

## The Hope from Jesus' Resurrection

The stories of Mary Magdalene, Thomas and Peter  
from John 20-21

The year was 1436. A scholar named Thomas Arezzo was in a fish shop, and in that shop there was a pile of wrapping paper that was used to wrap up the fish. In this pile, Thomas discovered an ancient copy of a letter from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. This letter is referred to as the Letter to Diognetus, and it's an explanation and defense of Christianity. Diognetus did not follow Christian teaching, but he clearly had questions and was willing to engage the author of this letter. And, this author (who is unknown), answers various questions as to the legitimacy of and reasons for worshipping Jesus. Towards the end of his letter, he then speaks to experiential evidence that Christianity is true. And, his evidence is the martyrdom of Christians. He writes,

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***[Have you not seen Christians] flung to the wild beasts to make them deny their Lord, and yet remaining undefeated? Do you not see how the more of them suffer such punishments, the larger grows the number of the rest? These things do not look like the work of man; they are the power of God, and the evident tokens of his presence. (as quot. in "Rediscovering the Church Fathers," Haykin, p. 65)***

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How is the church growing when so many Christians were murdered by Rome? This author says it's a miracle of God. Christianity should be extinguished, but God worked through the martyrs to draw more to himself. The North African theologian who lived in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> century, Tertullian, once said that "the blood of Christians is the seedbed of the church" (paraphrase). He writes of the miraculous nature of how the Christians resolutely faced death and says, "Whoever beholds such noble endurance will first, as though struck by some kind of uneasiness, be driven to enquire what is the matter in question, and, then, when he knows the truth, immediately follow the same way."

Another first century Christian who is called Justin Martyr wrote of how the Christian's martyrdoms led him to Christ. By the way, his last name was not Martyr. He's called that because he was later martyred. Before faith in Christ, he says he was a man who "reveled in the teachings of Plato." But he had heard the accusations against Christians. He had heard lying rumors that Christians lived in sinful pleasure. But then, he says, I "watched them stand fearless in the face of death and every other thing that was considered fearful, [and] I realized the impossibility of their living in sinful pleasure" (Haykin, p. 66).

As I'm talking about the deaths of Christians in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, you could be thinking, "Isn't this Easter?! What does this have to do with Jesus raising from the dead?" Well, those deaths directly relate to Jesus' raising from the dead. In that letter to Diognetus, the author shows us that our lives are radically changed and shaped by Jesus and what he did for us. In one portion of the letter, the author writes, "Instead of hating us and rejecting us and remembering our wickedness against us, he showed how long-suffering he is. He bore with us, and in pity . . . gave his own Son as a ransom for us – the Holy for the wicked, the Sinless for sinners, the Just for the unjust, the Incorruptible for the corruptible, the Immortal for the mortal. . . . O sweet exchange! O unsearchable working! O benefits unhopd for! – that the wickedness of multitudes should thus be hidden in the One righteous, and the righteousness of One should justify the countless wicked!"

Jesus, who lived a little over 100 years before this author, not only shaped this man's thinking, but changed this author's life. And not only this author, but many other Christian's lives, too! The martyrdom of many speak to the value of Jesus himself! But why would these people be willing to even give their lives up for following Jesus? Because Jesus gave his life so that people could be forgiven of sin and reconciled to God for all eternity future! The Bible also teaches us that Jesus endured the curse of God for sin in order to redeem all creation from the curse. Think about the crucifixion. What was put on his head? A crown of thorns. What did God say would happen to creation? Thorns would curse the ground. While Jesus was cursed hanging on the tree, he was actually reversing the curse! The creation, this world, human beings could be reconciled to God through faith in Jesus Christ!

Now, I know, some could hear this and think, "What?! That's crazy. Those are just a bunch of words. I'd rather just live my own reality." But, if that's you today, I am asking that you would simply hear me out and consider the story of Jesus a little more – and discover how he changed people's lives. Many in this room have been changed, and myriads throughout the centuries have as well.

So, this morning, what I'm going to do is focus on three people who are mentioned in Jesus' resurrection account. In doing this, I desire that you would see that **Jesus' resurrection gives hope**. Now, when I say "hope," I don't just mean that it gives us a wish. Like when a man says to his wife, "I hope to be home at 5:00 PM." The wife learns that's a wish, and she's not going to bet on him being home at 5. But when the Bible uses the word "hope," it refers to a steadfast assurance. Jesus' resurrection gives steadfast assurance. But steadfast assurance about what? About God. About a relationship with the Lord. About this life and the life to come. About *living and what really matters*. Jesus' resurrection gives hope.

Do you want hope? Do you feel like your life is a cycle of incidents that don't really matter? Do you ever wonder, "What's the point?" Look to Jesus and the resurrection account. Today, we will look at three different people who are mentioned. We'll see who they are and how Jesus (and his resurrection) shaped them. So, let's start with Mary Magdalene, and turn in your Bibles to John 20:11-18. Before we read, let's pray together.

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*<sup>11</sup> But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb. <sup>12</sup> And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. <sup>13</sup> They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." <sup>14</sup> Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. <sup>15</sup> Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." <sup>16</sup> Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to him in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher). <sup>17</sup> Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" <sup>18</sup> Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"—and that he had said these things to her. <sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Jn 20:11–18.

## 1. Mary Magdalene and having living hope.

Who is Mary Magdalene? Some people have speculated that she was the woman who the religious leaders were ready to stone and Jesus said, "Whoever is without sin, cast the first stone." That's a nifty speculation, but there's no evidence that Mary was that woman. Instead, what we know to be true from Luke 8:2 is that Jesus cast seven demons from Mary. And, from that moment, Mary is a disciple of Jesus. We're also told in Luke 8:3 that she, along with other women, help to support Jesus and the disciples in their mission. But whereas the other women are mentioned, Mary is mentioned over and over again in the gospels.

Imagine being Mary. Being demon possessed means that she was a social outcast. She's considered unclean by the community. No one to really care for her, love her. And who would want to love someone who was driven by demons? Her life is hopeless. Then Jesus invades her life. He interacts with her and commands the demons to flee. This action doesn't simply lead to Mary going back to the way things used to be. Mary's whole trajectory of life is different. Her life revolves around Jesus, and she continues to follow him to his crucifixion. The level of commitment from Mary Magdalene is a testament that she was graced by Jesus, forgiven much and set free by Jesus.

If you had this experience with Jesus, you couldn't remain unaffected, but then comes the most startling and life-altering news. Jesus is taken into custody, convicted of blasphemy and is now facing the Roman cross. What is Jesus going to do? Many of the male disciples fled, but Mary stayed. She, who had been ravaged by demons, is now watching Jesus, as his body has been ravaged by the scourging and then the torture of the cross. We don't know what went through Mary's mind, but based on her actions with the resurrection, she did not let go of her belief of who Jesus is.

So, early on Sunday morning, she's at the tomb. She's there to bring spices for the body. But Mary sees the stone had been moved from the entrance. She then goes to tell Peter and John – and they go running to the tomb to investigate. Of course, they discover Jesus isn't there, but his graveclothes are there, nice and folded. Then they go back home.

In this gospel account, John could have forgotten about Mary and moved on, but Mary's an important character. We get back to verse 11, and we find her crying in the garden. There could be a myriad of reasons for these tears, all related to questions about what is taking place. John tells us that the disciples really didn't understand before this that Jesus had to rise from the dead. Peter and John go.

Mary stays. She still has questions. She stoops to look into the tomb, and as she looks the angels appear. They ask why she's weeping. In some ways, this could have sounded like a ridiculous question, but I imagine it's a question to get her thinking. But she responds simply that they have taken her Lord and she doesn't know where. Mary still thinks he's dead. She doesn't engage the angels any more, and turns around. She looks and sees Jesus, but doesn't know it's him. She's asked again why she's weeping. But then Jesus adds, "Whom are you seeking?" This question adds importance. Is she weeping for a dead man who's bound in the grave or is she looking for the Living Messiah?

This tension must have been in her soul for these questions to have been asked. Mary pleads with Jesus saying, "If you took him away, tell me where he is and I will take him away!" Then Jesus simply says, "Mary." How Mary didn't know it was Jesus before, we're not exactly sure. But the next verse says she turned to him, which seems to indicate she wasn't facing him. Either way, how would a gardener know her name? This instance reminds me of Jesus' words when he said that his sheep hear his voice and

know him. In this moment, Jesus called her name, and she knew who was speaking! She turns to him, exclaims Rabboni, which means Teacher!

And, she clings to Jesus. Wouldn't you do the same? You thought he was dead! But you discover he conquered death and is back! What joy! He's back! But then Jesus responds by essentially saying he's back, but not for long. Look at verses 17-18: <sup>17</sup> Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" <sup>18</sup> Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"—and that he had said these things to her. <sup>2</sup>

Is Jesus saying no one should hug him until he's in Heaven? No. The point is that Jesus is saying that she shouldn't *cling* to his physical existence with her. Jesus, in speaking of his ascension, is speaking of greater things to come. The Old Testament speaks of ascending to the throne of God – and the New Testament speaks of Jesus standing at the right hand of the Father, meaning the place of preeminence as the King over all. If Mary clings to Jesus being physically next to her, then she's forgotten the fullness of God's plan to rescue people from all over the world and to restore creation from the curse! So, Jesus tells her to go tell the disciples. And, she does! She announced to the disciples that she has seen the Lord.

Ventura, ponder the love of Jesus here. Mary could have wondered if her hope was misplaced or if her hope had died. But Jesus came directly to her. She was the *first* person to see the resurrected Jesus! And, she's the first person to proclaim the good news of Jesus, with his resurrection as a part of it. In one sense, she's the first evangelist. And, she trusts Jesus. She believes there's more to Christ's mission! Jesus forever changed her, and his resurrection motivated her to tell others of Jesus. She was bold. She was free! She didn't only experience freedom from demons. She experienced freedom and hope in Christ! Since Jesus is alive, her hope is alive! As long as Jesus is living, she has hope. And, the same is true for us, Ventura! If Jesus were dead, she'd have no hope, but since Jesus is always alive, we always have a living hope. No matter what we endure, we have hope if we trust Jesus.

Mary's scenario teaches us our hope is alive. Now, move into Thomas and discover that our hope is secure.

## 2. Thomas and having a secure hope.

Let's read verses 24-29 together:

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*<sup>24</sup> Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup> So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe." <sup>26</sup> Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." <sup>27</sup> Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe." <sup>28</sup> Thomas answered*

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<sup>2</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Jn 20:17–18.

*him, "My Lord and my God!"<sup>29</sup> Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."<sup>3</sup>*

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Thomas is mentioned on different occasions in different gospel accounts. But he's probably most well-known for this account. Which, honestly, I kind of feel bad for him about this one. Why don't we know him for his statement in John 11:16? In this scenario, the disciples are telling Jesus to not go back to Judea because other Jews were wanting to stone him. But Jesus is set to go back to Judea in order to bring Lazarus from the dead. While the other disciples are hesitant and warning Jesus, John records this:<sup>16</sup> So Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."<sup>4</sup>

Thomas is willing to die with Jesus! That's a powerful statement, especially because many of the disciples seemed to think that Jesus came to build the Kingdom and to set everything in place. Yet, Thomas seems to have a belief that he'll follow Jesus no matter what the cost – even if it doesn't make sense.

But, we all know that just because we feel strong in the faith in one moment, doesn't mean that strength of faith remains. The crucifixion of Jesus was shattering to many of Jesus' disciples, including Thomas. And, in the midst of the faith-shaking situation with Thomas, we also discover a wondrous statement from Jesus. This story in John 20 reveals Thomas as an example of weak faith, but it points to a stronger Savior. It's an example that **we're not saved by the strength of our faith. We are saved by the Savior who is strong! So, as I've said before, it's not the amount of our faith that saves, it's the One on whom our faith depends who saves!**

Look at this story. Before this incident, John tells us that Jesus appeared to the other disciples. He showed them his scars! But, for whatever reason, Thomas wasn't there. The disciples tell him about it, and Thomas says that unless he sees and touches the scars, he won't believe. Thomas seems to be in a very low spot. He won't even believe his own friends. Surely, they're all wrong. They probably saw a phantom. But, could all of his friends be wrong in their testimony? Could they all have seen a mirage?

Some people still try to argue that this is all that happened with Jesus' resurrection. They say that everybody who said they saw Jesus just had a group hallucination. However, hallucinations don't work that way. You don't have *everyone* hallucinating the exact same thing.

Have you ever been in a position like Thomas, where your trustworthy friends are telling you certain things that are true and you refuse to believe? I've had seasons like this in my past when I've been depressed, discouraged or feeling anxious over finances or family circumstances. I can feel like my world is falling apart. But Tracy, or my parents or my sister or a fellow elder will remind me of the promises of God. I have to fight to believe what they're saying, but my flesh doesn't want to embrace it.

Maybe you can relate to Thomas. He says the *only* way he'll believe is if he sees! Clearly, Thomas ought to believe apart from sight. At one point, he trusted Jesus no matter what. Why can't he trust his other friends? Now, to this, Jesus could simply say, "Well then, I guess you're going to deny me." But Jesus doesn't do this. Eight days after the previous meeting, the disciples are together. Thomas is with his friends. The doors are locked to the place. And somehow Jesus shows up in their midst. By the way,

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<sup>3</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Jn 20:24–29.

<sup>4</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Jn 11:16.

some people argue that Jesus could walk through walls. And, while his resurrected body may have been able to do that, nowhere does the text state this. It could be that Jesus miraculously opened the lock door. In Acts 12, Peter faces a lock door, and it opens miraculously. My point in bringing this out is simply to say to focus on what the text wants us to focus on – and let's be careful to *not* insert things that aren't there.

Jesus comes into a locked room to proclaim peace. This is exactly what the disciples need to hear. Now, this word for peace does not primarily mean "May you have fluttery feelings of peace inside of you." The word "peace" is referencing a reconciliation with God. We as humans are born at war with God. We are rebels against the King because we are born wanting our own glory, our exaltation. We want to be at God's level. We reveal this in our selfishness, our loving of the things around us more than loving God.

For the disciples, their sin was revealed even in their wandering from Jesus. So many of them deserted Christ as he faced trial. And, remember, Jesus once said if you deny me before men, I'll deny you before my Father (see Matthew 10:33). So, Jesus shows up in a resurrected body and appears before them. His appearance could mean their demise, their rejection, their judgment. But Jesus' first words are "Peace be with you."

Of course, the other disciples heard these words before, but praise God they get to hear it a second time. But this is Thomas' first time hearing these words. Even though he's been doubting and struggling with faithlessness, Jesus speaks peace to Thomas! And then, Jesus turns directly to Thomas. It's as if Jesus shows up to directly address Thomas. He doesn't come to reprimand Thomas. He comes to comfort Thomas. The risen Savior who has conquered sin by taking our sin on himself. The Savior who rose from the dead to conquer death for those bound in death; has come to Thomas in order to reveal what he actually accomplished. Jesus didn't die on the cross to condemn. He died to take condemnation for Thomas-like people. And, he rose from the dead in order that the message of his victory would be applied to real lives.

So, Jesus turns to Thomas and says, in verse 27, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe."<sup>5</sup> It's as if Jesus heard what Thomas said to the disciples. Listen, Jesus isn't merely a human. Jesus is *Diety in the Flesh!* He's everywhere-present and also present in human flesh. What's amazing here is that Jesus' resurrection body retains the scars of his sacrifice. And it's proof of who he is.

Oh Ventura, ponder this. Jesus' body was broken and torn so we could be completely healed. The Bible says someday we will receive resurrection bodies, like Jesus. However, the Bible indicates we won't have our scars from this life. But Jesus keeps them! Why? Because his scars reveal his victory, his accomplishment and his love towards us! In eternity future, those of us here who have turned from our sin and depended on Jesus for rescue will rejoice every moment in the cross. We will be in a New Heaven and New Earth because of his sacrifice and resurrection! Praise God!

This reminds me of the hymn writer Fanny Crosby. She wrote around 8,000 hymns in her lifetime, and she was blind. As she was aged, she had a conversation with a friend who asked her if she thinks she'll recognize Jesus when she gets to Heaven. Her response was positive, but she pressed it. She said, "But you're really wondering if I'll recognize any person, let alone Jesus." She went on to say that she's thought a lot about this, and while she doesn't think she'll have a problem, she said that if she did, she'll

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<sup>5</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Jn 20:27.

go up to the One she thinks is the Savior and she'll ask to see his hands (see <http://barrishymns.blogspot.com/2010/01/i-shall-know-him.html>).

Then she wrote a song called *I Shall Know Him*. The chorus reads, "I shall know Him, I shall know Him And redeemed by His side, I shall stand. I shall know Him, I shall know Him, By the print of the nails in His hand." Here is a woman blind her entire life and she has confidence in knowing her Savior. But we are just like her. We haven't seen Jesus either. But how will we know? The scars! Praise the Lord he keeps the scars of victory and salvation for us.

Getting back to Thomas, as Jesus shows his scars, he calls Thomas not to disbelieve, but to believe. The implication is that Thomas was reverting back to unbelief. What happens next is interesting. We're not told that Thomas even touches Jesus. He may have. But either way, verse 28 makes a powerful statement of Thomas: <sup>28</sup>Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!"<sup>6</sup>

This is a culminating story in the book of John. John starts by saying Jesus is the Word who was with God and is God. And then, Thomas' story is used to declare that indeed Jesus is Lord and God! But not only that, he's Thomas' Lord and Thomas' God. That means that Thomas confesses the peace and assurance he has in Jesus. And because Jesus is Lord and God, his hope is steadfastly secure. He doesn't have a wavering hope. He has a hope that is more secure than any foundation in this earth.

You can imagine the joy in Thomas' heart as he makes this declaration. Then Jesus says to Thomas, "'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.'" <sup>7</sup> Jesus came to Thomas in the flesh, to bless him. But Jesus speaks to the many who are blessed and who haven't seen. That would be people like us. We haven't seen Jesus. But we've heard the testimonies of people in the first century who have seen. Many in this room have believed the eye-witness testimonies of Jesus and his resurrection. And for us, Jesus says that we're blessed. This word means that we have the greatest of all blessings. We are in a state of eternal blessedness because of Jesus.

You may say, "I don't feel like it," but that's where you preach to your feelings. What has God given to you? Is your life bound up in what car you drive or overdue bills or a dirty house? Sometimes we put our identity in those things and then think God is against us or for us depending on how life circumstances are. But that's not blessedness. Those things change like the weather. But Jesus never changes. Is Jesus your life? Is Jesus your hope? Then your hope is steadfast in the midst of whatever seasons this life brings!

Think of Thomas again. From a historical perspective, it's said that Thomas then went out from Jerusalem and became a missionary. There's evidence that he made it all the way to India to preach the gospel. Thomas lived his life in Christ! Wow! But, notice this. More than likely, Thomas was martyred. There are various stories about his death, and those don't seem as trustworthy, but his martyrdom is likely. Thomas did not count his earthly life dear to him. Why? Because Jesus blessed him, gave him peace, and Thomas has a secure, lasting hope that for all eternity future, he would be with the Creator God! Living or dying, he had hope. The death and resurrection of Jesus secured and changed this man.

Finally, we go to a third story, and we discover a love-based hope.

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<sup>6</sup> [\*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version\*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Jn 20:28.

<sup>7</sup> [\*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version\*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Jn 20:29.

### 3. Peter and having a love-based hope.

Chapter 21:15-17, we read, “<sup>15</sup>When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Feed my lambs.” <sup>16</sup>He said to him a second time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Tend my sheep.” <sup>17</sup>He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, “Do you love me?” and he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” <sup>8</sup>

The scenario is that the disciples were out fishing and Jesus shows up on the shore. Jesus asks them to make fish. They’re sitting on the shore, eating. And, keep in mind that up to this point, we don’t have any record of Jesus speaking directly to Peter. But it’s important that Jesus does speak to Peter because Peter’s story is one of outright denial against Jesus. Three times, he rejected Jesus. And what will Jesus do to Peter? Of course, Peter was there when Jesus spoke peace, but maybe that didn’t apply to Peter because Peter was more sinful in his actions than the others. He really did deny Jesus before men *verbally and emphatically*.

So, like Jesus lovingly targeted Thomas, he speaks to Peter. And he asks, “Do you love me?” Can you imagine how stinging that question would be? Peter’s probably wondered that after he denied and was weeping. But, amazingly, Peter responds by saying “yes.” Jesus asks this three times, which emphasizes the seriousness of the question. Does Peter love Jesus? He then says, “You know all things and know that I love you.”

Listen, Peter isn’t saying that he loves perfectly. He knows he’s guilty, but he does love. At each point, Jesus indicates that he’s restoring Peter to the calling he gave Peter. You know, Peter went back to fishing and Jesus is saying to Peter, “But I told you you were going to be a fisher of men, and I haven’t rescinded that privilege, Peter. What are you doing fishing?” Can you imagine the freedom Peter is feeling. He’s not only *not denied, but he’s loved and restored by Jesus!* Get this. Peter know Jesus is love. The question isn’t whether or not Jesus has loved Peter. The question is whether or not Peter loves Jesus.

This is a huge question for all of us to ask ourselves. I find many people who seem to think that God just wants us to believe what he says and then obey what he says, but God calls us to *love him*. If you don’t love him, you don’t know him. But the only way we can love him if is we embrace that he loved us first in Christ! The hope Jesus is showing Peter is that he has a love-based hope!

Because of this, Jesus goes on to predict Peter’s death: <sup>18</sup>Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go.” <sup>19</sup>(This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.) And after saying this he said to him, “Follow me.” <sup>9</sup>

Before Jesus’ crucifixion and resurrection, Peter wavered quite a bit. And while Peter was definitely not perfect after the resurrection, his boldness increases. The Spirit works greater obedience in his life, and he is bold for Jesus’ name. Why? Because he understood the great forgiveness that was extended to

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<sup>8</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Jn 21:15–17.

<sup>9</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Jn 21:18–19.



him. And, Peter ended up ministering in the city of Rome with the apostle Paul. Under the persecution of Nero, Peter was taken to be crucified – and he did extend his arms out in crucifixion, but feeling unworthy to be crucified the same way as Jesus, he asked to be crucified upside down. The probability is high that this is exactly what happened.

What could change a person from denying Jesus and living in timidity to then sacrificially living his life all the way to martyrdom? And not only Mary, Thomas and Peter, but what about all the Christians throughout all time who have sacrificed? How could Jesus radically transform so many? Answer: Jesus really gives hope. He doesn't give a hope like this world. **He gives living, secure, love-based hope.**

Therefore, listen to the words of John in John 20: <sup>30</sup>**Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book;** <sup>31</sup>**but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.** <sup>10</sup> Do you believe? And, do you realize this belief isn't an empty belief. It's a trust, dependence on a Savior who loves, empowers, died and rose again for sinners! This belief finds all hope in Jesus.

**I genuinely desire that you would find hope in Christ. If you have found hope in Christ, I pray that it would grow even more. Maybe you've been wavering back, seeking to find hope in what you perceive to be good circumstances, and you need to remember that Jesus is your hope, not your circumstances. God's love is great and eternal, and he loves you. You know that because he sent his one and only Son to both die and rise again. Now, live your life on the basis of him!**

**Rejoice, the crucified Son rose from the dead – and, through faith in him, you have hope.**

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<sup>10</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Jn 20:30–31.