

Sermon #1540
Title: His Hope (Easter)
Text: Luke 24

Gary L. Johnson
April 21, 2019
Series: All Eyes on Jesus

INTRODUCTION → Welcome to The Creek.

In these recent weeks, it's been **All Eyes on Jesus** as we've watched Him make His last journey to Jerusalem. There came a time when Jesus had to turn towards Jerusalem and take His last steps leading to His death.

Luke 9:51

When the time approached for Him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem.

The beginning of the end of His earthly life starts here, in Luke 9:51. From this verse until Luke 19:28 as Jesus arrives in Jerusalem, Dr. Luke devoted 35% of his Gospel to this one last journey in the life of Christ. While walking along the way, we've noticed...

- His High-Calling → Jesus came on a mission to seek and to save the lost.
- His Heart → Jesus called His followers to have broken, contrite hearts for others.
- His Humility → though He was equal to God, Jesus intentionally submitted to Him.
- And now, we cannot help but notice...His Hope.

Have you ever been in a conversation when someone says to you, "I've got good news and bad news. Which do you want to hear first?" That phrase has been around for some time, and its use can be traced back into the late 1800s. It's most often heard in a light-hearted way, typically as an intro to a joke, such as:

- Good News: Your women's softball team finally won a game. Bad News: They beat your men's softball team.
- Good News: The Elders accepted your job description the way you wrote it. Bad News: They were so inspired by it, they're looking hire to someone capable of filling the position.
- Good News: I'm done working my first shift early. Bad News: It's because we were all laid off.

Yet, as we come to the last chapter in Luke where we read of Jesus and His last stop in Jerusalem, we will notice bad news and good news again and again, and it was no laughing matter.

It's Easter, so we will be reading of the resurrection of Jesus in Luke. All four gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke and John—tell of the resurrection, and they each have their own perspective. Imagine if there were an accident at Southport and Franklin Roads. There would be various witness accounts, as they viewed the accident from four different angles. The same

happens with the resurrection of Jesus. Yet, as each of them declares the resurrection, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John each tell that 1) Jesus was dead and then buried (interred), 2) His tomb was empty on the third day, 3) angels explained what took place, 4) women were the first eye-witnesses of the empty tomb, and 5) the men refused to believe—at first.

We will not read each of the forty-nine verses in this chapter, but we will talk through the three short sections where we find some bad news and good news.

Luke 24:1-12

This first section is about the women going to the tomb at dawn on Sunday morning.

Verses 1-3

On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took **the spices** they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, **they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.**

The previous chapter tells us of the death and burial of Jesus. The women were at the foot of the cross, and they saw Jesus die. They even watched as the Roman centurion thrust a spear in the side of Jesus, bringing blood and water from deep within His chest cavity. The women watched as Joseph of Arimathea took the body of Jesus, wrapped it in cloth and placed it in the tomb. The women saw the exact tomb where the body of Jesus was placed. He was dead—completely dead, and that’s why they took spices to the tomb to anoint His corpse. If the death of Jesus wasn’t bad news enough, now it appeared that His body has been stolen. Talk about **Bad News!**

Verses 4-8

While they were wondering about this, suddenly **two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning** stood beside them. In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; **He has risen!** Remember how He told you, while He was still with you in Galilee: ‘The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and **on the third day be raised again.**’” Then they remembered his words.

Talk about **Good News!** Jesus was alive and that is HOPE! The tense of the verb means, “He *has been* raised.” The tomb is empty and the only possible explanation is His resurrection. His body was not stolen. He didn’t pass out and slip into a coma. Jesus was dead. The women didn’t go to the wrong tomb because they saw where He was interred. And, this was a mild rebuke from the angels. “Why are you looking for the living in a cemetery? Don’t you remember when Jesus said that He would be handed over to evil men, who would crucify Him and then He would be raised from the dead on the third day? Remember?” Just as the day was dawning, it was dawning on the ladies what Jesus had said—over and over again. Not once, but three times, on His last journey to Jerusalem, Jesus said that He would be handed over to sinners, be crucified and that He would be raised from the dead on the third day (see Luke 9:22, 43; 18:31-33). Three times. If it’s repeated, it’s important. They got it, and then they got on

their way, running to tell the men, who were in hiding for fear of the Jews! The gospel of Matthew even tells of how Jesus appeared to the women while they were running to tell the guys (Matthew 28:9, “Greetings!”)

Verses 9-12

When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things **to the Eleven and to all the others**. It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. **But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense**. Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.

“Look! What we thought was **bad news** (i.e., death) is **good news!** We’re telling you He’s alive! The angels told us so—and we saw Him! He talked to us! He did exactly what He said He would do—be raised from the dead on the third day.” His violent, horrific death was **bad news** but His resurrection from the dead was **good news**.

Luke 24:13-35

This second section is about two disciples who were walking to Emmaus later the same day.

Verses 13-16

Now that **same day** two of them were going to a village called **Emmaus, about seven miles** from Jerusalem. They were **talking** with each other **about everything that had happened**. As they talked and discussed these things with each other, **Jesus himself came up** and walked along with them; but **they were kept from recognizing him**.

Two disciples, one named Cleopas (v. 18) and the other is unnamed. They’re walking seven miles, about a day’s journey, to the village of Emmaus when Jesus suddenly appeared and walked with them, though they didn’t recognize Him. It sounds like an episode of *Undercover Boss*. Jesus asked them what they were talking about and they were astonished that He appeared to not know about all of the events of the recent days. This is what Cleopas said about Jesus of Nazareth.

Verses 19-24

“He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; **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. In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning but didn’t find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus.”

Talk about **Bad News!** The death of Jesus was **Bad News**, and now their disappointment in that Jesus did not live up to their expectations was **Bad News**. They thought that being the Messiah, He would go to Jerusalem and conquer the Roman army and restore Israel as a sovereign nation—and His disciples would rule with him. Their dream of victory was shattered when they saw Him arrested, killed on a cross and put in a tomb. Jesus had told them no less than three times during His last walk to Jerusalem that He would be arrested, killed, and buried but that He would rise on the third day.

Verses 25-27, 31

He said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Messiah 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... **Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him**

Good News! Jesus is the Messiah and He’s alive! That’s hope! **Bad News** of disappointment became **Good News** of hope.

Luke 24:36-49

The third and final section is when Jesus appeared to His disciples back in Jerusalem. The two disciples ran from Emmaus back to Jerusalem to tell them that they had seen Jesus.

Verses 36-38, 46

While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. He said to them, “Why are you troubled, and **why do doubts rise in your minds?** Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have... **The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day...**

Talk about **Bad News** again! After Jesus told them repeatedly that He would be raised from the dead on the third day, they are *still* struggling with doubt. He even showed them the scars in His hands and feet where the nails of the cross had been. He told them to touch Him as a ghost doesn’t have flesh and bone. He even ate a piece of fish to prove to them that He was alive. Once again, the **Good News** was that Jesus was alive – and that is HOPE!

Application

What does this mean to us today? How does this speak into our lives? Back then, the followers of Jesus had a dream – a hope – that Jesus, their Messiah, would crush Rome and bring victory to their everyday lives. But, the sudden death of Jesus, their disappointment with Jesus, and their doubts about Jesus turned their dream into a nightmare.

And we have dreams. We long for a dream job that can provide for a dream car, dream home, dream clothes, dream travel and more. We long for a dream marriage and a dream family. We want our dream kids to get a dream education and land a dream job that makes mom and dad proud. Even when we are younger, we learn to yearn for a dream something, from dream phones to dream friends. Yet, there are times in our lives when our dreams turn into nightmares. Just as with the followers of Jesus back then, death, disappointments and doubts can destroy our dreams.

That dream marriage and family becomes a nightmare when death takes someone we love deeply in this life. That dream job becomes a nightmare when disappointment happens and the long-awaited promotion is given to someone else or we lose our job and our home as a result. Our dream marriage becomes a nightmare when doubt enters our hearts about the faithfulness of our spouse—and those doubts then become more than real. It's a season of **Bad News** and we long for some **Good News**. People want many things in this life, but the one thing that people really want is HOPE. They hope that a marriage will work, that a job will last, that illness will be healed and death will not happen, that children will grow up healthy and well adjusted, and more. Just fill-in-the-blank: I hope that _____.

Like the phrase "I've got bad news and I've got good news," the phrase "saved by the bell" is familiar to our culture, and its history reaches back into the 1800s as well. Not only was it used in reference to boxing in that someone being pummeled in a boxing ring was "saved by the bell," the phrase is also connected to people who feared being buried alive. While George Washington was on his deathbed, he gave instructions to his family to be certain he was dead before he was actually buried. "Safety coffins" were actually designed, patented and built in England that had a cord placed in the hands of the supposed deceased and it ran up through the ground and was attached to a bell. If someone was comatose and buried and then came to consciousness in the coffin, he could ring the bell. The person declared, "I'm not dead yet!"

Does the marriage appear to be dead? How about the family or are the finances all but dead? Do friendships appear to be lifeless or how about the future, does it look dead? When life looks dead, we can be saved, and not by the bell, but by the blood of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God who takes away your sins and mine! Jesus died on a cross, was buried in a tomb and then was raised from the dead! Jesus alone conquered sin, death and the grave! Because of His resurrection, "I'm not dead yet!"

Christianity is not a list of rules – do's and don'ts. It's about a relationship that we have with Jesus Christ, built on the sure foundation of the truth of His resurrection. The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead brings HOPE, not only for today but for tomorrow. Hope in the resurrection—hope of life after death—has always been the longing of God's people, reaching back to Abraham, Moses, Isaiah, Daniel, David and more. Writing from death row, the Apostle Paul declared:

2 Timothy 4:6-8

I am already being poured out like a drink offering and the time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who long for His appearing.

God's people have always longed for – and will continue to long for – the resurrection HOPE of Jesus Christ, and there are four distinctives that you and I never want to forget when it comes to that resurrection hope. The resurrection of Jesus Christ offers HOPE that is...

HEARD

Resurrection HOPE is to be HEARD. Not only did the angels declare, “He is risen,” but Matthew, Mark, Luke and John declared the Good News that Jesus was raised from the dead. Not only is the resurrection THE story of the Gospels, it appears throughout the book of Acts. The resurrection of Jesus is declared by Paul in one letter after another that he wrote (Romans, Ephesians, Colossians, and more), and the hope of resurrection culminates in Revelation with the reality of heaven and resurrected, eternal life. The resurrection is the recurring refrain, the repeating theme, throughout the entire New Testament. Without the resurrection of Jesus, there would have been no New Testament and there would have been no church. And if there would have been no church, there would have been no Christian hospitals, schools, universities, orphanages, and more. The key message of the New Testament was powerfully declared by Paul, when he said,

1 Corinthians 15:3-4

For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures...

The preaching and teaching in the New Testament was all about the resurrection. It was mentioned time and again, in one place and every place. Can the same said be said of us? Something has changed. *The Passion of the Christ* depicts vivid, graphic, horrific, gut-wrenching torture and death of Jesus for more than two hours (2 hrs. 7 min), and the film ends with 80 seconds of film depicting the resurrection! That's a mere .01% of the film's content! Not only do we need to hear that Jesus died on the cross for your sins and for mine, but we must hear that He was raised from the dead and so will we be raised from the dead! That's good news!

We live in a verbal culture. We send 6,000 tweets a second, which corresponds to 500 million tweets a day! Every sixty seconds, 510,000 comments are posted on Facebook. People are connecting on more than 1.7 billion websites. Add to these staggering numbers the actual number of words we actually speak on a daily basis (i.e., 16,215 for women and 15,670 for men), and we can see that we are highly verbal in that we are communicating non-stop 24/7, 365. Yet, for all us who are followers of Jesus, how much of our communication is about the

Good News of Jesus, being raised from the dead? Hope of life-after-death is incredibly good news that MUST be heard by those in our sphere of influence (i.e., family and friends).

Romans 1:16

For I am not ashamed of the Gospel for it is the power of God for salvation of everyone who believes...

Romans 10:15

How beautiful are the feet of those who bring Good News!

ONLY in Jesus

The HOPE of resurrection is found only in Jesus Christ.

John 11:25-26

I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in Me will live even though they die; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die.

This phrase is one of seven “I am” statements of Jesus. In Greek, “I am” is a very intense way of saying, “I myself, and only I, am...” Only Jesus was dead for days and then resurrected to life. No other person has ever experienced resurrection, not Buddha, not Mohammed, not anyone. Buddah died in 483 BC and his followers can visit his grave, where his remains are interred. Mohammed died June 8, 632 AD and every year, hundreds of thousands of his followers visit his grave in Medina where his remains are interred. The grave of Jesus is different. It’s empty. There are no physical remains because Jesus was physically raised from the dead. No one else has done the same. Only He offers the HOPE of eternal life. Another of His “I am” statements declares:

John 14:6

I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

He didn’t say: “I am a way, a truth and a life.” He specifically used three definite articles in speech: “*the way, the truth, the life.*” He didn’t declare that He is the way to heaven. He declared that He is the *only* way to heaven. It’s not an arrogant or egotistical statement. It’s truth.

Many Americans are offended by this verse of the Bible. Some people see it as one of the most bigoted, intolerant, arrogant, politically-incorrect statements a Christian could make. In the thinking of many, the thought that Christians are the only ones going to heaven is absurd. This is called exclusivity. People complain if we believe that Jesus is the only way to God because we are then intolerant of other religions. Tolerance is one of the highest values in our culture today. In our pluralistic culture, we worship the same God, so we are told. Our culture believes that all paths lead to God, just as in mountain climbing, all paths lead to the top of the mountain. We need to realize that spiritually, we are climbing different mountains. We do not worship the same God. Some people say that our God and Allah are one and the same. Not

true. Islam denies that Jesus is God, that He died on a cross, was raised from the dead, and that Jesus is the way to heaven. If Islam is right, Christianity is wrong. Buddhists and Hindus do not believe in a personal God. Hindus teach there are more than 200 million gods. In both Buddhism and Hinduism, there is no resurrection, just reincarnation. We teach that God is personally in relationship with us through His Son, Jesus Christ, and through His death on the cross, we will be resurrected to eternal life—not simply reincarnated into one life form after another. If Buddhism and Hinduism are right, then Christianity is wrong. Even Judaism rejects Jesus as the Messiah, as well as the belief that salvation is through Jesus Christ. If Judaism is right, then Christianity is wrong. Both cannot be right. There is such a thing as absolute truth and we must investigate who and where is the truth. Christianity is unique in that it is based on mercy – grace. Christianity is unique in that it's not on what we DO to earn eternal life; eternal life is experienced based on what Jesus Christ did.

Did you hear that the movie *Avengers: Endgame* broke the internet? Even though it doesn't release until next weekend, six hours after tickets went on sale in early April, both AMC and Fandango websites crashed. Advance ticket sales broke not only previous records, but technology broken down and could not keep up with demand! That speaks volumes! It seems that everyone wants a hero. We are a culture in desperate need of heroes, and beyond any doubt, Jesus Christ is the ONLY hero who died for our sins, was buried and was raised from the dead. Resurrection HOPE is only in Jesus Christ. And that's **Good News!**

POWERFUL

Resurrection hope is powerful, because it was the power of God that raised Jesus from the dead.

Romans 8:11

And if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who lives in you.

The power of God raised Jesus Christ from the dead - and that same, indescribable, unwavering power is available to us for whatever has turned our dreams into nightmares. Such **Bad News** can become **Good News!** Isaiah declared this 700-years before Jesus was even born.

Isaiah 40:31

But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength; they will soar on wings as eagles, run and not grow weary, walk and not be faint.

People in North Korea are putting their hope in a person - more like a dynasty, now in its third generation. To keep their nation intact, leaders of North Korea continue to propagate lies to keep it from crumbling. Kim Jung Il, the father of North Korea's current leader Kim Jung Un, was said to have been born under a double rainbow and a new star appeared in space at the time of his birth. His official biography states that he was able to walk at three weeks and talk at eight weeks. While in college, he wrote over 1,500 books, and after college, he composed six

complete operas in two years. He attempted golf, and his first day of picking up a golf club, he shot a 38 under par game which included eleven holes in one. And as a North Korean, there are serious consequences if you do not believe in these lies on which their nation is built.

The disciples saw the power of God unleashed time and again through Jesus Christ. Jesus multiplied food that fed thousands. He raised Lazarus from the dead, as well as others. He walked on water, and if that wasn't enough, He changed water into wine. These miracles, and others like them, were all witnessed by the disciples, but the greatest miracle of all was the physical resurrection of Jesus from the dead by the power of God—power that is available to us to this day and beyond. And that's **Good News!**

ETERNAL

The resurrection HOPE of Jesus is eternal. This HOPE – along with us – has no end. At the cross, God's wrath was poured out on Jesus instead of us. His resurrection was God's reward poured out on us because of Jesus. I was cleaning out my wallet a few months ago, and I found this [show BLOCKBUSTER Rewards Card]. Anyone else ever have one of these? At its peak, Blockbuster had 9,000 stores in twelve countries and had annual income of \$5.9 billion. Today, there is ONE last store in Bend, Oregon, and I have no intention of traveling there to use my rewards' card. For those who are followers of Jesus, we have more than a rewards card. We have eternal HOPE that the best is yet to come.

Not only in your lifetime and mine, but for centuries, people have predicted that Christianity will come to an inglorious end. In March, 1966, the late John Lennon told a reporter for the London *Evening Standard*, "Christianity will go. It will vanish and shrink. I needn't argue about that; I'm right and will be proved right. We're more popular than Jesus now; I don't know which will go first—rock-n-roll or Christianity." Not only is Christianity still around, but Jesus still lives—and so will we.

The entire message of the Bible—from beginning to end—is that death is just the doorway into eternity for every person. Everyone receives everlasting life – either in the presence of God with everlasting joy or away from the presence of God in a place of everlasting suffering.

The **Good News** doesn't deliver us from bad news here. On the night before He went to the cross, Jesus told His disciples, "In this world you *will* have trouble, but take heart, I have overcome the world." That's **Bad News** followed by the **Good News!** Jesus doesn't promise a life of leisure and luxury, of health and wealth. Jesus doesn't promise us a painless life, but an endless life. And that's **Good News!**

Invitation

You cannot be saved unless you believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Romans 10:9 states: "If you confess with your mouth "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, then you will be saved." Don't trust your feelings, or even trust in the facts. Feelings and facts about the resurrection cannot save you. It's faith that saves you – faith in the

one and only Son of God, Jesus Christ. Those who surrender their lives to Jesus Christ and remain faithful to the end, are raised from the dead just as was Jesus, and will receive a glorified body just like His. John 14:19 "Because I live, you also will live."

Copyright 2019 by Indian Creek Christian Church. All materials presented by Dr. Gary L. Johnson uploaded, posted, transmitted, or distributed in any way, except that you may print or download one copy of the material for your personal, noncommercial home use only, provided that 1) you retain all copyright, trademark and propriety notices, 2) you make no modifications to the materials. For any uses other than this, written permission is required. (Indian Creek Christian Church; c/o Dr. Gary L. Johnson; 6430 S. Franklin Road, Indianapolis, IN 46259).