

Presbyterian Church of Henderson

Worship Service 10:30 AM

April 19, 2020

Prelude Kristin Jones, Director of Music

Call to Worship

Blessed be the God of our Savior, Jesus Christ!

God has given us a new birth in the living hope of the resurrection.

God has given us an inheritance that is imperishable and unfading.

In this we rejoice, even when we suffer trials.

For although we have not seen Jesus, we love him; and although we have not seen him, we believe in him.

For the outcome of our faith is the salvation of our souls.

Hymn PH 108 "Christ is Alive"

1 Christ is alive! Let Christians sing.
The cross stands empty to the sky.
Let streets and homes with praises ring.
Love, drowned in death, shall never die.

2 Christ is alive! No longer bound
To distant years in Palestine,
But saving, healing, here and now,
And touching every place and time.

3 Not throned afar, remotely high,
Untouched, unmoved by human pains,
But daily, in the midst of life,
Our Savior in the Godhead reigns.

4 In every insult, rift and war,
Where color, scorn or wealth divide,
Christ suffers still, yet loves the more,
And lives, where even hope has died.

5 Christ is alive, and comes to bring
Good news to this and every age,
Till earth and sky and ocean ring
With joy, with justice, love and praise.

Call to Confession

God has been made known to us in deeds of power, signs, and wonders, and will not abandon us if we confess the truth about our lives.

Prayer of Confession (unison)

God, you have made known to us the ways of life. Yet, too often, we put other things above you and turn away from the ways of life and

toward the ways of the world. Forgive us and guide us back into your presence, that we may know the fullness of joy. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

My friends, God is our refuge and will not abandon us. In Jesus Christ, we are reconciled to God. That is a promise of peace and joy; share that peace with one another.

Prayer for Illumination

Holy God, send your Holy Spirit upon the reading of your Word that it may serve to show us the path of life and lead us into your presence where there is fullness of joy. Amen.

First Reading Acts 2:14a, 22-32

But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them:

“You that are Israelites, listen to what I have to say: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know— this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law. But God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power. For David says concerning him,

‘I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand so that I will not be shaken; therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; moreover my flesh will live in hope. For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One experience corruption. You have made known to me the ways of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.’

“Fellow Israelites, I may say to you confidently of our ancestor David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Since he was a prophet, he knew that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would put one of his descendants on his throne. Foreseeing this, David spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, saying, ‘He was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh experience corruption.’ This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses.

Second Reading 1 Peter 1:3-9

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith—being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

SERMON "How God Gives Us a Living Hope"

1 Peter 1:3-9

- This morning we are beginning a new series called Standing Firm in God's Grace where we will look at the various lectionary texts from 1 Peter.
- This series will take us through the end of May to Pentecost.
- The book of 1 Peter is really about the message of Peter the Apostle.
- Remember in the gospel accounts when Peter was in the upper room with the other disciples?
- Jesus predicted that he would deny him before the rooster crowed the next morning (John 13:38).
- Sure enough, following the arrest of Jesus, Peter denied knowing him three times
- The moment Peter spoke his third denial, he heard a rooster crow, remembered the words of Jesus, and the gospels say that he cried bitterly.
- I can see him saying to himself, "He was right! I had let my Teacher down. I am a failure!"
- To make matters worse when Jesus died on the cross, it was the end of all of Peter's hopes.
- Can you imagine what Peter must have been feeling: anxiety, fear, depression, suicide?
- He has spent about 3 years following Jesus, and in the end he could not stand up to be counted as one of his disciples.
- Peter only knew the bitter sorrow for his denials.
- However, on resurrection day, Jesus did not stay dead.
- When Peter learned that the tomb was empty, he ran to see it for himself.
- Hope was being restored. Could it be what Jesus was saying about himself was true?
- He left the tomb in wonder.
- And on another post resurrection appearance (John 21), Peter and the other disciples are fishing, and a man on the shore told them to put their nets on the other side.
- They caught so many fish that they could not haul it to shore.
- This was exactly Jesus had done with them at the beginning of his ministry!
- They see Jesus on the shore in Galilee, and after they have breakfast together, Jesus turns to Peter and addresses his hurts and pain by having Peter affirm his love for Jesus and commissions him to "feed my sheep."
- In Peter's heart, his hope that was once crushed has been transformed by the resurrection of Jesus.
- Do you feel the transformation that has occurred in Peter's life?
- Rather than a bitterness, sorrow, and depression for the mistake of denying Jesus, Peter can now hope again because Jesus transformed his life on the shore of Galilee.
- With his stomach filled with more fish than he could eat, Peter's hope has been reborn!
- In Peter's new commission to care and nurture other churches, he writes this letter because he is concerned with the stability of Christian faith in a climate of active persecution.

- In today's text, 1 Peter 1:3-9, is actually one long sentence from verse 3 all the way to the end at verse 9
- This reveals the intensity of the writer and the fullness of his message
- Because this text is so rich, we are only going to cover the first 3 verses
- What is a **living hope**?
- When Peter speaks of hope, he is not expressing a wishful thinking like "I hope it does not rain" or "I hope I passed my test"
- Hope in this text means "an eager and confident expectation"
- Combined with the word "living" also carries the idea of a hope that is eager, confident and fully alive
- Unlike empty hope or dead hope that is often found in this world, this "living hope" is energizing, alive, and active in the hearts of the believer.
- And Peter, of all the disciples, knew first hand about this living hope.
- Peter is saying, "This is the living hope that changed my life!"
- EX: Remember making bread for the first time as a young teenager. Of course, I used ingredients found in the house. "Hey Mom, do we have any yeast?" Little did I know, the last time someone used the yeast was probably before I was born. So when I hydrated my yeast with warm water and a little sugar, I noticed that it did not form bubbles at the top very quickly. So I waited and waited. Eventually it began to foam, and somehow my bread turned into a brown brick. I gave up baking until, I was an adult and learned that yeast does so much better when it is fresh rather than 100 years past the expiration.
- ISW hope is similar. Hope that the world has in the things that are tangible will always make useless spiritual bricks, but a living hope comes from the resurrection of Jesus and offers us a reliable future - God's future for us.
- No matter what happens to us, if we have faith in Jesus, we have a living hope that our future is in God's hands.
- So in the eyes of Peter, "Living Hope" beyond a shadow of doubt comes directly from God the Father.
- What better testimony for this "living hope" to come from a man who probably had no hope until God transformed his hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- This is why Peter opens our text with the statement: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."
- This is a big deal to him!
- In praise he points to God because God had directly worked in his life to offer Peter a living hope.
- In the next three verses, I found five ways God gives us a living hope

God Gives Us a Living Hope:

1. God's INITIATIVE

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!

- Notice this "living hope" the Peter mentions was not created by a committee, a Roman council, a Jewish order, but from God Himself.
- This is God's way to reach into humanity, and say, "I want to be the solution to all your false hopes, depression, and broken dreams.
- Friends, we have this today through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

- Because Jesus rose from the grave, we have a living hope that God offer to us that is far better than anything in the world has to offer.
- God was the one who took the initiative through His Son
- God thought of us to offer a solution to the false hopes that are present in our world
- So, we have a living hope because God took the initiative

God Gives Us a Living Hope:

1. God's INITIATIVE

2. God's MERCY

*By his great **mercy** he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,*

- Mercy throughout the Bible is a characteristic of God demonstrated in God lovingkindness.
- It is God's pity, compassion, and kindness toward people.
- God shows His mercy through forgiveness.
- According to theologian Millard Erickson in his work, Christian Theology, he writes, "God's very is His tenderhearted, loving, compassion for His people. It is His tenderness of heart toward the needy. If grace contemplates humans as sinful, guilty and condemned, mercy see them as miserable and needy"
- When we see Peter is describing that God is a God of MERCY, he is speaking first hand.
- When Peter denied Jesus, he felt his whole world was crashing in upon him, BUT it was the MERCY of God that pulled him out of despair and personally felt with his sadness and despair!
- Mercy means that even though God knows our guilt and shame, he does not always issue the punishment deserved.
- Mercy is shown because God loves us.
- Even though Peter did not meet the standards of righteousness that God intended for him to have at his denial, in his MERCY, God restored Peter to become a part of God's redemptive plan.
- MERCY means that God is giving us options.
- We can either choose the path that leads to false hope, sin, and spiritual death, or embrace the mercy of God through His Son Jesus Christ and receive the love of God through His forgiveness and grace.
- Peter is encouraging believers that this incredible faith that they have is a demonstration of God's MERCY upon them.

God Gives Us a Living Hope:

1. God's INITIATIVE

2. God's MERCY

3. God's INHERITANCE

*4 and into an **inheritance** that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,*

- What is this inheritance?
- An INHERITANCE in Scripture is what is promised or given by God to his people.
- These themes are found throughout the OT and the NT

- Imagine Peter's context where the early Christians who were scattered throughout Asian Minor because of persecution.
- This motivated Peter to write to them in the first place.
- They are aliens and pilgrims who are making their way through a world that is becoming more hostile to their beliefs.
- I would imagine they had basically nothing.
- Everything is stripped from them.
- Peter's words of living hope of God's INHERITANCE is a comfort because it provides a sense of stability and future promise of being heirs of God's kingdom.
- EX: It would be like discovering you have a long lost uncle that had died and is now offering you millions from his estate.
- In a matter of minutes, your sense of security, identity, and purpose is changed because of this inheritance.
- ISW: Peter is telling these wanderers that God has something far greater than their present circumstances.
- Friends, we have a living hope of the same inheritance.
- We have a relationship with God and a future home in heaven that no one can take away.
- Peter describes this inheritance as imperishable, undefiled, and unfading.
 - a. If our inheritance is **imperishable** it is untouched by death
 - ▶ If anything were to happen to us or those around us, God gives us an inheritance that cannot be changed by the frailty of the human body
 - b. Our inheritance is also **undefiled**.
 - ▶ This means it is unstained by evil.
 - ▶ It is pure, holy from a Holy God who freely offers this to us.
 - ▶ When the world around you is filled with corruption, our living hope is our inheritance that cannot be corrupted by governments, leaders, or institutions
 - c. Our inheritance is **unfading**.
 - ▶ This means it is undamaged by time.
 - ▶ Everything around us changes over time, but God's inheritance is not effected by time
 - ▶ Our living hope will always be ready for us all we need to do is to be able to grasp the significance of our inheritance during times of extreme difficulty.

God Gives Us a Living Hope:

1. God's INITIATIVE
2. God's MERCY
3. God's INHERITANCE
- 4. God's SALVATION**

*5 who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a **salvation** ready to be revealed in the last time.*

- The word salvation is synonymous with the idea of inheritance but Peter's added feature is that it is protected by the power of God.
- God's salvation underlines the fact of God's continued activity in our lives.
- The phrase "through faith" emphasizes our part to God's salvation.

- When life seems unbearable, we focus on the living hope of the salvation of God that we maintain through faith.
- Too often it seems easier to give up and succumb to the despondency of our situation, but Peter encourages to not give up hope because the ultimate goal is salvation
- In verse 9, "You are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls"

CLOSE:

- No doubt we live in interesting and difficult times.
- Especially after an unusual Easter weekend, the resurrection of our Lord and Savior reminds us that God is active in our lives.
- Through the resurrection of God's Son, Jesus Christ, Peter reminds us that we have a living hope because of the actions of God:
 1. God's INITIATIVE
 2. God's MERCY
 3. God's INHERITANCE
 4. God's SALVATION

Thanks be to God for giving us Living Hope during these times of self-quarantine.

Affirmation of Faith (Apostle's Creed)

I BELIEVE in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

Prayers of the People

Resurrecting God, in a doubting world, **keep us in faith that we may have life.**

We pray for the church universal. Breathe on us your Holy Spirit, that we may honor and pass on the great inheritance we have received. **Keep us in faith that we may have life.**

We pray for the whole world, its nations, its leaders, and its people, that your wisdom and peace may prevail, and spare us from the COVID-19 virus. **Keep us in faith that we may have life.**

We pray for all those in need, the suffering, the oppressed, the ill, the dying, and all those who care for them. **Keep us in faith that we may have life.**

We pray for ourselves, our families, and those we love. **Keep us in faith that we may have life.**

Blessed are you, O God, who through Jesus Christ, crucified and risen, and in the community of the Holy Spirit, gives us an inheritance that is imperishable and unfading, now and forever, and now, with confidence as children of God, let us pray:

Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory forever. Amen.

Hymn Presbyterian Hymnal 122 "Thine Is the Glory"

1 Thine is the glory,
Risen, conquering Son;
Endless is the victory
Thou o'er death hast won.
Angels in bright raiment
Rolled the stone away,
Kept the folded grave clothes
Where Thy body lay.

Refrain:

Thine is the glory,
Risen, conquering Son;
Endless is the victory
Thou o'er death hast won.

2 Lo! Jesus meets us,
Risen from the tomb;
Lovingly He greets us,
Scatters fear and gloom.
Let the church with gladness
Hymns of triumph sing,
For the Lord now liveth;
Death hath lost its sting. [Refrain]

3 No more we doubt Thee,
Glorious Prince of life!
Life is naught without Thee;
Aid us in our strife.
Make us more than conquerors
Through Thy deathless love;
Bring us safe through Jordan
To Thy home above. [Refrain]

Benediction

The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace both now and evermore.

Postlude