

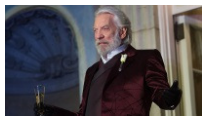
**Christ Community Covenant Church**  
**“The Miracles of Calvary” Resurrection Sunday!**  
**Pastor Dave Scherrer – March 27, 2016**

**Hope is dangerous.**

You know how I know that? I learned it at the movies. I learned that in Hunger Games.



Hunger games, in case you've been sleeping since 2012 is a very successful movie series drawn from a very successful book series by Suzanne Collins. **Hope is dangerous.** That's what President Snow said;



In the first hunger games movie, the world is ostensibly kept peaceful through a series of games, gladiator-like duels to the death. These so called “Hunger Games” are then broadcast to the various working class communities of a post war dystopia world. These games are used by the politically powerful to keep the worker communities in fear and therefore in control for the rich and powerful. “Hope”, President Snow says, “must be contained.” Too much hope is dangerous. President Snow's warning;

**“Hope is the only thing more powerful than fear.”**

President Snow didn't want the people to have hope.

Hope. The Saturday before the resurrection had to be a day without hope. The disciples would have been devastated by the recent turn of events. Imagine - one minute Jesus is being celebrated on the streets of Jerusalem with palm branches and shouting Hosanna. Now just six days later - this! Jesus murdered! This great movement of their Rabbi, they believe to be the very Son of God - the movement He had started – seemed to die with him. The future was lost, they were filled with fear. They probably figured by now that they were now on the Jerusalem 10 Most Wanted list - their lives were next it seems. They were filled with fear. Their hope was gone. What would the days ahead bring? These followers had given up so much, careers and callings, families and friends, just to follow Christ. Would fear cause them to slink back, maybe disappear into the cracks of the culture, would they forsake this new faith?? So many questions and so few answers.

Writing about the crucifixion, theologian Ralph Earle says this about the hope it gives:

*“True, it was the world's blackest hour, but also the world's brightest hour. The crucifixion was the blackest hour because human hatred came to its fiercest focus. The crucifixion was the brightest hour because divine love came to its fullest flower. At the cross, all the sins of the ages were placed on the bloodied shoulders of the sinless Son of God, as he became the ransom for all humanity.*”

**From the cross, salvation flows to every believing soul. This is the gospel, the greatest good news the world had ever heard. It is the one true and only hope that casts out all fear.”**

**~ Ralph Earle Jr., Theologian**

The hope of the cross.

Have you ever been there? A place of uncertainty, a place of darkness and despair? Your life seemingly hanging in the balance between what was and possibly what could be and it doesn't seem like you can

get there from here. Maybe today, right here right now, you're lacking hope. For the story of Christ, we know the ending. We know that Christ did rise again and the movement called 'Christianity' not only survived, but transforms the entire world. For your life, though, for your story . . . what does the future hold? What will the coming days, weeks and months bring?

What we know is that ***life without hope is despair but life with hope is dangerous.***

**Life without hope is despair, but life with hope is dangerous!**

Life ***without hope*** is desperate. Despairing. Dark. Lonely, so terribly lonely. Life without hope keeps us in bed when we know we should be at school or work. Life without hope is a form of walking death. Life without hope often becomes a path toward self-destruction. Have you been on this path?

But . . .

Life ***with hope*** - that is very different. Hope is dangerous. It's exciting, exhilarating, risky, forward looking and brisk. Hope gives us a *raison de vivre!* A reason to live! Hope makes our lives dangerous, because we believe we can't be stopped. Because every good deed done in Christ gives us the hope that we will be making a difference not only in this world and the next. Hope is life! Hope is power! Hope is dangerous!

Let me try and make this point from the Easter story. Let's look at the story of some women without hope early on the Sunday morning of the resurrection. From Luke's account of the resurrection of Jesus we read, (Luke 24:1-12):

**Luke 24:1-12**

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. (*spices were to anoint the body and they didn't have time to do that on Friday night when he was killed, so they wanted to do it now after the Sabbath*). And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, 'Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. Remember how He told you, while He was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise.' And they remembered His words, and returning from the tomb they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles, but these words seemed to them as idle tale, and they did not believe them. But Peter rose and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; and he went home marveling at what had happened."

This passage is about the battle of faith. What are we going to believe? Are we going to trust God's Word? Or are we going to give in to despair? What I think is interesting is that Jesus Himself does not appear to anyone in this part of the resurrection account that Luke writes. I think this is really important because Luke is pointing our attention to something significant – and that is that hope is producing faith – faith in the words of Christ.

I don't want to diminish the love and devotion of these women for Jesus. But whatever else motivated these gals to go to the tomb, their purpose was based in unbelief. Jesus had told them many times He was not going to be in that tomb, and the very fact that they went to that tomb with spices for burial expecting Him to be there is an indication that they didn't believe Jesus' words! This is the point in this passage. When the angel begins to speak, what does the angel say? "Why are you looking for the living among the dead?" Jesus had told them that He wasn't going to stay dead. He was going to be crucified, killed, buried, and He was going to rise on the third day, ALIVE! And so the very first words of the angel are an indication that there was a faith problem here. They hadn't listened to Jesus' words or at least they didn't put any faith in them.

The angels said: **“Remember how He told you while He was still in Galilee that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise.”** The Angels were admonishing the women saying, “Remember Jesus’ words! You will not be able to make sense of any of this unless you remember Jesus’ words. The way for you to understand this event, the way for you to understand the resurrection is to go back to Jesus’ words and remember them.” And then Luke, just in case we missed it, tells us in verse 8 that **the women remembered His words!**

**The women remembered His words!**

And the women remembered! And everything they do in the rest of this passage has all the marks of hope. Remembering Jesus’ words gave them hope – really big hope. Dangerous faith-filled hope! Brave life-changing hope! They go running back to the disciples who are hiding in a dark room probably at their headquarters in Bethany filled with fear and doubt – every bit as unbelieving as these women - and the women say, “Let us tell you what we saw and what we didn’t see and what the angels said to us!” And even when the disciples blow them off, the women persist in this bedrock belief and hope in what they’ve remembered and what they’ve been told and what they’ve seen.

So why is that so important to us? Well it's important, because **the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is the root of our hope.**

**The resurrection is the root of our hope!**

We all need hope, but what we don’t need is some kind of groundless, ‘pie in the sky,’ unsubstantiated hope. A hope that is really only wishful thinking. That kind of false hope doesn’t do anyone any good. We need real hope and that hope comes from the resurrection. The resurrection is the very ground of our assurance of the forgiveness of sins. In the resurrection of the Lord, God is publicly revealing that He has accepted the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for our transgressions. God is saying to everyone who believes on Jesus Christ, **“Your sins have been forgiven by the work of My Son on the cross, in the tomb, and in the resurrection.”**

And I have one more thought but just as important; not only is the resurrection *the root of our hope in life*, the resurrection also reminds us that we love and serve and worship **a Living Savior**. The angels said it, didn't they? “Why are you looking for the living among the dead?” He's a **Living Savior**. A theologian by the name of Timothy Johnson reminds us . . .

“The resurrection is the starting point of Christian religion. Jesus didn't found the church by his ministry. The church came into being because of the resurrection. Everything that Christians do, every time they pray to God through Jesus, there's **the conviction that Jesus is more powerfully alive and more available to humans now than in his earthly ministry**. If we don't start with the living Jesus, then we're not Christian.”  
~ Timothy Luke Johnson, Emory University

You know that this means? It means that you can talk to Him right here right now. It means that you can know Him and you can know His love and grace and forgiveness. It means that He is a Good Shepherd who walks with you in the valley of the shadow of death. It means you can have a relationship with Him and be at peace with God. Our ultimate hope is that our bodies too will one day be raised from the dead. You know the Christian hope is not that we will go off into some weird spirit world or some fairy land; it's that one day our bodies will be raised out of the tomb, glorified and perfected and we will live with God forever.

We've been singing this morning about that fact that this same power that raised Jesus from the dead is alive in those who are found in Christ. Paul writes in the great chapter 8 of Romans:

**Romans 8:11**

<sup>11</sup> The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you.

**Now that is hope!**

**Hope is the story of Easter!  
Hope is the story of God!**

So I am wondering, do you know this story? A better question is, "Are you part of the story of God?" In a moment, I'm going to have you stand with me and if you are a believer of Jesus who lived and died and is risen, then I want to invite you to repeat a confession with me. If you are visiting here with us today, maybe hearing all this for the first time, you too may want to say for the very first time a confession of faith to ground your hope in the Living One that will not fail you. And if you are visiting and this is all still a mystery and you're not too sure about all this, you can just stand silently and let this be a moment for you and God to connect a little bit.

Let's all stand and if you believe let's confess together

**I believe as the women believed, those who were the last at the cross and the first at the empty tomb.**

**I believe with the first believers and stand on the shoulders of other believers across time and space, who have believed, confessed and taught that God raised Jesus from the dead, and that in so doing he vanquished sin and death.**

**So, with believers from around the world and across the ages, I join the Easter chorus -  
"Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!"**

### **Closing**

I hope you have experienced the Living One this morning. I hope you have experienced a miracle of faith expanded or hope renewed. Remember His words. As we have been singing, this same power that raised Jesus from the dead is alive in you if you remember and believe in the Words of Jesus. He is alive! He is risen from the dead!

### **Benediction**

#### **1 Peter 1:3**

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who according to his great mercy has begotten us anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.