

## Scripture Lessons for The Third Sunday of Easter

**Psalms 116:1-14** (NIV) <sup>1</sup>I love the LORD, for he heard my voice; he heard my cry for mercy. <sup>2</sup>Because he turned his ear to me, I will call on him as long as I live. <sup>3</sup>The cords of death entangled me, the anguish of the grave came upon me; I was overcome by trouble and sorrow. <sup>4</sup>Then I called on the name of the LORD: "O LORD, save me!" <sup>5</sup>The LORD is gracious and righteous; our God is full of compassion. <sup>6</sup>The LORD protects the simplehearted; when I was in great need, he saved me. <sup>7</sup>Be at rest once more, O my soul, for the LORD has been good to you. <sup>8</sup>For you, O LORD, have delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling, <sup>9</sup>that I may walk before the LORD in the land of the living. <sup>10</sup>I believed; therefore I said, "I am greatly afflicted." <sup>11</sup>And in my dismay I said, "All men are liars." <sup>12</sup>How can I repay the LORD for all his goodness to me? <sup>13</sup>I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD. <sup>14</sup>I will fulfill my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people.

**Acts 2:14a, 36-41** (NIV) Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: . . .

<sup>36</sup>"Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." <sup>37</sup>When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" <sup>38</sup>Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. <sup>39</sup>The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call." <sup>40</sup>With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." <sup>41</sup>Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

**Luke 24:13-35** (NIV) <sup>13</sup>Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup>They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. <sup>15</sup>As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; <sup>16</sup>but they were kept from recognizing him. <sup>17</sup>He asked them, "What are you discussing together as you walk along?" They stood still, their faces downcast. <sup>18</sup>One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, "Are you only a visitor to Jerusalem and do not know the things that have happened there in these days?" <sup>19</sup>"What things?" he asked. "About Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. <sup>20</sup>The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; <sup>21</sup>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. <sup>22</sup>In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning <sup>23</sup>but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. <sup>24</sup>Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see." <sup>25</sup>He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! <sup>26</sup>Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" <sup>27</sup>And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. <sup>28</sup>As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus acted as if he were going farther. <sup>29</sup>But they urged him strongly, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them. <sup>30</sup>When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. <sup>31</sup>Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. <sup>32</sup>They asked each other, "Were not our

hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?" <sup>33</sup>They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together <sup>34</sup>and saying, "It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon." <sup>35</sup>Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.

**1 Peter 1:13-25** (NIV) <sup>13</sup>Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your **hope** fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed. <sup>14</sup>As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. <sup>15</sup>But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; <sup>16</sup>for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy." <sup>17</sup>Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear. <sup>18</sup>For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, <sup>19</sup>but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. <sup>20</sup>He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. <sup>21</sup>Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and **hope** are in God. <sup>22</sup>Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart. <sup>23</sup>For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. <sup>24</sup>For, "All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, <sup>25</sup>but the word of the Lord stands forever." And this is the word that was preached to you.

## Incomparable Hope

1 Peter 1:13-25

- ❑ Incomparable because of the grace to be given us (verse 13; John 1:16; Romans 5:2-3; 1 Peter 5:12; Ephesians 2:5, 7)
- ❑ Incomparable because of the costliness of our redemption (verses 18-20)
- ❑ Incomparable because of the victory Jesus won over death (verse 21; 1 Corinthians 15:57; Hebrews 2:14-15)
- ❑ Incomparable because we have been born again through the living and enduring word of God (verses 23-25)
- ❑ Incomparable because of its purifying power (verses 14-17, 22; 1 John 3:2-3, 9; Ephesians 4:22-24; Titus 2:11-14)

## Incomparable Hope

1 Peter 1:13-25

There are educated people today, novelists, inventors, doctors, scientists, researchers, who say that human beings were meant to become something more than are right now.

And these people believe that the means to achieve this are already available through genetic and cybernetic engineering—they just need to be fine-tuned and the details worked out. Their clear goal is to create a post-human or trans-human species—*homo supra-sapiens*, as it were—that will be so superior to present human beings so as to no longer be human.

They are, of course, right—and wrong!

They are right. We were made for something more—something greater—but it is not going to be achieved through genetic or cybernetic engineering.

You and I were created to be holy.

Whatever the pipe dreams are of transhumanists—they are not to create a holy people.

We were meant to live forever with the Lord in perfect holiness and righteousness

It is a future and a destiny that we can hardly begin to grasp because it is so radically different from who we are now and what we experience in this life.

Last week, we heard in 1 Peter 1:3, that we have been given *new birth into a living hope* through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and how that fills us with an **inexpressible joy**.

This week Peter expands on that living hope. The message this morning is titled, **Incomparable Hope**. *Incomparable* means it cannot be compared to any other hope we might have in this life; it is matchless.

As I read the text this morning from 1 Peter 1:13-25, listen for what it says about this *Incomparable Hope*.

**1 Peter 1:13-25** (NIV) <sup>13</sup>Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your **hope** fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.

<sup>14</sup>As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. <sup>15</sup>But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; <sup>16</sup>for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy." <sup>17</sup>Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear. <sup>18</sup>For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, <sup>19</sup>but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. <sup>20</sup>He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. <sup>21</sup>Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and **hope** are in God. <sup>22</sup>Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart. <sup>23</sup>For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. <sup>24</sup>For, "All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, <sup>25</sup>but the word of the Lord stands forever." And this is the word that was preached to you.

Let us pray: Heavenly Father, help us to know and comprehend this invaluable, incomparable, living hope that we have in Jesus because of His resurrection from the dead. Teach us what this hope means for our lives today and for eternity. We pray in Jesus name, amen!

*Set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.*

Our hope is in Jesus, living and coming again. *He is our incomparable hope.*

But what is hope? It is a confident expectation of a future fulfillment of a present desire. We desire something, but the fulfillment of it is yet in the future.

For instance, we are hopeful that the quarantine will be lifted so we can gather again with family and friends—to share a meal together or perhaps to celebrate a wedding or grieve together at a funeral.

Hope, is looking forward to a future fulfillment of a present desire. The problem is our culture doesn't easily comprehend the idea of hope. Because we live in a society of instant gratification, the idea of a future fulfillment of a desire we have now is foreign to us. If we have a desire, we fulfill it now!

To quote the apostle Paul in Romans 8:24-25, "Who hopes for what they already have? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently."

Worldly hope is always uncertain. You might say, "I hope I pass the math quiz today," even though you didn't study for it. Someone might say, "Billy is our only hope of winning the baseball game." They say that because Billy is capable of hitting a home run and clearing the bases. But in this game, he has struck out 3 out of 4 times at bat. Billy may be their only hope, but he isn't by any means a certain hope.

Biblical hope is always sure and certain because it is based on the promises of God. If you downloaded the outline of this message, I've listed five reasons from this passage why Biblical hope cannot be compared to worldly hope. First, it is

- ❑ Incomparable because of the grace to be given us (verse 13; John 1:16; Romans 5:2-3; 1 Peter 5:12; Ephesians 2:5, 7)

*<sup>13</sup>Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.*

This verse tells us that we are to live focused, self-controlled lives in the present, not only because of the grace God has given us in the past, nor just by the grace God gives us in the present, but because of the grace God will give us in the future.

Grace is receiving what we do not deserve and cannot earn. It is God's free gift of forgiveness, salvation and eternal life!

We certainly should live in gratitude for the grace God has already given us in Jesus:

*John 1:16 From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. (NIV)*

We also experience God's grace daily. The apostle Paul tells us in Romans 5:1-2 that through *Jesus Christ, . . . we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God.*

Peter ends this letter by saying, *this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it* (1 Peter 5:12).

So, our lives should be lived in gratitude for past grace, by the power of present grace, but also in anticipation of future grace!

Ephesians chapter 2 tells us what that future grace with look like: *it is by grace you have been saved . . . in order that in the coming ages [God] might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.* (Ephesians 2:5, 7)

That is the grace on which we are fully setting our hope.

Second, the hope we have is

- ❑ Incomparable because of the costliness of our redemption (verses 18-20)

*<sup>18</sup>For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were*

*redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, <sup>19</sup>but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. <sup>20</sup>He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake.*

We have an incorporable, matchless hope because of the price Jesus paid. We can never take for granted what cost God so dearly.

Third, our hope is

- ❑ Incomparable because of the victory Jesus won over death (verse 21; 1 Corinthians 15:57; Hebrews 2:14-15)

*<sup>21</sup>Through him [Jesus] you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.*

As we heard last week (I Peter 1:3), we have this *living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead*

1 Corinthians 15:57 *But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.* (NIV)

We have an incomparable hope because of the victory Jesus won for us over death, sin and the devil.

Hebrews 2:14-15 (NIV) says: *<sup>14</sup>Since the children have flesh and blood, [Jesus also] shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.*

We have *faith and hope* in God because of the resurrection of Jesus from dead. Death is not the end, it is the beginning of the glorious inheritance God has prepared for us—our incomparable hope.

Fourth, this hope is

- ❑ Incomparable because we have been born again through the living and enduring word of God (verses 23-25)

*<sup>23</sup>For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. <sup>24</sup>For, "All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, <sup>25</sup>but the word of the Lord stands forever." And this is the word that was preached to you.*

In the gospels, the good seed is the word of God.

Seeds are a picture of hope. You bury seeds in the ground with the hope of a harvest—whether flowers or fruit or vegetables or grain.

Have you thought about planting your garden this year? Some things you have to plant every year (annuals) and some things come up again, or bloom year after year (perennials). The word of God is the ultimate perennial. It is the seed that continues to reap a harvest for eternity. That is our living hope.

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, because this is Peter's main focus in this passage, this hope is

- ❑ Incomparable because of its purifying power (verses 14-17, 22; 1 John 3:2-3, 9; Ephesians 4:22-24; Titus 2:11-14)

*<sup>14</sup>As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. <sup>15</sup>But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; <sup>16</sup>for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy." <sup>17</sup>Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear.*

*<sup>22</sup>Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart.*

This incomparable, matchless hope has the power to purify our lives because it focuses our thoughts and desires on Jesus.

Hebrews 3:1 (NIV) *Therefore, holy brothers [and sisters], who share in the heavenly calling [our incomparable hope], fix your thoughts on Jesus,*

In 1 John 3:2-3, we are given this wonderful picture of *the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed: <sup>2</sup>Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears [Jesus], we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. <sup>3</sup>Everyone who has this hope in him [Jesus] purifies himself, just as he [Jesus] is pure.* (NIV)

A better translation of verse 16 is, *You shall be holy, for I am holy.* It is in the future tense. When we see Jesus, we shall be holy, because *we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.*

*<sup>3</sup>Everyone who has this hope in him [Jesus] purifies himself, just as he [Jesus] is pure.*

This incomparable hope has a purifying power because it fixes our eyes on Jesus.

As I said last week, being *born again to a living hope*, means we are given a whole new life and we are to live it in a whole new way.

The apostle Paul emphasized that in Ephesians 4:22-24: *You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; <sup>23</sup>to be made new in the attitude of your minds; <sup>24</sup>and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.* (NIV)

Oswald Chambers wrote in *My Utmost for His Highest*, that our purpose in life “is not happiness, nor health, but holiness.” This is what we were created to be.

1 John 3:9 tells us: *No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God.*

We have God’s spiritual DNA. That is why Peter says in our passage to *Be holy, because [God is] holy.* He is quoting what God said in Leviticus 11:45: *“Be holy, because I am holy.”*

We are told in Titus 2:11-14 (ESV):  
*<sup>11</sup>For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, <sup>12</sup>training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, <sup>13</sup>waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, <sup>14</sup>who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.*

Jesus is our blessed hope, our incomparable hope, our matchless hope. Every other hope in life fades in comparison because Jesus is our only sure and certain hope through His resurrection from the dead.

*<sup>13</sup>Therefore, . . . set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.*

*that in the coming ages [God] might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.*

Let us pray,

Benediction:

Romans 15:13 (NIV)

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.