...

[4 : 48] This is a continuation of the passage that Megan read earlier. That Jesus Christ, having been crucified on a cross by the Romans on Friday, the narrative that turns to Sunday morning.

Some of his dear friends went to the tomb. They found that his body was not there. We're not going to focus on that account this morning.

We're actually going to pick up some other followers of Jesus, who, in despair after three days, were walking away from Jerusalem. And we want to look at them, and on their road, their journey to Emmaus, and on their journey to hope.

So let's read this passage together. Luke chapter 14, starting in... I'm sorry, chapter 24, starting in verse 13. Let's read this together. That very day, two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem.

And they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. And while they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. Their eyes were kept from recognizing him.

[6 : 05] And he said to them, What is this conversation you are holding with each other as you walk? And they stood still, looking sad. Then one of them made clear this, and he answered him, Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened in these days?

And he said to them, What things? And they said to him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, A man who was a prophet, mighty in deed and word, Before God and all the people, And how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, And crucified him.

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 have happened.

Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, And when they did not find his body, They came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, Who said that he was alive.

Some of those who were with us went to the tomb, And found it just as women had said. But him they did not see. And he said to them, O foolish ones, Slow apart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.

[7 : 27] Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things, And enter into his glory? And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, He interpreted to them in all the scriptures, The things concerning himself.

So they drew near to the village to which they were going, He acted as if he were going further. But they urged him strongly, Saying, Stay with us, For it is towards evening, And the days now are spent.

So he went in to stay with them. When he was at table with them, He took bread, And blessed, And broke it, And gave it to them. And their eyes were opened, And they recognized him, And he vanished from their sight.

And they said to each other, Did not our hearts burn within us, While he talked to us on the road, While he opened to us the scriptures? And they rose that same hour, And returned to Jerusalem, And they found the eleven, And those who were with them gathered together, Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, And has appeared to Simon.

And then they told what had happened on the road, And how he was known to them, And the breaking of the bread. We pray for you. Lord, as we come to this word this morning, We ask that by your spirit, You would help us, Lord.

[8 : 54] Help us to hear, And receive, Lord, the word of hope that you have for us in this passage. Help us to, Lord, fight against the despair, That creeps in your hearts.

Lord, we pray this morning, That your word would be clear to us. Lord, that you would help me to proclaim it as I am. And that we would all have hearts ready to receive, What you have for us today, And Lord.

We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. How can we find a hope, That we can hold on to? In this passage, We see two things. First of all, We see why we lose hope. The dynamics of our hearts, And the things that make it so hard for hope to hold on to.

Secondly, We see where hope can be gone. A hope that we can hold on to. A hope that we cannot lose. So let's look first, At why we lose hope.

[10 : 03] And in order to do this, Let's just look at the story, Of these disciples. The first thing you see about them, Is that they are leaving Jerusalem. They are leaving the place where Jesus died.

They are not waiting around. They have no anticipation, That anything is going to happen. They are walking off the pitch, In defeat. They believe that, There is nothing more to stay in Jerusalem for. And so, They are walking away. And it's clear, As Jesus appears, And comes alongside of them, Even though they don't know who he is, They don't recognize him for who he is, Yet, He comes alongside and gauges them.

And when he asks them, What they are talking about, They are sad, Downcast. And he asks them why. He says, Because this man, Jesus, We thought he was the one sent from God.

We have been with him, We have seen him do amazing things. You go back and read the Gospel of Luke, They've seen him, Raise the dead, Heal the blind, Feed the multitudes.

[11 : 18] They've seen him, Proclaim righteousness, And love, The outcast, And the lonely, The sinners. They thought he was the one, That God had sent, To finally redeem them.

To finally restore, The nation of Israel, So that they might be a place, Where God is truly worshipped, And where the blessing of God, Overflows into the world. We had hoped, Past tense, We had hoped, He was going to be, The one, Who would redeem the world.

They walking away, Because, It's not what they saw. He did not come, And conquer, And redeem. He was destroyed, Crucified, Defeated.

They lost hope, Because they thought, This cannot be, God's plan. This cannot be, What God is doing. It's not supposed, To end this way, In defeat, In shame, In suffering, In death.

The redeemer, Was supposed to bring, Glory, And renewal, In life. They lost hope, Because they felt, Like they did not, They did not understand, What God was doing.

[12 : 49] They could not, Understand God's plan. Not only that though, As the passage goes on, They also heard, These accounts, The women, And then Peter, Went to the tomb, And came back, And said, He's not there.

And the reports, That they had heard, From this vision, Is that he was alive. But if you look, At the end of verse 24, As they're wrestling, With this, As they're recounting, It to Jesus, What's their conclusion?

Him, They did not see. You see, They hadn't just lost, A political ideal, They hadn't just lost, A movement, A social movement, They hadn't just lost, A vision of a new life, They had lost a person. They put their hope, In this Jesus. This one that they'd, Traveled with and eaten with. They put their hope, In this person. And now he was gone.

They didn't know, Where he was. Him, They did not see. Having known him, And loved him, They were crushed.

[14 : 07] He was not there. Jesus, Where are you? How could you, Abandon us? How could you die, Like this?

Not only did they, Not understand, God's plan, It felt like, They had lost, God himself. I think, That we often struggle, With hope, In similar ways.

Of course, It's easy to be hopeful, When things are going well. When things are turning out right, When the things, We set our hands to, Seem to be reasonably successful, And meaningful, And, These things are wonderful, We should rejoice, In those seasons, Just like we rejoice, When the flowers bloom in the spring, Rejoice when we see, These good times, And be thankful for them.

But the true test, Of our hope, Is not seeing them. The true test of our hope, Is seen in adversity, And trial. I have sat with some of you, In the past week, Grieving the loss, Of loved ones.

I have sat with some of you, As you face, A serious, Potentially chronic, Or terminal illness. I have sat with some of you, As you try to pick up, The praises, Of a marriage, Shattered, By sin, And hurt.

[15 : 41] These are the things, That grind the hope, Away. And sometimes, It's not just, The massive crises, That erode our hope, Sometimes it's the everyday, The everyday, The mundaneness of life, That dashes, Our hopes and dreams, Of something bigger and better.

The daily grind, And little disappointments. And you know, In the face of these things, Part of the reason, It's so confusing, Is because, At least as we look, At the God of the Bible, He seems to be, A sovereign God, Who is good.

That is, He has all power, And His intentions, Are meant to be good, For us. When we experience, A life that feels, Like, It's not good.

When it feels like, His plan is incomprehensible. When it feels like, He is far away. We lose hope. When it feels like, We lose hope, When we can't understand, What God is doing.

And we lose hope, When we don't know, If God is with us. In these times, We feel, Like maybe, We'll have, A final say, In this world.

[17 : 05] That we should just, Eat, Drink, And be married, And tomorrow, We'll die. And lose hope. So, We like the disciples, Often find ourselves, Asking the question, In the midst of this, All the reasons, Why it's hard, To keep hope.

Where do you find, The hope? Where do you find, The hope that we desperately need? The good news is that, Friends, It's Easter Sunday morning, And when God steps in, He is able to show us, That hope that we can't, Of course, God has already stepped in, In this passage, He's come alongside, These disciples, And, I don't know if you've thought about this, But it's a very ironic conversation, From 13 to 24, Because he's coming alongside, These disciples, Who are wrestling with, What happened in Jesus, Jesus, Where did he go?

Why did these things happen? And then, You know, The word they talked about, He said they were talking with each other, It's actually a word of debate, Or a sort of, Intense discussion, So they're going back and forth, Trying to figure this out, And then he comes along, And looks clueless, Hey, What's going on?

What are you talking about? And they're like, Don't you know about Jesus? And of course, He's sitting there and saying, Yeah, I know a little bit about him, Actually, I am him, And I do know these things, And I'm like, We don't know what happened to him, But this is what we know, And he's like, Yeah, I know what happened to him, But I don't know, Graciously, He engages with them, In this conversation, And then in verse 25, He begins his response, Look with me at this, Let's read this together, And he said to them, O foolish ones, And slow of heart, To believe all that the prophets have spoken, Was it not necessary, That the Christ should suffer these things, And enter into his glory, And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, He interpreted to them, And all the scriptures, The things concerning himself, As Jesus responds to their confusion, As Jesus responds to their sense of lostness,

He first steps in to help them understand God's plan, They think that the death of Jesus, Could not have been God's plan, The place where they are at right now, There is no way that this is what God intended, But Jesus steps in and says, Actually, This is exactly the plan, This is the plan that the prophets foretold, And by the prophets, That's a generic term, He's saying, This is what the whole Old Testament, Was pointing ahead to, He said that this is in fact, The very weave and warp and woof, Of the Old Testament story, What God is doing in the world, Is that this Christ, God's anointed one, Who would come to be the redeemer, That he would suffer, And then enter into his glory, That this is in fact, Not an aberration from God's plan, But it is God's plan, And it's so striking to us, Because we want him to just fix it,

[20 : 24] And get us out of the suffering immediately, That's what we think, And that's what they wanted Jesus to do, Come into Jerusalem on a white horse, With an angelic army, And reestablish the kingdom, And bring the victory, And bring the freedom, And bring the freedom, But Jesus says, No, Do you not understand, It is necessary, It is necessary, For Christ to suffer, And then enter into his glory, Why is this, Let me zoom out for a minute, To tell you a little bit, About the big picture of the Bible, And how it all fits together, So you can get a taste, I wish I was there, I would love to hear this sermon, I would love to be walking with Jesus, For these three hours, On the road to Emmaus, And hear him explain, The Old Testament, And what God was doing, And how all of this pointed to him, But we don't have that, So I'm going to try to approximate, Maybe some things that he said, In hopes that you might be able to see,

How this fits together, You see, Because the Bible tells us the story, That in the beginning, God created a world, A world that was perfectly good, In every way, In the center of it, And created humanity, To live in fellowship with God, And enjoying his creation, Where we would live under his rule, Receiving from him, All that we need and want, And that it was very good, And this is the world, That our soul remembers, And longs for, This is when, The taste of goodness, Even in this broken world, Remind us of what it was supposed to be, But then the Bible says, That humanity, In our pride, And in our foolishness, Rebelled against God, And rejected, This place of receiving from God, All these good things, We as humanity, Exalted ourselves, And said, We want to be God ourselves, And in doing so, We refused God, Sin entered the world, And everything was broken, Because of our rebellion,

Corruption spread throughout, Nothing was not tainted by sin, Nothing maintained the fullness, Of its original goodness, Everything was subject to corruption, And decay, And death, But the Bible

says, That this is not the end of the story, This is only the first three chapters, In the Bible, So we'll go faster, I promise, So as we keep going, Right?

God then enters into the world, In love, With a plan that he had determined, Before the beginning of creation, That he would rescue, A people for himself, That he would not abandon, This creation that he made, To corruption and decay, But he would rescue it, And redeem it, But that he would rescue it, And redeem it, Through suffering, Let me show you, In some of the lives, Of the key players, In the Old Testament, How this played itself out, In Genesis, The patriarch, Abraham, The beginning, The father of the nation of Israel, Was given this grand promise, That he would be the father, Of a great nation, Both population wise, And location wise, There would be a place, Where God's people would dwell, A multitude of people, Whereby God would, Display his glory, And bless the world, Abraham received this promise, And then lived,

The rest of his life, As a nomad, Living in tents, And for most of his life, As a child of his father, Only at the end of his life, Did God, Begin to give him, A taste, Of the fulfillment, Of that promise, He suffered, Before he got a foretaste, Of the glory, Of the fulfillment, Of the promise, He did, He got a plot of land, To lay his wife's body, And he got one son, Who would be the child, Of the promise, But he suffered, Before he entered into glory, So similarly, Moses, You remember Moses, The child who was brought up, In Pharaoh's household, Seemingly positioned, To be a great deliverer, And yet, As he attempts, To step into that role, What happens?

[24 : 44] He is rejected, Refused, Threatened, And sent off into exile, He spends 40 years, In the backside of nowhere, Tending, Spelly sheep, Wondering what in the world, God is doing, And at the end, Of that period, God appeared to him, And called him, And used him, To be the one, The instrument, Through which God, Would deliver his people, From slavery, In Egypt, And bring them out, Of that land, Think about David, King David, Who was, As a child, Anointed, By the prophet Samuel, Who said, I'm going to come, I'm going to anoint you, As the king, You're now, The one that God has chosen, And yet, What happens to him, He spends the next, 15, 20 years of his life, Running, A ready king, From the city king,

Who in his jealousy, And pride, Refused to see, God's plan, David's anointed, David, The anointed king, Spent years, Running away, Seeking to preserve, His life, Before he was able, To ascend to the throne, That God had promised, And even then, As great as, David's kingdom was, There was a taste, Of glory, Yet not the fulfillment, Finally, Think through the story, Of the nation of Israel, David's reign, They began, A long time, When they actually, Did live in the land, And had, Had a place, And had the people, And they had a capital, Jerusalem, And they had a temple, This was where, They worshiped God, The way he told them to, And yet, In their sin, And in their fallenness, They continued, To rebel, And sin against God, And in his judgment, He brought invasion, The Assyrians, And then the Babylonians, Overran the land, They destroyed,

Jerusalem, And they tore down, The temple, And they stole, The implements of worship, From the temple, The nation of Israel, Spent 70 years, In exile, Suffering, Wondering, God, Is this your plan? God, Pharaoh came, And you can keep going, And look at this, Whether it be lambs, In a sacrificial, System of the law, Whether it be, Isaac, Being offered up on a, On an altar, Whether it be Noah, Spending, Months, On a really smelly ark, It was not a pleasure, Bruce, Don't be fooled, Noah suffered, As he was rescued, From, From the judgment, To Joseph, To Ruth, And others, The Old Testament tells us, God's plan of redemption, Is not simply, From suffering, By snapping his fingers, And making it all right, It is through suffering, That then God, Redeems his people, And of course, All of this, Is meant to prepare, In the world, To understand, Rightly, What happens, When Jesus Christ comes, For Jesus comes, And he suffers,

In his life, The humility, Of being a human being, He suffers, Hunger, Thirst, And weariness, And most of all, He suffers, On the cross, As he bears our sins, And we think, How can this, Be the place, How can this, Be God's plan, The good news, Is that, He did not, Sending to suffer, But he rose, From the dead, Through his suffering, Then he would bring, Glory, Not only for himself, But for us, Jesus says, In verse 26, Was it not necessary, It was necessary, Why?

[29 : 03] Because only by, Suffering along, With us, In his incarnation, Can Jesus, Redeem us, From suffering, Only by, Bearing our sin, On the cross, Is Jesus able, To secure for us, The forgiveness, Of sin, Only by, His dying for us, Can Jesus bestow, On us, Eternal life, Only by, Rising from the dead, Can he ascend, To glory, Defeating, Sin and death, And promise to take us there, Only by, Rising from the dead, Can God accomplish, The renewal, Of all things, Whereby, He's going to rescue, This world, From the fallenness, And the brokenness, And the corruption, Of

sin, And promise that, One day, If he fully applies this, To this world, He will make the world, New, Creation itself, Will be remade, And you will be, In a renewed, Even, Better, Than a city,

Where we will dwell, With God forever, And the glory, That we long for, And the glory, That we have, Will be surpassed, By the glory, That we have, Forever with him, Do you see, Even then, And why, This is such good news, The disciples, Don't know, What God's plan is, And Jesus comes along, And says, Do you not see, This is everything, That I've been leading up to, And the life, And death, And resurrection, Of Jesus Christ, Of Nazareth, Is the keystone, It is the centerpiece, All of history, And leading up to it, And all of history, After it, Is the playing out, Of what happens, During this, Pivotal moment, In history, You would come, And rescue us, From sin and brokenness, The things that, Threaten to steal our hope, Friends,

This is where we find, A hope that cannot be lost, You're sitting, In the hospice, With someone who's terminal, It's very hard, To see, Where there's hope, It's very hard, To understand, What is God's plan?

The only place, We can look, Is not to these circumstances, And not to these, This thing, That we're experiencing, In the moment, But we look to this, Objective, Historical, Reality, That Jesus Christ, Lived and died, And rose again, And because of that, We can cling to hope, Because of that, We know, That our suffering now, Is a part of the glory, That is to come, When we are joining, In Christ, Because he's shown us, That this is God's pattern, Our hope in the future glory, Is certain, And our hope in the present time, Allows us, To maintain, That hope, When otherwise, It might be eroded, Or taken, And over, Friends, This is why, This is such good news, The tomb, Is empty, And the glory, Is certain, How good,

But friends, It's not just, In understanding, God's plan, That we find out, But the rest, Of the story, Tells us, That it's more, Than, It's that, We have the person, In the center, Of that, As well, Look with me, Verse 28, And following, As they're walking along, Jesus has still not, Revealed himself, They don't understand, Who he is, Yet, There's something, Interesting about, The resurrection body, And the way, That the new testament, Describes what, Jesus is able to do, Where he is, Fully human, And normal, In the ways, That he eats, And walks, And everyone recognizes, And clearly, As still being, A normal human being, In a normal body, Yet, There are times, When it seems, That this normal human being, Body, Is also in some ways, Super human, It's a whole, It's fascinating to see, How the commentators, Wrestle with this, And speculate about it,

[33 : 32] But what is clear, Is that he is fully human, Yet there's something, More than that, And they don't recognize, Him in it, So, They're going to stop, And pay us for the night, It seems like, Jesus might go on, I don't think he really would have, Because he can't play in here, But, They invite him, They encourage him to stop, Right?

So, So he goes in, And they sit down together, And they eat together, And they break bread together, And, And, So as you know, If you've been here for the last, Couple of months, As we've been preaching, Through the Gospel of Luke, Luke, Regularly, Portrays, Jesus, Sitting at the table, Eating with people, And the beautiful thing about it, Is that he would do it, With everybody, He did it with the proud, And arrogant, And, And, Aggressive, Pharisees, And religious leaders, Who opposed him, He would do it, With the tax collectors, And the sinners, The outcasts, The lepers, He would come alongside, And invite these people, To a table together, Where he would bring them in, And welcome them, And invite them, To see who he is, And to have fellowship with him, It was a very personal, It was a very, Incarnate,

Reality, Not just a concept, But a person, And when he broke the bread, Their eyes were opened, Maybe, They saw all the scars of his hand, Maybe, They remember the last supper, Or maybe, They just remember, All those times before, When they had seen Jesus, Break bread and eat, With his disciples, With his friends, With strangers, Jesus, Comes alongside them, At the end of this long story, Where Jesus had already explained, All these things, About himself, But he hasn't been saying, This is about me, Right?

He's been saying so far, Oh, This is about Jesus of Nazareth, And then he breaks the bread, And they realize, Oh, It's even, You haven't abandoned us, You haven't left us, But you are here, With us, And they did not see, Was replaced with, And they recognized him, And their hope was restored, That Jesus, Had not abandoned them, And they knew him, They knew him, Did not our hearts, Burn within us, And the knowledge, Not just of the great plan of God, But of the person of Jesus, Now risen from the dead, Alive, Was such good news, That they picked up their dinner, And ran back to Jerusalem, Whatever it took them,

All day to get there, They turned it around, And went all the way back, That night it seemed, So that they could give this report, He is alive, We have seen him, And so funny, Right?

[36 : 48] At the very end, They come in, They're like, Hey God, We've got to tell you something, And the disciples, And the 11th disciples are like, Yeah, We know, He's risen, We've seen him, And they're like, Yeah, I know, So can we, And they have this great celebration, Because Jesus is not simply, A great plan, Or a cog, A great cosmic, Religious work, Jesus isn't just a great teacher, Whose ideas were recorded, Jesus isn't just, A religious founder, Whose organization continues, But Jesus is a living, Savior, And he has set the table, Of fellowship, And invited us, To come, To him, And find hope, A hope, That will never leave us, He is promising, He will never forsake us, And he will never leave us, And by his spirit, This is true, Until the end of the age, When he will return, And make the world new,

And when we will, Not only experience, The renewal of creation, But in the, Very center of life, Is that we will be, With Jesus, We sang in one of the hymns, Earlier, About how, In heaven, When we see him, We will be filled, With such great joy, To know that he is ours, And we are his forever, And we will sing, And we will sing, And we will sing, In joy, And in worship, And in exaltation, Honoring him, And giving praise to him, Filled with the joy, That the Savior, The Redeemer of the world, Has rescued us, He's inviting us, To come, To put your hope in Jesus, Today, Let's pray, Lord, We, Our speech, Before you, The greatness, Of your love for us, Lord, Thank you, That you would suffer, And die, For us, So that we might live, And Lord, We know that, Following you, Doesn't rescue us, From all suffering, In fact, You told us, That in this world, We will have temptation, And our hope, Is secure, That you have overcome, The more, And Lord, We celebrate, This Easter morning, The way that you, Submented that hope, In the reality, Of the resurrection, Of the dead, Or that we might, Clean to that, Unchangeable, Truth, For us, Oh Lord, Fill our hearts, With hope today, We cry in Jesus' name, Amen.

Let's stand, Let's praise for us. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's blow. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray.

Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray.

[40 : 14] Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. On His throne Our cloud Of heavenly And the crown All music My song Awake my soul And sing Of Him Who died for Thee As Thy Manious King To all Eternity Crown In the Lord Of love Behold His Hands and Sigh Which To Tend In