

Looking for Hope

Matthew 28:1-10
April 12, 2009

As you think about what you need most in your life, what is it? Is it peace of mind, romantic love, a happy family, a lifelong friend, financial security; or is there something more? Where does hope fit in your equation for a fulfilling life?

I. Looking for...

A. All of us are searching for something in our lives. In the process we look for things that give us hope. We put our “trust” in things that give us reassurance. In the Old Testament it is described by the verbs ‘to wait, to expect’ (*kawah*), and ‘to be full of confidence, to trust’ (*batah*). Hope (Gk. *elpis/elpizein*) is the NT word.

1. **Jer. 9:23-24** describes those cultural values that so many people value...

²³Thus says the LORD, "Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches;"

- **Wise man: Persuasion (Intelligence)**

I Cor. 2:1, 5 – I did not come with superiority of speech or wisdom. ⁵Your faith should not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.

SAT scores of 1600... Going to Harvard or MIT... being the smartest.

God's Response: *Is 29:14 "And the wisdom of their wise men will perish, And the discernment of their discerning men will be concealed."*

I Cor. 1:19 "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise... AND THE CLEVERNESS OF THE CLEVER I WILL SET ASIDE."

- **Mighty Man: Power (Influence)**

App: How often do we judge people by their physical stature or powerful influence?

Chariots and horses (Psalm 20:7): *Some boast in chariots and some in horses, but we will boast in the name of the LORD, our God.* The chariot represented the transportation of a dignitary or a warrior. He was a man of power.

Look how many mighty men fell?

- ✓ Goliath: Pagan
- ✓ Samson: Purity
- ✓ Saul: Pride

- **Rich Man: Possessions (Investments)**

- ✓ Living in an expensive home; driving a sports car; exotic vacations; getting everything you want; Xboxes; plasma screen TV's; Wii
- ✓ **The one with the most toys wins.** This is the worldview of materialism can be summed up with one word, more. Materialism says that the only thing that really matters in life is acquiring things. We live to collect things.
- ✓ **The Bible's answer:** *Luke 12, "A man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions" (NIV).* Don't judge your life by how much you've got. The greatest things in life aren't things.
- ✓ **God's Response**
Mt. 6:19-24: Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth.
(v. 21) - Where you treasure is, there will your heart be also.
(v. 24) - Can't serve God and money

2. John 11:25

²⁵Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies; ²⁶and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?"

- This is what gives you a hope... a foundation.
- Jesus Christ is what we live for.

B. What are you looking for?

1. You still haven't found what you're looking for (U2)

2. Are you looking for...?

- **Peace**...in a worn torn world. In the Middle East? Iraq? Afghanistan?
- **Justice**...in an unfair world. Will the oppressed ever be vindicated?
- **Prosperity**...in a financially troubled world. Is the stock market worth trusting?
- **Love**... in an infatuation-driven world. Will there be someone who will love you unconditionally?
- **Security**...in a desperate world. Something you can cling to?
- **Friendship**...in a transient world. People come and go in our life. There is no stability.
- **Family**... in an estranged world. You just want a family that sticks together...loves each other and doesn't fight.
- **Success**... in an illusionary world. "Too many people climb the ladder of success only to find that its leaning against the wrong wall."

C. **Transition:** Our passage in Matthew 28 suggests that our hope is anchored in the resurrection of Jesus Christ! Matthew focuses on the resurrection as seen through the eyes of 2 women. What were these women looking for?

II. Longing for... Matt.28:1-10

All 4 gospels include the resurrection account, though none describe it since there are not eyewitnesses to the event itself. (Mark 16:1-11; Luke 24:1-12; John 20:1-8). It is the most important event in history. Without it there is no need for the NT or Christianity. Charles Hadden Spurgeon wrote, "Upon a life I did not live, upon a death I did not die, I risk my whole eternity and the resurrection is the why."

A. 3 responses (v. 1-4)

¹Now after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the grave. ²And behold, a severe earthquake had occurred, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it. ³And his appearance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. ⁴The guards shook for fear of him and became like dead men.

1. The Women:

- So, long after the end of the Sabbath as it began to dawn on day one after the Sabbath sets the time for us. It is Sunday morning. Sabbath ended Saturday night. And now maybe ten hours have passed, it's nearing dawning early on Sunday morning. This is the third day the Lord has been in the grave. He was there a part of Friday, the entire Sabbath and so many hours already on Sunday until it began to dawn on the morning of that first day with reference to Sabbath.
- These 2 Marys are mentioned here, but they were just the part of a group of women who came. They were going back to finish the job they had started before the Sabbath dusk. They loved Jesus, they had served with him in Galilee; they had been at the cross; they had been at the tomb the day before. They came with heavy hearts and full of compassion and sympathy. They are loyal...devoted
- On their way they wonder how they will move the stone (Mark 16:3)

- Their purpose was not to see a resurrection, their purpose was to anoint a corpse. Jews didn't embalm and Jewish tradition said that the spirit departed on the 4th day because of the degradation and corruption of the body. The tradition was that at the fourth day the spirit left the body permanently because the body was so decayed and corrupted that the spirit could no longer recognize it. This is tradition which comes into play in [John 11](#). Remember the sister of Lazarus said to the Lord, *"He's already four days dead, by this time he stinketh."*
- They are here to show love and devotion one more time. This is not an act of faith...yet! Although compared to the disciples in hiding they were very courageous. It is not popular to be a Jesus-follower at the time!
- You know why those women were the first to see the angel and the living Christ?
 - ✓ God rewards the faithful and they had served the Lord in the past and so they were to be specially rewarded."
 - ✓ Another writer said, "Death came by a woman in the garden so life comes to a woman in the garden."
 - ✓ Someone else said, "The deepest sorrow deserves the greatest joy."
 - ✓ Another said, "Supreme love deserves supreme privilege."
- Real answer? Because they were there! Simply stated, if you're not there you're not going to see it. They were there and so they saw it. If anybody else would have been there, they would have seen it too.
- [Where are you when God is calling?](#)

2. The Angel:

- The earthquake has occurred before they ever get there. This is the second one in 3 days. Greek word is *seismos*...seismograph.
- It is caused because God's angel had "landed" and moved the stone. But the earthquake was not caused by the resurrection of Christ; it was caused by the arrival of an angel to open the tomb. Nothing, by the way, says that he let Jesus out of the tomb.
- **The angel did not move the stone to let the Lord out. The angel moved the stone to let the women in so they could see that He was already gone.**
- In other passages (Luke/John) it looks like there were 2 there, but only one speaks at a time.
- The angels' glow with God's glory. (Like Moses face when receiving the 10 commandments). His dazzling white garments represent purity and holiness.

3. The Guards:

- The guards who were indifferent to Christianity see this and are so terrified they faint! They went into temporary coma. They were knocked literally unconscious out of terror. They had seen something they had never seen or thought of or ever been able to comprehend. They wake up and realize the body is gone and they are in big trouble. They aren't accustomed to "losing" things. Their jobs and their lives are on the line!
- After they come to, they go tell the Jewish authorities what has happened. The Jewish leaders concoct the story that the body had been stolen and bribe the soldiers with "large sums of money" to tell a lie. (Matthew 28:11-13)
- So the women don't even know about the tomb being guarded or anything. They just see the results.

B. 3 requests (v. 5-7)

⁵The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified. ⁶"He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. Come, see the place where He was lying. ⁷"Go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead; and behold, He is going ahead of you into Galilee, there you will see Him; behold, I have told you."

1. *Do not be afraid:* They needed **comfort**

- Fear was the natural response when seeing angels in the Bible. It often meant death to someone... Passover Angel in Exodus, Holy of Holies in the tabernacle, etc.
- They are also afraid because they think someone may have stolen the body.
- The angel quickly brings them up to speed. He anticipates their question. Where is He? He has risen!
- *Risen* is a word to indicate resurrection from the dead. There's no question that He was dead. That's why the soldiers who were experts at death didn't break His legs, He was already dead. They thrust a spear into His side penetrating the sac around the heart and out came the blood from His heart and the water from the pericardium. He was dead. And these same women, along with Joseph of Arimethea and Nicodemus, had spent some time wrapping His body with 70 pounds of spices. And there been no indication of life. They knew He was dead; and lying in that tomb for this the third day, no question He was dead.
- The angels jolts them with the memory that this is exactly what He said He would do on the third day, just like He said. *Luke 24:8 says, "And they remembered His words."* So, that's what He meant... so that's what He was saying. He really is alive.

2. *Come see the place:* They needed **confirmation**
 - And so as they went on the inside, they got the same message and it's recorded in Mark 16:5-6 Inside the empty that angel repeated the message...twice to emphasize the incredible reality that so stunned their minds.
 - *Was lying:* past tense. Peter actually sees the grave clothes sitting perfectly wrapped as if a body had “slipped” out of them (Luke 24:12 and John 20:5).
3. *Tell His disciples:* They needed **credibility**
 - 2 witnesses were needed to confirm testimony in a court of law. They needed men to certify what had happened not just women!
 - This is not a time to be wasted at the tomb; this is not a time to hang around. Fascination has to give way to proclamation, right? "Go quickly and tell His disciples that He's risen from the dead."
 - The men needed to confirm what the women saw. They didn't believe them at first. They had to see if for themselves!

C. 3 reactions (v. 8-10)

⁸And they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy and ran to report it to His disciples.

1. **Fear**
 - When we are confronted with great spiritual truths, we may be afraid, because we don't understand them.
 - Their fear is only temporary.
 - It starts with fear and transitions to great joy
 - **Application:** Do you fear God today? Why?

2. **Joy**

- When the women found the apostles and delivered their message, the apostles didn't believe them (**Mark 16:13**). That confirms that the disciples didn't steal Christ's body – they didn't even believe the resurrection had occurred (cf. **Luke 24:10-11, 22-25**)!
- As they are running it dawns on them. He is alive. He is A.L.I.V.E. *Always Living in View of Eternity!*
- They are in for a surprise. Not only have they witnessed and empty tomb but now they see the risen savior!

3. **Worship**

- **Christ's greeting (v. 9a)**

⁹And behold, Jesus met them and greeted them. And they came up and took hold of His feet and worshiped Him

There was Christ in His resurrection glory, but what did He say – "Hi"! He greeted them with the normal greeting of their day. It was how people would greet each other as they passed on the roads. In a very simple and warm way Jesus stopped the women and greeted them. Although He was glorified, He had not lost His human tenderness

- **The women's gratitude (v. 9b)**

"They came and held him by the feet, and worshiped him."

They knew He was the risen Christ, so they worshiped Him. He was to be adored, praised, glorified, and honored. They did what Paul says everyone should do: *"At the name of Jesus every knee should bow... and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God, the Father"* (**Phil. 2:10-11**).

- **Jesus' instructions (v. 10)**

¹⁰Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and take word to My brethren to leave for Galilee, and there they will see Me."

His final instructions give them hope and purpose for living!

III. Living for...What should we put our hope in?

A. The Person of **God Himself**

1. Psalm 39:7

⁷"And now, Lord, for what do I wait? My hope is in You.

2. Psalm 31:24

Be strong and let your heart take courage, all you who hope in the LORD.

3. Psalm 62:5

My soul, wait in silence for God only, for my hope is from Him.

4. Col. 1:27

to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

5. I Tim. 4:10

For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men,

B. The Prospect of **Eternal Life**

1. Titus 3:7

so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

2. Col. 1:5

because of the hope laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel

3. I Thes. 5:8

⁸But since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the hope of salvation.

C. The Promises of **Hope**

1. **Scriptures** give us hope (Rom. 15:4)

⁴For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

2. Hope does not **disappoint** (Rom. 5:5)

⁵and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

3. We have a **future** (Jer. 29:11)

¹¹'for I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.

¹⁸Surely there is a future and your hope will not be cut off. Prov. 23:18

¹⁴Know that wisdom is thus for your soul; If you find it, then there will be a future, and your hope will not be cut off. Prov. 24:14

4. Illustration: 22 year-old Angel pitcher, Nick Adenhardt died in a hit and run car wreck late last Wed. night after pitching 6 scoreless innings. This young man thought he had his whole life in front of him. Killed instantly! What is your future tied up in? Do you know where you will go when you die? Do you have the resurrection hope?

Table Talk:

1. What do you tend to put your trust or hope in?
2. When do you think most about God?
3. What would your reaction have been if you came to an empty tomb?
4. Why were the women fearful?
5. How can you explain the fear that turned to joy?
6. What was their response when they see Jesus for the first time?
7. What will your response to Jesus be today?