

CAPITAL BIBLE CHURCH

April 16, 2016

SERMON NOTES

PASTOR BILL HAKEN

Series: The Hope of Easter

"The Hope of Easter"

1 Cor. 15:19

Big Idea: Jesus rose from the dead to give me hope and life eternal!

A Sunday School teacher had just finished telling her third graders about how Jesus was crucified and placed in a tomb with a great stone sealing the opening. Then, wanting to share the excitement of the resurrection, she asked: "And what do you think were Jesus' first words when He came bursting out of that tomb alive?" A hand shot up into the air from the rear of the classroom. Attached to it was the arm of a little girl. Leaping out of her chair she shouted out excitedly "I know, I know!" "Good" said the teacher, "Tell us, what were Jesus first words." And extending her arms high into the air she said: "TA-DA!"

The resurrected Lord is the central event of our faith. It's the "TA-DA!" of Christianity. And because of Easter, we know that God in Christ Jesus is more powerful than anything in life, even death.

The resurrection is not just another thing we believe as Christians, it is the very center of our faith. Everything hinges on the resurrection. And you realize that when life smacks you in the face.

1. Life can be very hopeless.

George Bernard Shaw is perhaps most renowned as a free thinker and liberal philosopher. In his last writings we read, "The science to which I pinned my faith is bankrupt. Its counsels, which should have established the millennium, led, instead, directly to the suicide of Europe. I believed them once. In their name I helped to destroy the faith of millions of worshippers in the temples of a thousand creeds. And now they look at me and witness the great tragedy of an atheist who has lost his faith." George Bernard Shaw.

2. People have no hope without God.

*Ephesians 2:12 Remember that in the past you were without Christ...you had no hope, and you did not know God.*

A philosopher of earlier in this century, Bertrand Russell was an outspoken atheist. He even wrote a book called Why I Am Not A Christian. When Russell was 81 years old, he was interviewed on a British Broadcasting Corporation radio talk show. The interviewer asked him what he had to hang onto when death was obviously so close. Russell responded, "I have nothing to hang onto but grim, unyielding despair." What an honest yet hopeless response. You see, when you live only for this life, when you invest your life in the flesh, when you think that this is all there is, you can't help but live in despair.

3. Why is hope so important?

When Jewish psychiatrist Victor Frankl was arrested by the Nazis in World War II, he was stripped of everything--property, family, possessions. He had spent years researching and writing a book on the importance of finding meaning in life--concepts that later would be known as logotherapy,

When he arrived in Auschwitz, the infamous death camp, even his manuscript, which he had hidden in the lining of his coat, was taken away.

"I had to undergo and overcome the loss of my spiritual child," Frankl wrote. "Now it seemed as if nothing and no one would survive me; neither a physical nor a spiritual child of my own! I found myself confronted with the question of whether under such circumstances my life was ultimately void of any meaning."

He was still wrestling with that question a few days later when the Nazis forced the prisoners to give up their clothes. "I had to surrender my clothes and in turn inherited the worn out rags of an inmate who had been sent to the gas chamber," said Frankl. "Instead of the many pages of my manuscript, I found in the pocket of the newly acquired coat a single page torn out of a Hebrew prayer book, which contained the main Jewish prayer, "Shema Yisrael" (Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one God. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.) "How should I have interpreted such a 'coincidence' other than as a challenge to "live" my thoughts instead of merely putting them on paper?"

Later, as Frankl reflected on his ordeal, he wrote in his book *Man's Search for Meaning*, "There is nothing in the world that would so effectively help one to survive even the worst conditions, as the knowledge that there is a meaning in one's life. ... 'He who has a "why" to live for can bear almost any "how" .'"

The school system in a large city had a program to help children keep up with their school work during stays in the city's hospitals. One day a teacher who was assigned to the program received a routine call asking her to visit a particular child. She took the child's name and room number and talked briefly with the child's regular class teacher. "We're studying nouns and adverbs in his class now," the regular teacher said, "and I'd be grateful if you could help him understand them so he doesn't fall too far behind."

The hospital program teacher went to see the boy that afternoon. No one had mentioned to her that the boy had been badly burned and was in great pain. Upset at the sight of the boy, she stammered as she told him, "I've been sent by your school to help you with nouns and adverbs." When she left she felt she hadn't accomplished much.

But the next day, a nurse asked her, "What did you do to that boy?" The teacher felt she must have done something wrong and began to apologize. "No, no," said the nurse. "You don't know what I mean. We've been worried about that little boy, but ever since yesterday, his whole attitude has changed. He's fighting back, responding to treatment. It's as though he's decided to live."

Two weeks later the boy explained that he had completely given up hope until the teacher arrived. Everything changed when he came to a simple realization. He expressed it this way: "They wouldn't send a teacher to work on nouns and adverbs with a dying boy, would they?"

4. How does Jesus' resurrection give us hope?

*1 Peter 1:3 Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. By His great mercy we are born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.*

*Hebrews 6:18 These two things cannot change: God cannot lie when he makes a promise, and he cannot lie when he makes an oath. These things encourage us who came to God for safety. They give us strength to hold on to the hope we have been given.*

*19 We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, sure and strong.*

*1 Corinthians 15:19-20 (NLT)*

*19 And if our hope in Christ is only for this life, we are more to be pitied than anyone in the world.*

*20 But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead. He is the first of a great harvest of all who have died.*

*26 And the last enemy to be destroyed is death.*