

Resurrection Hope  
John 20:1-9/#thegospelofjohn

Have you walked into this community this morning with some disappointed hopes?

Is your body deteriorating faster than you expected? Have there been some extremely painful twists and turns with the person you married? Do you find yourself having to start over late in life? Are your children going down roads you never expected?

If there was a job description for disciples of Jesus, right below trusting Jesus and loving others would be this word: hope. Your vocation in the Christian life is to hope. This isn't a form of escapism or wishful thinking - this is what we were designed to do.

The Bible says that those of you who choose hope in this dark and discouraging world will not be ashamed or found foolish. The Bible's promise is that if you choose hope you will not be embarrassed! "Hope does not disappoint!" (Rom. 5:5). Hope will not fail.

There is a huge difference between disappointed hopes and hopes that will not disappoint. The hope that does not disappoint and the hope that will not fail spring from the bodily resurrection of Jesus, our Savior.

The apostle John says that the bodily resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth is something that should matter to you. John's testimony flies full force with great love and compassion into all the disappointing hopes of your life. There are disappointing hopes, but the hope of the resurrection is a hope that will not disappoint.



William Lane Craig: "Without the belief in the resurrection the Christian faith could not have come into being. The disciples would have remained crushed and defeated men. Even had they continued to remember Jesus as their beloved teacher, his crucifixion would have forever silenced any hopes of his being the Messiah. The cross would have remained the sad and shameful end of his career. The origin of Christianity, therefore, hinges on the belief of the early disciples that God had raised Jesus from the dead."

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*Now very early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been moved away from the entrance. <sup>2</sup> So she went running to Simon Peter and the other disciple whom Jesus loved and told them, "They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!" <sup>3</sup> Then Peter and the other disciple set out to go to the tomb. <sup>4</sup> The two were running together, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and reached the tomb first. <sup>5</sup> He bent down and saw the strips of linen cloth lying there, but he did not go in. <sup>6</sup> Then Simon Peter, who had been following him, arrived and went right into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen cloth lying there, <sup>7</sup> and the face cloth, which had been around Jesus' head, not lying with the strips of linen cloth but rolled up in a place by itself. <sup>8</sup> Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, came in, and he saw and believed. <sup>9</sup> (For they did not yet understand the scripture that Jesus must rise from the dead.) (John 20:1-9)*

The Apostle John gives signpost after signpost in his Gospel to preview the resurrection.

John 1:1	John 2:1, 19	John 6:39	John 11:25	John 16:20
It all begins in His prologue, "In the beginning was the Word and this Word was with the Father from the very beginning and what God the Father is, fully God so is the Word, fully God" (1:1).. The invisible God is now visible in the Lord Jesus Christ and He is full of two things. He is full of grace and truth (1:14).	Jesus' very first sign in the Gospel of John happened at a wedding at Cana. Jesus turns water into wine on the 3 <sup>rd</sup> day (2:1) and in the temple, He tells the religious leaders and all of Israel-- "destroy this Temple and I will raise it up in 3 days" (2:19).	Not only will Jesus rise from the dead, but we too will rise as well. In chapter 6, Jesus says, I will lose no one and I will raise them up on the last day. Those who eat of Him. Those who partake of His sacrifice live forever and will be raised up on the last day (6:39).	In chapter 11, Jesus raises his dear friend Lazarus from the dead and tells Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live even if he dies, <sup>26</sup> and the one who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" (11:25).	In chapter 16 Jesus tells His disciples, "You will weep and mourn. You will be sorrowful but your sorrow will turn to joy. Jesus says, "I will see you again and your heart will rejoice and no one will take your joy from you!" (16:20)

All of these strategic signposts lead us to John 20, where we find Mary Magdalene very early Sunday morning, while it is still dark, coming to Jesus' tomb. She has come to anoint and care for Jesus' dead body. She arrives at the tomb to discover that the stone had been moved away and Jesus' body was missing and her heart just sinks. Mary had placed all her faith and hope in Jesus and yet He died as a criminal and now His body is gone and she doesn't know what to do.

She runs to Peter and John and says, "They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!" (20:2). Peter and John race to the tomb. John doesn't go in immediately, but Peter does and Jesus' body is gone and linen cloths are displaced in an unusual way.

One of the most striking and stubborn historical facts is that the enemies of Jesus and of Christianity in those first days, weeks and months in Jerusalem could not produce the body of Jesus of Nazareth. That would have killed all Christian momentum. There was no dead body because Jesus was no longer dead. He arose from the dead! In verse 8, John saw and believed. Despite all the signposts, they hadn't understood the Scripture that Jesus must rise from the dead. No one took the body and John realizes in that moment that his Rabbi, his Savior, has come back to life.

Everyone in the ancient world knows that resurrection doesn't happen. Everyone knows today that resurrection doesn't happen. Dead men don't rise from the dead. In the classical world of Greece and Rome, resurrection was something you might think about, but it would never actually occur. The Sadducees wanted nothing to do with the resurrection (Acts 23:8), but the Pharisees believed in the resurrection but not until the end (5:28-29, 11:24). What happened at the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea is unheard of. Jesus went through death and began new creation in his resurrection where death and sin were defeated and life could begin in its fullest.

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### Our Treasure: Resurrection Hope

We have found a treasure, the treasure of God's love and hope. Its roots are in the resurrection of Jesus. He is the resurrection and the life and because he arose from the dead, we too will arise from the dead.

Every day, every moment, attachments to this world keep pulling us away from this treasure. The spiritual life is the long and often challenging search for what we have already found. So much of this Christian life is hiding this treasure in the field where we found it and walking through that process of selling and letting go of everything we own and value, and coming back to buy that field over and over and over. Nothing but that treasure can truly satisfy you.

Peter says, "By His great mercy he gave us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, that is, into an inheritance imperishable, undefiled, and unfading. It is reserved in heaven for you, who by God's power are protected through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." (1 Peter 1:3-5)