



Hope Rising

[1 Corinthians 15:3-4, 12-22](#) (NIV)

Pastor Matt Friend – Easter Sunday, April 4, 2021

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– OUTLINE –

Today's Big Idea:

Hope can rise in our hearts because Jesus rose from the grave.

Today's Takeaway:

Trust Jesus' good news!



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– NOTES –

Introduction:

“Hope.” The word breathes anticipation. It’s hard to say hope without some sense of expectation.

The Sunday morning following Jesus’ death dawned with very little promise. In fact, for those who were closest to Jesus, it dawned with heavy sorrow.

Nevertheless, when they realized Jesus had risen from the grave hope rose in their hearts.

Today’s Big Idea:

Hope can rise in our hearts because Jesus rose from the grave.

Think About It:

The Apostle Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians 15 meet every qualification of a Roman legal document of evidence:

- Paul was born around the same of Jesus.
- He went to law school in Jerusalem about the time Jesus was wreaking havoc in that city.
- He spent the first few years of his career violently trying to invalidate Jesus, but God opened his heart and he became a believer—one of the greatest missionaries ever.
- For Paul, it was a historical fact that Jesus died on the cross. He could take you to the location.
- For Paul, it was a historical fact that Jesus was buried in a garden tomb. He could take you there.
- For Paul, it was a historical fact that Jesus rose from the grave. He could introduce you to hundreds if not thousands of eye-witnesses.



Paul wrote his *magnum opus* on the resurrection (1 Corinthians 15) about 25 years after the resurrection and ascension of Jesus. Twenty-five years isn't very long. Where were you in 1996?

- Motorola introduced its first-ever flip phone.
- Yasser Arafat was president of the PLO.
- Disney purchased ABC for \$19 billion.
- *Braveheart* won Best Picture at the Academy Awards.
- Boris Yeltsin was sworn in at the Kremlin for a second term as President of Russia.

We can testify those things are true because most of us were around when they happened. And Paul could testify that Jesus' resurrection was true because he was around when it happened.

How can we respond to someone who questions if Jesus really existed?

Some say, "Unless you can take me back in time to see Him for myself, I won't believe." Do we apply that same logic to Alexander the Great, George Washington, or Henry Ford?

How can we respond to someone who claims that Jesus' resurrection can't be scientifically proven? The Apostle Paul would've said, "I'm not doing science... I'm doing history." Science studies the repeatable; history studies the unrepeatable. (Caesar only crossed the Rubicon once. Historians don't see this as a problem and are usually not shy about declaring that event.) Do we apply the scientific method to all aspects of life? Really? What is the scientific method to listening to music or falling in love? Many things transcend science.

How can we respond to someone who questions if Jesus really died on that cross? No credible historian denies that Jesus of Nazareth really lives. Most historians will attest that there's enough evidence to suggest that Jesus really did get nailed to a cross. But the question is, "Is it possible that Jesus just swooned/fainted on the cross, but that he really didn't die?" The answer is simple, really. Jesus had to die because the Roman soldiers were experts in capital punishment. They would not have left it to chance that he had merely passed out. This is why they stuck a spear in his side, just to make sure was dead.

"The evidence for Jesus' resurrection is so strong that nobody would question it except for two things: First, it is a very unusual event. And second, if you believe it happened, you have to change the way you live." –Wolfhart Pannenberg



There are multiple pieces of evidence that point to the resurrection of Jesus, but none is greater than the evidence of changed lives. Think about it: overnight, thousands of Jews and Greeks—with very little culture or worldview in common—agree 100% on the same thing: Jesus rose from the grave. They received evidence and started believing something never believed in history—that a man had been bodily resurrected and, therefore, had proven himself to be the Son of God.

When early Christians met one another, one would say, “Christ is risen.” The other would respond, “Christ is risen indeed.” How sure were early Christians of Jesus’ resurrection? Thousands of them were so sure that they willingly and bravely faced martyrdom in Roman coliseums.

How can we know Jesus’ resurrection was a physical (and not just a spiritual) resurrection? In the Bible, “resurrection” refers to being physically resuscitated/revived back to life. His followers could touch him, hug him, feel the scars in his hands and feet. Luke tells us that he ate broiled fish. In the Gospels, he appears as a man that looks like any other man.

Today’s Takeaway:

Trust Jesus’ good news!

- If you’re not yet a believer: Commit your life to Christ. Easter is more than just a day. It’s a decision. Understanding the entire Bible isn’t necessary for salvation. The primary question is, “Do you believe that Jesus died for your sins and that He arose from the grave?” Whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.
- Christian: This hope is for us as well. Resurrection is not just the hope that you can go to heaven when you die, but it’s the hope that one day, Jesus will return to resurrect this universe. He will, at that time, reunite your soul with a resurrected body where you will live on the renewed earth forever. We will have new, literal, physical, bodies. The resurrection of the King guarantees the resurrection of the King’s children.

Christians were so confident in the resurrection that until the late 18th century it was common for people to have their tomb-stones marked in Latin, *resurgem*, or “I will rise again!”



It was the resurrection of Jesus that turned the heartbroken followers of a crucified rabbi into the fearless leaders of the early church. Rome could threaten them, beat them, imprison them, and kill them; but it could never get them to deny what they had witnessed.

Conclusion:

Right now, your heart may be breaking. You might be falling apart. But Jesus knows the road you're facing—even if it's a step in the dark. One day you're gonna see clearly. One day, your heart's gonna find—that buried beneath all the grieving, the sun has been waiting to shine.

Hope can rise in our hearts because Jesus rose from the grave.

