

# Christian hope is always Resurrection Hope

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Romans 5:1-5

Hope has developed a bad reputation.

Some folks think hope is not enough. Chilean politician, Fernando Flores, has said, “Hope is the raw material of losers.” Winners have a goal and a plan. Some folks think that “hope” is just a code word for wishful thinking.

Far more people think hope is too much. For many folks, despair is the new cool. If you expect nothing, you’ll never be disappointed. If you risk nothing, you’ll lose nothing. If you don’t put yourself out there, you won’t be embarrassed. If you have no opinions, you can’t be wrong.

Stephen King captured this “horror of hope” in *The Shawshank Redemption*. Andy Dufresne has just proclaimed the necessity of hope for his survival in prison. Andy’s friend, Red, tries to set him straight. Let’s watch the clip from the movie (show clip).

“Hope is a dangerous thing,” Red warns Andy. “Hope can drive a man insane.” That’s the theme song for our age. We live in the Age of Despair.

What is despair? Despair results when there is no way forward. Every path is blocked. Despair results when I am all used up. I have no power to go on. Despair results when my plans and purpose are defeated. The goals I have now seem pointless.

We live in the Age of Despair. In such an age, hope might drive a person insane. So Paul’s words in Romans five, verse five, sound more than a little crazy: “...and hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.”

What causes this despair? Many people believe that life is a Dead End. That’s with a capital “D” and a capital “E.” Death closes every road forward. Death defeats every power. Death derails every plan. If Death is the final word, then hope is a cruel delusion.

That’s why Christian hope is always Resurrection Hope. That is the thought I want you to take today. **Christian hope is always Resurrection Hope.** Death is not the final word. There is a way forward. There is power for living. There is a reason to go on.

Here is how Resurrection Hope works. There is a “where” on this journey—life with Jesus now and always. There is a way to go—following Jesus and living the Gospel. There is willpower available—the love of God poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

Why don’t we know this? As long as things are pretty good, we don’t think about despair or hope. When things go bad, however, we’re faced with a choice. We can choose despair. We can

be miserable. Nothing really matters. Either God doesn't exist or God doesn't care. Either way, life stinks.

You may think such despair is a modern invention. You would be wrong. Ancient philosophers thought that hope is for suckers. On many Roman tombstones, you can read these words. "Non fui, fui; non sum, non curo." That means, "I was not, I was; I am not, I do not care." That's pretty bleak. Despair is a universal option.

We can choose despair. Or we can choose hope. This is the Christian choice. **Christian hope is always Resurrection Hope.**

Paul address this in First Thessalonians four, verses thirteen and fourteen. Paul wants us to have accurate information "*so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.*" Our hope comes "*since we believe that Jesus dies and rose again...*" And because Christ is risen (Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!), we trust that we will be raised up on the last day.

It was my honor to proclaim that Resurrection Hope at the funeral of Jim Jeppesen this week. It is my honor to proclaim that Resurrection Hope at every Christian funeral. It is my task to proclaim that same hope for daily living here and now.

That's where the rubber hits the road today. **Christian hope is always Resurrection Hope.** So we live in the power of that hope in the here and now. Jesus' Resurrection launches God's Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. We are invited to live out that hope in spite of our suffering and struggles.

Paul understands that suffering forces a decision. Will I choose deathly despair or Resurrection Hope?

Paul reminds that God's choice comes first. In Jesus' death and resurrection, God has chosen you and me for life. Because God chooses us in Jesus, we have peace with God. Because God chooses us in Jesus, we have access to God's grace, mercy and love. We have that access through God's Word and sacraments, through prayer and worship, and through the gift of Christian community.

Resurrection hope means that suffering is not God's plan or punishment for us. Suffering is the last-ditch effort of Death to have its way with us. But we know better. In the face of suffering we proclaim God's peace and power for living. Death is not the final word. The final word is the Resurrection.

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So come today and pray. Pray with Expectation. Pray in the pace of God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Pray with the love of God pouring through your heart by the power of the Holy Spirit. Pray with confidence in God's grace for you today.

Pray in Resurrection hope...

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