

SERMON: “HOPE: A Hope for the Future”

Rev. Geoff Ross, Sunday, July 18, 2021, St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church

[LW:Funerals:I’ve come to rely on two/primary texts – believe/bookends of God’s promise of a better place/a “place prepared” for us/me/you/an offer of hope: the 23rd Psalm/John 14:14:1-6; 25-27 offer a vision of God’s kingdom/heaven – of a banquet/feast/meal of rich food and wine, a place prepared with our/your name on the place card//a room to rest/belong, where you/I/we can all be the best of ourselves in God’s company forever. A promise/offer of hope for the future.]

Today’s two readings – the promise made in/through **Jeremiah**/to restore the People of God/plan for a future with hope/to a place prepared for them; and the vision/**Revelation** of the “*new Heaven/Earth*” where everything before has “*passed away*”/replaced by/prepared God who will wipe away every tear, and death/mourning-crying will be no more/the promise of creation’s restoration is fulfilled – tell/remind us that the “HOPE” we have in Jesus/God’s promises are about more/bigger than just for us/whatever we’re going through right now: it’s about a HOPE for the future in which we/you/me will be invited up/into. Together they reveal the scope/arc of God’s saving plan/action toward us. They also speak to the Good News/Gospel of the resurrection.

[Q:What do you place your hope in? Whatever it is – even culture/civilization/community – if it’s of this world, it will falter/fade/fail/wane: it will die as all things in this world dies. But God’s plan has a different ending! “All people are grass/constancy like the flower of the field:wither/fade – but the Word of God will stand/last forever.” (Isaiah 40:6-7)]

Timothy Keller, in the last chapter of his book, ***Hope in Times of Fear***, tells us that he wrote “...*this book with the expectation that the sense of fear/pessimism/anxiety that our world is experiencing now is not likely to be dispelled anytime soon.*” Not exactly words of comfort/assurance/hope to end a book about hope! And, given what’s going on right now, it’s understandable: but, as he wrote/I’ve said earlier in this series, our hope is not to be found in this world. Last week I said that “HOPE” is what sets us apart from the rest of the world – and it’s true: our “HOPE” is founded on/in Jesus, who came to be-with us/live as one-of us/suffered all this world do/the world rejected yet who died for us/as us – it forms/it’s what makes us us. But our “HOPE” is not based only on the death of Jesus – death is temporal/earthly/the cost of sin – it is revealed in/through His death conquering resurrection – God’s saving act that offers us/you/me/everyone the “HOPE” of salvation/eternity that also brings about the restoration of the whole of creation!

[Isaiah/Promise: “the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines/rich food filled with marrow/well-aged wines strained clear. And he will destroy ...the shroud that is cast over all peoples/spread over all nations; he will swallow up death forever. Then the Lord GOD will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken. It will be said on that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us. This is the LORD for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.” (Isaiah 25:6-10) “Waited”=“HOPE” This was/is/always has been the promise. This is our/world’s one/true/only HOPE!]

As we end our series on “HOPE” I know that HOPE is hard to have in our world/these hard times; but we are fallen creatures in the fallen world in need of help/HOPE. And it’s cold comfort to say that nothing in this world will/can provide us with the help/HOPE we need; but it’s the truth: our help comes in/through/from God/God alone – the God who has steadfastly promised to

guide/deliver/restore us/world/creation to a/with a new beginning when/where/in which evil/death are defeated/destroyed and justice/peace reign. This promise/HOPE is not just for us/is for all of creation – a restored harmony/relationship between God and creation/world/humanity-humanity/neighbours/creation-creation/us.

And this is why the resurrection of Jesus Christ is so important/not a ‘hope so’ promise: it HAPPENED/transcended this world/proclaimed/declared/asserted God’s gracious/loving/saving plan for our salvation. And because it did, we can be certain/expect/count/confidence/assurance that it changed/will change everything. Jesus’ death paid the ‘price’ of sin/the resurrection paid the ‘firstfruits’/future-payment for all of creation to be renewed/restored as a place where every tear will be wiped away/death and decay/destruction will be no more/justice flows/all things will be made new/freed from sin.(Revelation reading) The resurrection revealed/promises the HOPE of the restoration of the life/world/relationship with God that we lost – it offers us a new world/life that we’ve always longed/waited/hoped for but never had.

Friends, Jesus came to fulfill God’s saving plan/offer us eternal life; He gave up glory to reveal God’s glorious promise to restore/redeem/resurrect the whole of creation; He died/was resurrected to demonstrate that God’s *“anger is but for a moment; his favor is for a lifetime. [That]weeping may linger for the night, but joy comes with the morning.”*(Ps 30:5) So, no matter hard things/life/your situation, the message/promise is clear: look/HOPE to/in Him/Jesus/the One who makes all things new/whose blessing are new each morning for on/in Him we have our/A HOPE for the Future. Amen.