

## **SERMON: “HOPE: A Glorious Hope”**

Rev. Geoff Ross, Sunday, July 4, 2021, St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church

As I start today, I have good news and bad news. The good news is that God’s plan for our salvation/ the “HOPE” we have in Christ is not just about this life – as I said, it is also about our salvation and eternal life. The bad news is that it isn’t about us! BUT this is also good news since it’s about God/God’s grace/the glorious hope of our salvation/redemption/restoration in/through Jesus’ resurrection. This is what the whole Bible points toward. It’s what the prophets spoke about/patriarchs trusted their lives in/Jesus – disciples/apostles preached/all of creation groans/longs for. The resurrection is not a ‘past’ event; it also brings the future into the present/unites heaven/earth – God/creation. No, the “HOPE” that we have in Christ, isn’t about us: it’s about the reunification of all of creation/it is the anticipation of sharing God’s future glory forever/together.

*[Glorious: Meaning – (“Glory”: Greek: “doxa”)/ “Heaviness”/“weight” – used to express the ‘worth’/‘importance’/‘greatness’/splendour’/‘power’ of a person. For God: refers to all these qualities – also “brightness”/“blinding”/“dazzling” presence – glory was seen as ‘brightness’/‘majesty.’ Also means – “wonderful”/“marvelous”/“magnificent”/“spectacular.” God’s grace is heavy/blinding/wonderful and is of great worth because it came at a great cost....]*

Paul’s Letter to the Colossians offers us a summary of what God in/through Jesus Christ has done for us: “He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” (Colossians 1:13-14) Paul goes on to add why this act by God is an act of grace/love/so unexpected: “God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.” (Colossians 1:27) These passages echo the reading from Paul’s Letter to the Romans (Rom:1:1-5/1<sup>st</sup> Sunday/HOPE series) in which Paul celebrates/rejoices/exalts in the wonder/joy/glory of God’s audacious gift of hope in/through: “our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God.” (Romans 5:1-2) All this speaks to what Peter writes is “an indescribable and glorious joy, for you/me/we are receiving the outcome of [y]our faith, the salvation of your souls” – a glorious hope: a gift beyond our deserving

*[The word “hope” in English is weak: To “hope” means to want/without certainty. But the root Greek word “elpis,” is stronger: mean “a conviction.” Christian hope is not a hopeful wish—it is a hope-filled certainty. Friends, we WILL experience God/eternity/heaven/grace – it’s a certainty! Paul calls this the “hope of glory”: freed from the past/free in the present to restore our relationship with God/anticipate a future – renewed/restored/redeemed/returned to our glory in God’s presence.]*

And this brings us back to why God’s plan for our salvation/redemption/restoration isn’t about us/you/me/any of us! The bottom line is this: You/I/we can’t do it ourselves – only God can do it. You/we have to turn our life/mind/heart/everything – give up/let go/let God – to God and let Him do it. We can’t save ourselves/only God can. God wants us to trust/yield/put our “hope” – certainty/confidence – in Him: God wants you/me/us to acknowledge that our hope isn’t in our abilities/this world but is instead in Him/Jesus. But we must let God/Jesus in/become incarnated within us – because Jesus is God’s glory.

Timothy Keller, in his book **Hope in Times of Fear**, summarizes the whole of the Bible/Old Testament as pointing – with confidence/certainty about the future fulfilment of God’s promised restoration of creation – to the incarnation: Jesus Christ became flesh and (literally) “*tabernacled*” among us/“*became flesh and dwelt among us*”(John 1:14), and we beheld His glory – God’s splendour/brightness/majesty/presence. Paul tells us that Jesus in “*the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of His being.*”(Heb 1:3) Jesus does not simply have God’s glory or bring it, He reveals/embodies God’s power/beauty/wonderful/filled presence. Jesus came to redeem/restore the relationship between God/creation/us as the locus of heaven/earth, to bridge the gap to God’s presence/glory – all incarnated not only in our world, but within each of us. But the glorious hope that we have also came at a cost – a “heavy”/“weighty” price: Jesus’ suffering/death on our behalf, to be the sacrifice that ends all sacrifices.

*[Immanuel: “God with us” – incarnation/dwell with:in/through Jesus God is now available to us/works in/through us.]*

By faith/hope – confidence in Christ’s resurrection – we are united with the risen Jesus to be new temples/Body of Christ, redeemed/restored/regenerated creations – and God’s presence/glory lives in us making us partners/participants with Christ in His life/work/kingdom building/death/resurrection. As we prepare to approach the Table which reminds us of/commemorates not only Jesus’s death, but also the “HOPE”/purpose of the resurrection, let us give ourselves to the “HOPE” that God alone can offer – the sure/certain glorious hope of a resurrected future in the presence of the glory of God – again, forever. Amen.