

“The Reason for Our Hope” – Pr Jim Sprengle

Easter 6 – May 10, 2026

- I. **1 Peter 3:15-16** – “¹⁵ In your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you. ¹⁶ yet do it with gentleness and respect.”
- II. **The hope that is in you.**
 - a. As Christians, we have a hope in us that gives a sense of direction and peace, as we look forward to the promises of God.
 - i. We were talking in our Adult Bible Class a couple of weeks ago about the difference between hope and faith.
 - ii. Faith is like this... first of all, God gives us faith by the power of the Holy Spirit – and it allows us to receive His grace and forgiveness.
 1. But once we have this gift of faith, it continues to grow and trust in God – in all that He has done, and what He will do.
 - iii. Hope is an eager expectation of the promises of God which will be realized through faith.
 1. You might say that hope flows from our faith... as we trust in God for all things, hope cannot help but come from looking forward to all the blessings God has in store for us.
 - b. In a recent article from Relevant Magazine, it says that one of the most searched terms over the last five years is “hope.”
 - i. When you think about all the different things that are going on in the world in the last half decade, and the term “hope” is searched on more than things like political upheavals, technology breakthroughs, or even “how to make money online.”
 - ii. It’s interesting, if you go back to other times like the financial crisis of 2008, the big search word was “prayer.”
 - iii. In March of 2020, at the beginning of Covid, the word was “faith.”
 - iv. Yet, for the past five years or so, “hope” is the word that people want to explore... or maybe figure out what it means or how to have it.
 - v. It seems that there are so many ups and downs – what the Bible calls trials and tribulations – and for many, the future is bleak...
 1. Certainly, we hear about those born in the 1980’s and later as they struggle to save enough to buy a home, or they are swimming in debt from college loans and don’t even work in the field of their degree, and they look ahead and don’t see a bright future... or any kind of stability.
 2. But the persistent trend of searching for hope shows that people aren’t looking for help with a single problem or catastrophe, but we have uncertainty that is ongoing... the lack of a “bright future” in their minds... and just maybe, a Google

search on “hope” can help them figure out how to see a better future.¹

- c. Now, I think you all probably have an idea of what I will say, but Google searches, asking AI or any type of artificial intelligence, or going on a spiritual search by reading lots of books on world religions are not going to help anyone find the hope they so desperately seek.
 - i. The only source of true hope is faith in Jesus Christ, who is the fulfillment of God’s rescue plan.
 - ii. In fact, one of our great hymns, “My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less,” reminds us why we hope ... as some of the words are:
 1. My hope is built on nothing less, than Jesus’ blood and righteousness.
 2. In ev’ry high and stormy gale, My anchor holds within the veil.
 3. His oath, His covenant and blood, Support me in the raging flood; When ev’ry earthly prop gives way, He then is all my hope and stay.
 4. And the refrain: On Christ, the solid rock, I stand; All other ground is sinking sand.
 5. You see, this is a hymn that helps us sing about the hope we have in Christ alone and through the most challenging ups and downs in life, we still look forward to a “bright future.”
- d. As Christians, we have a hope in us that transcends the world... and Peter reminds us that we are always ready to share it with those around us.

III. **Our text in 1 Peter** is about suffering for doing what’s right for God.

- a. Every person faces trials and tribulations, but even Jesus reminds us that when we face hardship for honoring Him, we are blessed.
- b. In the history of humankind, people respond to trials and tribulations by turning away from God and harming others... or turning toward God and loving others.
 - i. When we do the latter, we are honoring the holy name of God, or as we pray in the Lord’s Prayer, hallowing His name.
 - ii. Even when we may be mistreated... or the struggles we face are unjust and unfair... yet we still in our “hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy.” (v 15)
- c. You see, these are times when someone may look at your actions and trust in God, and rather than typing the keyword, “hope” into their Google search bar... they ask you instead.
 - i. You have had constant suffering as you battle cancer... and still praise God and trust Him... Why?
 - ii. You were fired from your job because you did the right thing, and you are just as hopeful as ever... What gives?
 - iii. Your property and belongings were destroyed in a natural disaster, and you don’t blame God but give Him thanks... What is going on?

- iv. You buried your husband after fifty years of marriage... and though your heart is broken, you still speak about the resurrection and eternal life with confidence... How can you still have peace?
- d. What do you say when someone asks you why...?
 - i. Peter says “be prepared to make a defense” – or you might just say, be ready to give an account of why you have hope.
 - ii. What can you tell another person about your love for Jesus and what He has done for you?
 - iii. What can you say about the God of the Bible, about the sin that infects every human, and about His rescue plan that became a source of your salvation?
 - iv. What can you say about the Lord Jesus, who willingly died on the cross to pay for the sins of all humanity... especially your own?
 - v. What can you tell someone about the Jesus who conquered death and blesses us with the same promise through faith in Him?
 - vi. What would you say about your baptism and that God adopted you... promising forgiveness and eternal life as you were called His own?
 - vii. And what can you say about the hope you have for a bright future in spite of the trials and tribulations that harass you every single day?

IV. **The reason for our hope.**

- a. Back in 1986 Huey Lewis and the News sang a song called, “The Future’s So Bright, I Gotta Wear Shades” – but forty years later in 2026, many of the youth of our day cannot see a bright future at all.
- b. There is no blessing on earth that will match a relationship with Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, and whether people know it or not, there is no hope outside of Him.
 - i. The fact is that in Christ we are without fear of any earthly problem... sin cannot condemn us because Jesus paid the price for it... death cannot separate us because Jesus promises that we have an eternal home with Him... and satan cannot devour us because he was defeated by the victory in Jesus.
 - ii. Sure, we may face trials and tribulations, but they have no real power over any of us who have faith in Jesus... and flowing from that faith, a hope in the future that transcends the world we live in.
- c. And so, when the world searches for hope, we already know where it is found.
 - i. Our hope is not built on the economy, politics, our health, our possessions, or even the stability of this world.
 - ii. Our hope is built on Jesus Christ crucified and risen.
 - iii. That is why Christians can suffer and still sing... grieve and still give thanks... face death and still speak about life.

- iv. The world may look at us and wonder, “How can you still have peace?” ... And with gentleness and respect, we point them not to ourselves, but to Christ....
- v. Because the tomb is empty, the future is bright for all who belong to Him. Amen.

¹ Source: Annie Eisner, “Hope’s Google Spike: Are We Desperate or Devout?” Relevant Magazine (3-3-25)