

Luke 24:36-49

Easter 3; April 18, 2021

### Resurrection Hope is Certain through the Word

*“Certain Hope for Uncertain Times.”* When you look at everything that is going on in this world around us, the words: *CERTAIN HOPE*, may not be the first words you think of. When I watch the news, or read news articles online, I see a whole lot more of uncertainty than certainty. One person says one thing, and another person says the exact opposite. Therefore, since we live in a world that is so full of contrasts, we almost begin to think: *“Whose word do you trust?”*

How do we judge people’s words? I think, we judge a person’s words by their actions. Actions can either support your words or contradict them. Your words are more trustworthy if they’re accompanied by actions that point in the same direction and show the same intention. When they support what you say, you show that the desires, promises, apologies, and intentions you express are all true. Therefore, people trust your words. But if words are not accompanied by actions that confirm them, they become nothing but air moving out of our mouths. You can’t trust someone who says one thing and then goes in a completely different direction.

For three years, Jesus told his disciples that he was here to forgive the sins of the world. He gave them promises like no one else. He promised them forgiveness. He promised them hope. He promised them peace. He backed up those promises with action. Think of how many miracles he did. Think of how many times he just had to say the words, and things began to happen. But the biggest action didn’t happen until he came out of the grave. If Jesus’ bones would turn to dust, then every single word that Jesus spoke would not be true. If you think about it, there is a lot riding on the Resurrection. Our whole eternity is at stake with the empty grave. If Jesus’ words are not backed up with action, our faith goes right out of the window.

When we don’t keep our eyes on the *certain hope* that the Resurrection gives, then we get filled with fear and doubt. That’s what we see happening on Easter Sunday evening in our text. The disciples were so filled with fear and doubt behind those locked doors. The two disciples who had been on their way to Emmaus had just ran back to Jerusalem and told them a story that was hard for them to imagine being true. Jesus was alive. It seemed almost too good to be true. They wanted it to be true. Yet, they were startled and frightened. They were fearful of what the Jewish leaders might do to them. After all, they were part of this *“Jesus movement.”*

But maybe they were afraid that Jesus was actually alive. What if it is true that Jesus is alive? What would Jesus say to his students? What would he say to his chosen band of brothers? Would he be disappointed in them, like he was with them in the middle of a storm on the Sea of Galilee? Or maybe his tone would have that edge of anger, like when he cleared out the temple. *“How dare you? I chose you to be my witnesses, and what did you do? You left me to die.”* I can only imagine all the thoughts that must have been going through all the minds that were locked in that room.

Then it happened. **“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.”** They didn’t know if they should be excited or scared to death. Satan was working hard that evening. He wanted the faith of those disciples crushed. He wanted them afraid. He wanted them to doubt. He didn’t want them to hear those words from Jesus: **“Peace be with you!”**

But Jesus had a different plan. He wanted them to take all their guilt, all their fears, all their sorrows and lay them in front of the open tomb. He wanted them to lay them in front of an empty cross. He wanted them to be sure that He had won victory over death and the grave. That victory replaces guilt with forgiveness; it replaces fear with courage; it replaces sorrow with joy.

The whole Bible is about how God undertook a rescue mission to save us from the misery we had brought upon ourselves. God did this by sending His Son to be the Savior of the world. This Savior, decisively dealt with sin by taking sin upon Himself. He overcame death by dying. He defeated the Ancient Serpent by crushing its head, while subjecting Himself to its venomous bite.

That's what Jesus wanted them to know. **"He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."** He wanted them to know that they could now trust every single word that God had given them in the Bible. He wanted them to know that if you want certain hope in uncertain times, you find it in the Resurrection. Because the Resurrection Hope is certain, you find hope and promise in every word in the Bible.

Jesus wants you to know that he has the same certain hope he gives you. He knows that there are times that we are scared and frightened. He knows the uncertainty that cancer may bring into our life. He knows that you are worried because you just lost your job or your job is uncertain. He knows the struggles that go around in your heads sometimes. He knows the challenges that we are facing. He knows your hopes and your dreams. He knows it all. We live lives that are fear-filled at times and lives that are filled with amazement. Through all those different ups and downs in life, we have a Savior who says to us: **Peace be with you!**

Over the next four weeks we'll see the *Certainty that Resurrection Hope* gives us. May we give thanks that *Resurrection Hope is Certain through the Word!* Amen.