



Mary Craig Ministries, Inc.

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“Our Hope in Christ”

by David Patten

We live in historic times. Perhaps not since the Second World War has an entire nation, indeed the world, been bowed, humbled, struck down.

All around are stories of this modern day plague. I learned this week about the pop singer whose stage name is Pink. I do not know Pink, I do not know Pink's music. And I do not know if she believes Jesus Christ the Son of God allowed himself to be nailed to a cross so her sins, so she, and us, could be forgiven and welcomed into the presence of a Holy God.

But my heart goes out to Pink because she has a son Jamieson about the age of our twins. Pink tested positive for this COVID-19 disease caused by the coronavirus. Then Little Jamieson got sick, quite sick apparently, and she did the only thing she knew to do.

Pink did what any of us would do if our child was sick: She got down on her knees and prayed. She later said, “I've never prayed more in my life.”

I dare say there are many, many souls all around the world who since January have been praying more than they have ever prayed in their lives. Let us pray God will use this to open the eyes of their minds and hearts to receive the Lord.

Pastor Mary this WEEK reminded me of 1 Thessalonians 4:13, that we are not as those who have no hope. Yes, these times this Easter may appear dark ... And yet, the gospel is going forth as never before, and we do have great, great hope.

“Faith, hope, and love abide, these three, and the greatest of these is love.”

God proved His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Today we celebrate the perfect completion, the Tetelestai, of the greatest act of love, of faith, of hope of redemption, and of mercy this world has ever seen.

The death of Christ on the cross as atonement, as propitiation for our sins in loving obedience to Father God, and his burial, and his resurrection on the Third Day, is our certain hope, a blazing beacon to lead us through dark times. It is how we know God stamped paid in full, done, finished, on the perfect, sacrificial, atoning work of Jesus Christ on the cross, who suffered and bled and died for all those given to Him by His Father. Jesus Christ was sent by the Father to save.

The cross, of course, WAS intended as the ultimate humiliation, degradation, public torture, and shame. By enduring the cross as the Lamb of God, our saving Lord Jesus Christ, fully God and fully Man, and yet without sin, made a way, made the ONLY way for Holy Father God and sinful man to be reconciled. He is the only reconciler of God and Man. He is the only one who COULD reconcile God and Man, and Father God accepted His perfect work. He is indeed the Prince of Peace, the Pearl of Great Price, the one name by which men must be saved by the Grace of God, and by the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ IS God, God incarnate.

First Timothy 3:16 declares: "God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

And today He is Risen! He is risen indeed!

What the world intended as Christ's ultimate humiliation, which he submitted himself to as an act of love and obedience to the Father, of supreme loyalty really, was in truth the perfect fulfillment of God's plan for redemption of a people whose hearts are filled with iniquity. God prepared a lamb of His own, Jesus Christ.

Christ is sin-bearer, curse-bearer, the bearer of the wrath of God, and the bearer of the Glory of God. He mediated between God and Man, being fully God and fully Man.

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ demonstrated and proved that the Father received the work of Christ and His obedient life even to death on the Cross, in behalf of those given to Him by the Father.

To quote Pastor Mary, "Jesus is the One Accepted; we are accepted IN the Beloved (Jesus Christ). Salvation has been, is, and will be by the Promise, not by LAW-keeping (works). The Holy Spirit IS the Life-Maker, or Life-Producer (John 6:63). Only the Holy Spirit can give LIFE.

In the Holy Lamb of God, the debt was paid in full. He paid the debt. That is why Jesus Christ of Nazareth is the only way to salvation, and to reconciliation with Holy God.

And God showed His divine approval of Christ's sacrifice in this, that on the third day, in fulfillment of scripture, Christ rose from the dead.

Ephesians 4 tells us:

"Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

"(Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?

"He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)"

Ephesians 4:8-10 KJV

<https://www.bible.com/bible/1/eph.4.8-10.kjv>

On this day then, we rejoice that some two millennia ago, God and His Son Jesus Christ turned the tables on a world that rejected the Messiah, the Son of God, rebelled against the Prince of Peace. In so doing, Christ took captivity captive, robbed death of its sting, rose to where He now sits seated at the right hand of God, and gave gifts unto men.

So what was the result of the world's rebellion against God's Living WORD, His Living Decree of Redemption? Philippians 2:9-11 tells us:

"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

"That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

"And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Philippians 2:9-11 KJV

<https://www.bible.com/bible/1/php.2.9-11.kjv>

Earlier this week I received an email from a successful Florida businessman, a devout believer, who wanted to remind us, in these days of self-isolation and social distancing, that we all have a great hope to share with a world that is really, really scared and hurting right now. He called his fellow believers “The Easter people,” meaning those of the body of Christ, who celebrate the resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

As of this writing, we are told nearly 2 million people around the world have contracted this modern-day plague, COVID-19 — although the real number may be twice that due to undiagnosed and unreported cases. The global death toll has passed the 100,000 mark. In fact, since the New Year, over 110,000 souls went to stand before their Creator. And there they encountered God as their Holy all-powerful Savior, or they encountered God as their Holy all-powerful Judge. Later, you may want to think about that.

As much as the people of Christ, the Easter people if you will, are feeling anxious and socially isolated and worried about the economy and the future, think for a moment about this: What does the unbelieving world feel?

Think for a moment how that must feel, to be alone and to not know the name that is highly exalted above every name, of things in heaven, of things on earth, of things below the earth, to the glory of Almighty God? What about them?

Paul writes in Romans 1:16: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes.”

And in 2 Timothy 1:7 it is written, “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”

But what about those living in fear right now, who do not know who to pray to like they’ve never prayed before, who do not know that His perfect love, by the power of His Holy Spirit, casts out fear? What about them?

What about those who are watching the terrifying headlines in the news today who do not understand what it means to walk by faith and not by sight — to walk by faith, and not by sight! [2 Corinthians 5-7].

What about them? I think Christ yearns for us to be an example this Easter, to share His word and His light and His Grace with a dark and dying world, to reach out and share HIS eternal redemption paid at such unimaginable cost for the salvation of many.

To do that, We must walk by the power of His Holy Spirit. When a spirit of fear rises up, as surely it will in these days, remember: we are NOT as those who have no hope. Be bold to share your hope, your love, His love, His faith, with others. The world really needs that right now. It always has.

To stand strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might, we must respond with faith in Jesus, yes. But even more so, we must respond with the faith OF Jesus. We must pray the Holy Spirit to give us the faith Jesus has, as we are in Him. It is HIS Faith we need, as His Holy Spirit is in us — and not our own.

Perfect love casts out fear — His is the perfect love.

In John 16:13 Christ tells the disciples:

“When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.”

John 16:13 KJV

<https://www.bible.com/bible/1/jhn.16.13.kjv>

Philippians 2:1-8 tells us:

“Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind.

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

“In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

“And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross!

“Therefore God exalted him to the highest place, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge THAT Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Philippians 2:10-11 NIV

<https://www.bible.com/bible/111/php.2.10-11.niv>

Benediction [Hebrews 13:20-21 KJV]

“Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,

“Make you perfect in every good work to do HIS will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in HIS sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

Hebrews 13:20-21 KJV

<https://www.bible.com/bible/1/heb.13.20-21.kjv>

Betty has a few words about how you can access and share our message today, and about an evangelism tool on the www.martcraigministries.org website called “Salvation in a Sentence.”

Salvation in a Sentence

- By grace (Ephesians 2.8, 9; Titus 3.5; Romans 6.23)
- you see your true condition; (Romans 3.23; Proverbs 14.12)
- understand the nature of God (1 John 1:1-5; 1 John 4.8-10; Isaiah 6.3; Exodus 34.7; Psalm 89.23)
- and who Jesus is and what He did; (John 1.1,14; John 3.16; Isaiah 53; Acts 2.36; Romans .8-11)
- perceive the need to repent of sin, believe in Jesus and His word that He died to pay the penalty for your sin and rose from the dead; (1 Corinthians 15.3, 4; John 5.39,40)
- receive Him as Savior, Lord, and Master, (John 1.12; Luke 16.13; Acts 4.12; 1 John 5.11-13)
- to follow Him in full trust, reliance, and confidence (Luke 12.31, 32)
- and receive the free gift of eternal life (John 6.47; John 17.3; 1 John 5.10-13).

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Other scriptures from the beginning of the Easter service

Colossians 1:9-22

“For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;

“That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;

“Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;

“Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:

“Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

“Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:

“For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

“And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

“And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

“For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;

“And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

“And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled

“In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight.”

<https://www.bible.com/bible/1/Col.1.9-22.kjv>

Revelation 1:4-8

“John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne;

“And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

“And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

“Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

“I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.”

<https://www.bible.com/bible/1/rev.1.7-8.kjv>

Psalms 118:14-24

“The Lord is my strength and song, and is become my salvation.

“The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous: the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly.”

“The right hand of the Lord is exalted: the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly.

“I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord.

“The Lord hath chastened me sore: but he hath not given me over unto death.”

“Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go into them, and I will praise the Lord:

“This gate of the Lord, into which the righteous shall enter.

“I will praise thee: for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation.

“The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.

“This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.

“This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.”

<https://www.bible.com/bible/1/psa.118.14-24.kjv>

Ephesians 3:14-21 NKJV

“For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height— to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.”

<https://www.bible.com/bible/114/eph.3.14-21.nkjv>