

Our HOPE is in CHRIST, THE RISEN LORD!



Hal Lindsey, an American evangelist, remarked, “*One can live about forty days without food, about three days without water, about eight minutes without air, but only one second without HOPE.*” In other words, hope is so crucial to our everyday existence. Research has shown that people without hope are the most eligible candidates for suicide. Elderly people without hope die much earlier than those with hope.

In the Bible, the word ‘hope’ is not the same as we use in daily language, “*I hope I get married! I hope I win the contest! I hope my business flourishes!*” **In the Bible, the word hope means ‘certainty’.** Our hope is certain and is centered on Jesus, the Christ!

If you ask me, “Why do I follow Jesus? Why am I a Christian?” I would say, “I believe in Him because he suffered, died and rose again. There have been many religious leaders claiming to be the Saviors, **but there has been ONLY ONE who proved it by His death and resurrection!**” Resurrection is so crucial and foundational to Christian faith.

Look at the overwhelming proof of the Resurrection: *‘The disciples of Jesus’!* They were so afraid at first that they just ran away when Jesus was crucified! What changed them then? **How could they no longer be afraid, even of dying?** See, how all of them died – Peter, Andrew, Simon, Bartholomew crucified; Mathew and James (son of Zebedee) slain; Mark dragged by horses; Mathias and James stoned; Thomas speared; and Luke hanged! They didn’t hesitate even a bit to risk their life, for; **the RESURRECTION of JESUS was REAL!**

C. S. Lewis says, “*Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance. The only thing it cannot be is moderately important.*” For some of us, the death and resurrection of Christ is only a matter of intellect, it has not reached the heart. Once we have truly encountered the reality of the Risen Savior, we too will do what the disciples did! We will go out of our way to live for Jesus and shout aloud to the world, **‘JESUS IS RISEN! REJOICE!’** As we celebrate the Resurrection of the Lord this Easter, let’s focus on the five assurances that His resurrection brings: **Pardon, Power, Purpose, Presence and Promise.**

1. Assurance of PARDON

“As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us!”(Psalm 103:12)

According to a famous psychiatrist, fifty percent of his patients could be discharged and they didn’t have to see him anymore, if he could only convince them that they are forgiven. Guilt lies beneath most of our wounds and illnesses. But, let’s praise God! In Jesus, we are assured absolute forgiveness!

2. Assurance of POWER

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.”(Matthew 28:18)

The Presidents are powerful, but not outside their country. But, the Bible tells us, Jesus has authority over nature, demons, illnesses, and even over death. If we truly believe in the supremacy of Jesus, why should we ever worry! If we worry, then our God would be too small! We need to just lay our case before Him, allow Him to act and experience the Miracles!

3. Assurance of PURPOSE

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you”. (Matthew 28:18-20)

Mark Twain says, “*The two most important days in your life are, the day you are born and the day you find out why.*” For some of us, our mission is limited to becoming popular, powerful, rich or successful. **Are we investing our life with others to help them come to**

Jesus? ‘Making disciples’ doesn’t mean just helping people believe in Jesus, **but to help them become Christ-like**, that’s the true purpose of our life. It’s only then that pain and suffering would become meaningful for us because we would know that **‘PAIN’ is the tool that God uses to mould our character, to mould us into Christ’ likeness.**

4. Assurance of PRESENCE

“And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”(Matthew 28:20)

Do you feel lonely? **Practise the Presence of Jesus!** A young lady proudly told her friend, *“Whenever I go out, I look at the Crucifix at the entrance of my house, and I say, Goodbye Jesus, see you later”*. The friend replied, *“I rather say, ‘Jesus, Come, let’s go!’”* That’s the joy of His presence that He has promised to us, at home, at work, in health, in illness, on the hill, in the valley, in life and in death!

5. Assurance of the amazing PROMISE

“Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed - in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”(1 Corinthians 15:51-52)

I met a lady who was bed-ridden since 20 years. She had diabetes, had lost her eyesight, her leg had been amputated due to high diabetes and she suffered all kinds of health issues, but she was ever bright! On being asked the reason, she quoted to me 1 Corinthians 15: 51-52 and said, *“Jesus is Risen! There is life after death and this corruptible ailing body of mine will all be renewed and made whole in a moment!”*

Friends, do you know, why you and I can rejoice? Why the early disciples didn’t mind being tortured? Because the truth is, **our future is gloriously beautiful in Jesus!** If you are walking with Jesus and you feel like giving up in your marriage, in your consecrated life, or in your career, the Bible says, *“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain”*. (1 Corinthians 15:58)

How many of us have heard of **‘The Cape of Good Hope’**? It is the South – western tip of South Africa. For thousands of years, it was called the ‘Cape of Storms’, because it was considered very dangerous and people were damn scared to cross through it. A brave sailor by the name of Vasco Da Gama, one day, went through the Cape of Storms and reached India and from India, he went back to Europe. He showed the world that the Cape of Storms didn’t have to be the Cape of storms and they changed it to ‘The Cape of Good Hope’!

2000 years ago, there was this man who died, went to the other side and came back to life, to tell you and me, **“Do not be afraid! I have overcome death!”** Yes, **JESUS is our Cape of Good Hope** and hence, we can REJOICE, for in Him, God’s inheritance for you and me is well assured and protected! ***Wish you all a happy and hope-filled Easter!***

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