

4/12/20 - 1 Cor. 15:12-17 - "Where to Hang your Hat" (Easter Sunday)

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[0 : 00] Father, we come to you this morning and we thank you for a time where we can set aside the stresses in life. Now, this day in particular is a day that we remember a victory, a victory that brings all things into perspective, the greatest blessings we experience in this life and the greatest tragedies.

Father, speak to us through your word today. Father, let us experience life and let us experience the freedom that the resurrection of Christ has given those who trust in him through faith.

Father, bring this word to life this morning and help us through the power of your Holy Spirit. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen, Micah?

Okay. Christianity in particular, as we get started, I just want to kind of bring some curious thoughts to our minds.

That upon this day, this day is so important for the Christian. Christianity is firmly set upon the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

[1 : 30] Christianity. Either Christianity stands strong on that foundation or it falls upon such a miraculous act of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

It's all working, the triune God of raising Jesus from the dead. Without the resurrection, there would be no good news. There would be no good news.

There would be no gospel. It's the foundation of that evidence of the resurrection which opponents of Christians and Christianity come to attack.

They bear arms upon this historical credibility of the resurrection. If they're going to attack anything in Christianity, it would be God's word and also the resurrection.

No. So, I want to read. I'm going to read out of Mark 16. And I want to take us through this historic account of the resurrection in Mark 16.

[2 : 33] I want to read through it. So, you know that this isn't, if this is maybe the first Easter Sunday, you're sitting just eating some oatmeal on the couch and like checking Youngstown Metro out.

Well, we're going to show you that this is not just my idea made up. This is a historic account which occurred in real history. Let's read in Mark 16.

And believe it or not, I'm actually not 100% set of how much I'm going to read in it. I might go to the end of the book. I'll allow the Spirit to lead me in that.

So, let's read in Mark 16. It says, When the Sabbath was passed, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome brought spices so that they might go and anoint Him.

And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. And they were saying to one another, Who will roll this stone away for us?

[3 : 38] And the entrance of the tomb. And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back. It was very large.

And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed. And he said to them, Do not be alarmed.

You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen. He is not here. See the place where they laid him.

But go, tell his disciples and Peter, and he is going before you in Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.

And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them. And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

[4 : 38] And so, Jesus comes, Jesus ends the chapter in Mark, and he appears before Mary Magdalene. He appears before the disciples. And he institutes the Great Commission.

Real history, real time. This isn't folklore. This isn't some Greek mythological story or narrative. This isn't folklore. This is real history. And actually, we're looking at Mark. If you look at all the Gospels, they call the Gospels and their relationship to one another synoptic.

That they all give four different unique perspectives of many accounts in Jesus' life. And many different accounts of the tomb.

Various different details, and it's all significance. It's something important not to read the Gospels sort of like on a parallel spectrum, because you don't want to flatten out the meaning. One doesn't complement another.

[5 : 38] One has a different perspective that unifies this other account. Just as if we had four different people in a situation, I might notice a different detail in the account than somebody else.

The Gospels have this message. The same message, essentially, of the resurrection of Jesus appearing after his death. This is real-time church and visitors and folks joining us today on the live stream.

This is real-time, real history with transcendent implications for us. And so, my first and only point that I want to start embarking on and start analyzing within Scripture, one and only point.

I'm a bad Baptist preacher today. One point. That is to hang your hat on the resurrection. Hang your hats on the resurrection.

And I want to consider Paul, because Paul literally, per se, hung his hat on the factual account of the resurrection, being central in all Christian faith and Christian truth.

[6 : 57] Consider 1 Corinthians chapter 15. 1 Corinthians chapter 15, verse 14. Paul writes to this church, And if Christ had not been raised, then our preaching is in vain, and your faith is in vain.

We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that He raised Christ, whom did not raise, if it is true that the dead are not raised.

For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile, and you are still in your sins.

Wow, Paul. That's pretty extreme, right? A little bit irrational there, Paul. Have a little bit extra coffee that morning.

A little exaggerated, maybe. The quick implications upon the unifying hope of this divided church, of the Corinthian church, that was battling against each other, they were divided between one another, with who's better than one another.

[8 : 24] Paul hangs his hat on saying, Hey, everyone, this is the unifying hope. We have the same foundation of Jesus Christ as being central in our lives.

And he's saying that if this were not so, what? Our preaching is in vain. In verse 14. Our faith is in vain. In verse 14.

Verse 17, it says, Our faith would be futile. In verse 15. It says, God would be misrepresented if this didn't happen. Their theology would be erroneous.

In 15 and 16. And most of all, we still would bear our sins. In verse 17. There would be no atonement.

Without the resurrection of Jesus, the entire Scripture as a whole would be misrepresenting God.

[9 : 24] This would unravel all the biblical narrative. Remember the Bible being a Christocentric book. That Christ is the central theme and figure within the book, even long before he made his arrival.

The message of Scripture doesn't just reveal some factual truth to men. It doesn't just reveal truth to men.

It also reveals God to men. This is known as special revelation. And this is something in the year of 2020 with many different truths out there, many different ways, and a lot of tolerance in religions and beliefs.

We must hang our hats on the resurrection church. The Old Testament reveals this God that's revealed all in Scripture by means of his divine deliverance for the nation of Israel, but also from the divine judgment of Israel.

He's revealed in Scripture. You take away the resurrection, it unravels everything. Hebrews 1, 1 through 2 says, Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke, revealed Himself, to our fathers by the prophets.

[10:46] But in these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son, capital S, Son, whom He appointed the heir of all things, through whom also He created the world.

And speaking of hanging our hats, okay, the Old Testament, they hung their hats on, there's something coming. There's some future deliverance.

And they had that faith. We also hang our hats in the New Testament as well. God would be considered misrepresented, as Jesus stated in Mark 2, earlier in the book of Mark, Mark 2, 27, that the Almighty is the living God, and God of the living.

This would be one thousands, be one of thousands which would fall if the resurrection did not happen. It would mean that death is stronger than God.

It would mean that death is stronger than God's Word. Death would ultimately be God's final match, that final boss at the end that would surely overpower Him, which would prove that God is not God.

[12:09] The resurrection is pivotal. And the same is true. If Jesus were not raised from the dead, this entire narrative of which Paul hangs his hat on, of which the Old Testament hung their hat on, having faith looking forward, knowing that something was coming, that there would be a Messiah, a deliverer for this nation, everything would come crashing down.

All redemptive history would crumble. All would literally fall if Jesus had not risen. And like Paul, we have no other option than to have faith like Paul, to hang our hat on the same resurrection.

And in so doing, when we hang our hats on the resurrection, we're hanging our hats on the mission of Jesus Christ, which was twofold. We spoke about it in depth and a little bit more at length on Good Friday, which represented the suffering of Christ.

Well, one of the missions of Jesus Christ on this earth was to come and to suffer on behalf of mankind and suffer their sins. We have faith in the Word of God that Jesus came according to the Scriptures, just as prophesied many centuries ago to suffer on behalf of sin.

There would not have, there would have not been a resurrection without the suffering. Christ without a cross, meaning the suffering, looking at suffering, is not Jesus of the Bible.

[13:42] Okay? Christ without a cross is not the Jesus of the Bible. Mark 8.31 says, the Son of Man must suffer many things. That is why he says, must suffer many things.

And also, Mark 10, verse 45, says, for the Son of Man also came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

The first mission of Christ on this earth of which we hang our hats is that Christ came to suffer. And in his suffering, it points to his perfect, sinless life as well, as the spotless lamb who suffered.

He was qualified in his suffering. But the other mission is more towards the end times, eschatological end times. Jesus came also to reign.

This suffering was far from the finish line in this narrative. Yeah, it's about three quarters of the way through our Bibles, but it's nowhere near the finish line of the narrative.

[14:56] We know this according to Daniel 7. I'm not going to get into Daniel 7, but Daniel 7 states that Jesus will sit in judgment of the world and to establish the kingdom of God in an apocalyptic power in the end times.

Jesus Christ is the lamb who was slain, but he is also the lion of Judah. The spotless lamb led to the slaughter as we studied in Isaiah 53, but he's also the roaring lion who will judge.

And in so doing, the mission in redemptive history is fulfilled in these two events, his suffering and his reign. resurrection. But why?

You might ask. Why all this? Why couldn't there be a different way? Why all of this? Why must he suffer? Why the resurrection?

Well, what you believe about the resurrection reveals a lot of what you believe about the cross. And likewise, the opposite is true. What you believe about the cross reveals what you believe about the resurrection.

[16:15] I want to talk about the meaning of each of those because they have significant and foundational implications within our lives as Christians. Let me explain.

Paul says in 1 Corinthians as we read chapter 15 verse 17, if Christ is not risen, you are still in your sins.

sins. He's talking about the relationship between the resurrection and the cross. And an understanding of the resurrection brings an understanding of the cross.

And likewise, the understanding of the cross brings understanding to the resurrection. He says, you are still in your sins if Christ is not risen. Well, how could that be?

Friends, isn't this what atonement is all about? You're using all these big old words of atonement and stuff. He was sinless. Our sins were put on him in his death, right?

[17 : 15] Our sins were buried with him on his death. So what exactly did the resurrection do for us and what's the relationship between the resurrection and that atonement and that suffering? Romans 4 verse 25 is vital to understanding the relationship between the two.

Romans 4 verse 25 Paul says that Jesus was put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

You get that? The relationship between the cross and the resurrection. He was put to death for our trespasses.

He was put to death. He suffered for that. And he was raised for our justification. So within the scope of Christ's suffering we see atonement of sin.

Yes. But then also in the scope of Christ's resurrection which we celebrate today represents the justification of sin. That payment was approved.

[18 : 31] The transaction, the ransom was paid. Atonement is something it's a Christianese word. Yeah, I know. Atonement is an important word to know though because it reaches back into historical narrative of the Old Testament where God set up a system by which the nation of Israel could make amends or to make things right on behalf of their sins.

When you think, when you hear the word atonement think of the phrase on behalf of. On behalf of. So this stretches the narrative continues into the New Testament.

The atonement of Jesus Christ through the suffering and death he bore that he bore was a sufficient sacrifice. Yes, to set things right. However, it cannot stop there.

As Paul proclaims we would still have our sins because we wouldn't be justified without the resurrection of Christ. So, through the resurrection of Christ we see justification according to Romans 4.

Jesus was raised for our justification which is an important meaning of a word which means acquittal. It's the image of a courtroom when that gavel gets slammed down and that judge declares that person innocent.

[19 : 57] Case closed. Done. Declaring someone righteous. This is what the resurrection means.

Without the resurrection we would still be in our sins. So, within this picture of suffering of Christ we can't detach the victory of resurrection from the suffering.

Church. church. This is the gospel. How often we can stumble upon our words.

When people ask us what is the gospel? Share with us the gospel. All of a sudden we get tongue tied. We get uncomfortable. We're like well, Jesus. You know, you go back to your middle school Bible study days and just say the winning answer for any Christian question.

Jesus. Jesus. Right? This is the gospel. That our sins were placed upon him. He was the atoning substitution of our sins.

[21 : 08] Through his life it revealed a quality of that sacrifice according to all that was prophesied. All that was forecasted forward in the Old Testament pointed towards this quality of life of which he lived.

And it was revealed and recorded in all four gospels in the New Testament. That quality of life of fulfilling prophecy and doing the ministry and demonstration that God called this earth to experience.

And in his death the atonement was received. There was a substitution on behalf of. He died on behalf of every person in this room. Took that sin.

Placed it on him and died the death that we deserve. Brought satisfaction because he was the spotless lamb who was slain. That quality of life was adhered to.

He was the only one who could suffer on the behalf of our sins. And in his burial it's just like the words of Jesus on the cross.

[22 : 11] It is finished. And he breathes his last. His death bore God's wrath. God loved mankind so much that he knew that man could never fulfill on their own power what only that he can fulfill.

So he came to life. He came into this scene fully human and fully God and literally hung on the cross and bore his own wrath for us.

and our sins died and were buried with him. And it didn't end there. It ended in the resurrection where we are declared righteous that that payment was sufficient in the resurrection.

We are justified. This is the gospel. What does it mean for us today?

The Bible not only reveals the past hope. We're not just sitting as onset lookers of oh that was a great victory.

[23 : 23] Yep we'll see you at the following Easter's and everything we'll do the same hoot and holler. It's not something that we just observe from the past. This is something that we're revealing in our current moments in time.

The Bible not only reveals the past hope which is revealed on the account of Jesus Christ being raised from the dead but there's also something laying ahead in the future. There's a future hope. The Bible tells us that we are being justified in this life. By confessing our sins. We're being sanctified.

And one day we will rise with Him. Think about that. Paul was one of the many who met the resurrected Jesus.

Jesus was on the scene after His death for several days. A lot happened. A lot of miracles happened several days after Jesus had revealed Himself back in the narrative.

[24 : 41] Many people experienced that. And we should have faith in His account as 1 Corinthians 15 20 says, but in the fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.

1 Corinthians 15 20, but in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. Meaning that there is something glorious to come.

There's something glorious to come for those who are in Christ. There is participation in a resurrection of our own, being resurrected with Him.

I actually remember the message from last Easter. I actually spoke directly about that last year. There is a great future hope that not even death can take away from us.

Our lives, our bodies can be stripped away, our hearts can stop beating, our minds can stop functioning, but nothing can take away the assurance that we have in our future resurrection.

[25 : 48] It is a hope that exceeds the joys of any earthly relationship. For anybody who's married, if you think about that wedding day and those doors opening, seeing your bride for the first time, you want to talk about that doesn't have anything to compare with what we're going to experience laying ahead.

There's a hope more glorious than childbirth. The miracle that all those emotions that happen in childbirth and seeing your newborn for the first time, there's a hope that minimizes and brings petty. All the good in this life, the most exhilarating experience you could ever have in this life, it minimizes that. But it also minimizes even the worst tragedy that you can experience in this life.

And because the gospel is hope, we are assured in that hope. We're assured that we'll be given new bodies. For anybody with back pain, amen?

We are going to be given new bodies someday. We are assured in that. We're assured that all disease, all sorrow, all sin, all tragedy will be gone.

[27 : 05] All pandemics will be gone. Amen. We are assured that we will one day be with Jesus.

I'm all fired up now. Remember, this is vital. God's resurrection is not God's God's God's God's cross.

Jesus is not Jesus of the Bible. And so, if you're considering this in various serious terms in your own life today, maybe this is the first time you've ever heard a message quite like this.

You need to count the cost because there's a likewise in that. just as we're resurrecting with Christ, we're also called to suffer with Christ.

A Christian without a cross is not a follower of the one who suffered and bore the wrath on the cross. There will be suffering.

[28 : 06] Jesus called his disciples with a proper expectation, pick up your cross and follow me. Becoming a Christian is not a route of having an easy life whatsoever.

prepare for some battles. Prepare for a very difficult and a life of suffering as God refines you. He uses suffering in marvelous, mysterious and marvelous ways that I can recall even in my own life. Can you imagine what lies ahead for those who belong in Christ? Think of that eternal worldview which carries us through all these hardships in life.

The suffering that Christ said we're going to experience. Yes, if you look at Voice of the Martyrs, if you're not familiar with that organization on the internet, it's all about people who are giving their lives, being beheaded for their faith.

They're counting the cost. They're suffering with Christ but they're also resurrecting with Christ. You could strip us of our bodies, it doesn't mean anything. The pain of this life, the future hope that lays ahead, the eternal worldview, that we see, carries us through the hardships of life, the pain in this life, the betrayal from one another sometimes in this life.

[29 : 26] This is a hope secured. R.C. Sproul actually defined that future hope and our future bodies and what lays ahead. He says that we will not be defied.

Our new bodies will be incorruptible without decay, illness, pain, or death. There will be added power to our present bodies as they will be raised in honor, power, and glory.

Our bodies will be fashioned to be like the glorified body of Jesus. The new body of the saint will be spiritual and a heavenly body. It will be adapted to a higher order of living, perhaps glowing and radiant in countenance, not unlike Christ in his transfiguration.

Church, if this lays ahead for us, why don't we live for him? Why do we doubt his goodness when hardships strike?

When trials come our ways? When it seems as if each day is a throw of the dice of what kind of Christian we're going to be? Did you wake up on the wrong side of the bed or are you the guy yesterday?

[30 : 45] It's sometimes the throw of a dice. There's no consistency, no contentment in our faith. One of my favorite hymns is known as the It Is Well.

A very old hymn back in the 1800s. And I don't think there's any hymn like it. It's literally a song that I sang on my way home knowing that my entire house was burning down.

It's a song that I sang in a hospital bed fighting and suffering for my own life. But it's nothing that death can't touch.

It's nothing that no flame on this earth can touch. It is a contentment in faith. It's such a beautiful hymn of contentment, really. It was written by Horatio Spafford back in the 1800s.

He had quite a testimony, something like Job. He experienced suffering in sort of like what we read in the book of Job. And during the pinnacle of his profession, he was very, very prosperous in life.

[31 : 58] He was very wealthy. He had a lot of financial success. But his life turned very grim. And launching the whole tragedy was him losing his son, which was followed by the Great Chicago Fire back in the 1800s.

And most of his real estate investments were destroyed. He's seeing a financial collapse in his life. He just lost his son. And just a few years later, Horatio sent his wife and four daughters at the time on a little excursion just to get away on a boat.

And Horatio received a telegram from his wife, which bore the news that the family's ship had shipwrecked, and all four daughters died. And the reality where this hymn comes into play, and where it comes into play in our own lives with contentment, says Horatio was on route on that sea, the very sea that took the life of his four daughters, is when he wrote the poem, the line in the poem, when peace like a river attendeth my way, when sorrows like sea billows roar, roll.

Whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say, it is well, it is well with my soul. Obviously, Horatio wasn't a hymn writer, but it wasn't until Philip Bliss came into the scene and saw his writings, and he composed a peaceful melody and a tune to the words, that of which the same melody we sing today, it is well with my soul.

Like I said, it's the hymn that we sing because we know that nothing, nothing in this life that we experience has any significance compared to that which lay ahead.

[34 : 02] It's a melody that was uttered laying in a hospital bed, going on my way to the burning fire, struggling in my own life. It's a truth that's been resounded on the lips of Christians all throughout history since the hymn was composed.

A truth which resounded upon the contentment of that faith that we have in the one whom we believe in. It's incredible to think such encouraging and uplifting words originated from the depths of such unimaginable sorrows.

To think that something so uplifting to our broken souls came from such a tragedy that Horatio experienced, and likewise, it is equally incredible to think about that as such a victory to arise from such a vicious death to Jesus Christ.

The night might be dark, but there is light coming in the morning. This is precisely what the secure hope of the gospel continually assures us in this life.

It is the beauty which arose out of the blood of Christ. When we continue to grow in grasping the implications of the suffering of Christ and the resurrection, it changes us.

[35 : 27] There's no other way to respond than it changes us. It changes our perspective. It changes our worldview. How we view the world and the things that we experience as hard or as great as they might be are all nothing in compared to the resurrection which is to come.

It reshapes our priorities. It ignites determination to press through our trials. It brings us peace and rest at night knowing tomorrow is His anyhow.

It draws confidence that our sin has been ransomed and paid for. We hang our hat on the resurrection. And often, if anybody is like me, it kicks you right in the butt to get in shape. Quit acting like a dummy. Christ died for us. So let's live for Him. You can do a plethora of things in this life, but what you do with Jesus is by far the most vital priority over all things in this life. So if you are not in Jesus Christ's viewing today, or if you have been for many decades, many years, the same is true. What you do with Jesus Christ is vital.

[36 : 45] As the Apostle Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 5.19, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to Himself. So if you are not in Christ today, what are you putting your trust in?

There is nothing in this world that can compare to simply putting your faith and trust in this message. It is a simple gospel with tremendous and deep three-dimensional implications, but it comes down to placing your faith.

There is no amount of money that can atone for your sin. There is no amount of good works that can atone for your sin. If you are banking on being a good person and comparing yourself to your neighbor who is a murderer possibly, or somebody who just got out of jail, you are doomed. But there is hope. The same message that has saved me from the pits of hell is the same and true for you today. Ask God for help in this. Ask God to reveal Himself to you.

Maybe tonight as you are pondering this message, I hope this message sticks with you through the coming hours today. What do you put your trust in? Is it a hope that will die and end, or is it a hope everlasting?

[38 : 10] And for all of us Christians, saints, declared righteous by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, live life in assurance of His substitutionary atonement, that atonement that He did on behalf of us.

He took it from us in His sufferings. And be confident in His justification through that resurrection. When trials come, when the next tragedy strikes, I assure you, there will be something that will come in this life.

When that moment happens, you have a decision. And what you do with Jesus Christ at that moment will determine who you serve in this life.

Do you serve Jesus? Is He truly your Master or not? So at this time, as we continue to sing, we're going to have a moment of prayer to reflect upon the implications of this resurrection, this assured, anchoring hope in Jesus Christ.

That this is nothing like the world offers. Let's dwell on this, this unique hope that we celebrate today on this Resurrection Sunday.

[39 : 37] and that this is what we celebrate today. Let's do it. and on this one. so Oh, oh, oh, oh, Oh, oh, oh,