

HIS FINISHED WORK

OUR FUTURE **HOPE**



2019 HOLY WEEK DEVOTIONALS

LAFAYETTE FEDERATED CHURCH



HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

April 14th: PALM SUNDAY:

Worship Services at 8:15 & 11 AM

Sunday School at 9:45 AM

EASTER CONCERT at 6 PM

April 18th: MAUNDY THURSDAY:

Communion Service at 7 PM

April 19th: GOOD FRIDAY:

Men's Fellowship Breakfast at 7 AM

Tenebrae Service at 7 PM

April 21ST: EASTER SUNDAY:

Sunrise Service at 6:30 AM

Easter Breakfast at 7 AM

Triumphant Resurrection Service at 8:15 & 11 AM

Sunday School at 9:45 AM

LAFAYETTE FEDERATED CHURCH

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INTRODUCTION

HOPE. It's the one thing we can't live without. The deepest part of our souls cries out for it. HOPE. Not a false hope that makes untrue promises. Not a guarantee invented by a man or a woman. But a real, lasting HOPE. That's the message of Easter. Because Jesus died and was raised from the dead, HOPE is here. Hope is Jesus.

Our theme for this year's Easter season at LFC is: "His Finished Work, Our Future Hope." For this year's Holy Week devotional, each pastor has chosen a song from our Easter Musical, *"The Cross Has the Final Word"* and reflected on the message of hope embedded in it. Our goal is that these brief devotionals will be a tool to help you focus your day on the ultimate message of hope-the person and finished work of Jesus.

May this Holy Week be a blessing to you and your family. I hope you will take advantage of our special services and events leading up to our Easter celebration on Sunday.

In Christ,

Pastor Aaron

HIS FINISHED WORK...OUR FUTURE HOPE

“Still Rolling Stones”

by Pastor Gregg Gaffney

“I thought that I was too far gone for everything I’ve done wrong. Yeah, I’m the one who dug this grave. But you called my name. You called my name! All at once I came alive, this beating heart, these open eyes. The grave let go, the darkness should have known You’re still rolling stones.”

There is nowhere that is too far for our God to reach. There is no situation that the love of God cannot overcome. All our sin was heaped upon Him. His death paid the penalty, and His resurrection proves it. And that same resurrection gives credence to the hope that we have for eternal life. Even when things are the most difficult in this life, we can stand firm in that hope. We know that what affects us today is temporary, but the life we gain because of the forgiveness of our sin through the work of our Savior Jesus on the cross is eternal. Again, there is no place that God cannot reach you and no circumstance that God doesn’t stand with you. Listen to what Paul wrote to the Corinthians:

“We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. Therefore, we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.” 2 Corinthians 4:8-10, 16-18

These words come from a man who initially stood against Jesus and vehemently persecuted His followers, a man who called himself foremost among all sinners (1 Timothy 1:15). Then after meeting Jesus on the road to Damascus and experiencing the forgiveness of Christ, he gave his life to serve his Lord. But that service wasn’t easy, nor without great cost to himself. He worked hard, was imprisoned often, beaten times without number, and every day of his ministry brought the danger of imminent death.

In his own words, Paul described the tribulation he faced: *“Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.”* 2 Corinthians 11:24-37)

Yet, he looked past all these things to pursue the joy that comes with the eternal hope of salvation in Jesus. That same eternal promise allows us to look at every trial we face as Paul did; a momentary light affliction! How do we know this is true, because Jesus is alive, not dead! And for this reason we can celebrate; the God Who rolled the stone away that first Easter morning is still in the business of rolling stones away today.

Spend time today thanking Him for rolling the stone away in your life! Think of others in your circle of influence who need to know the God Who rolls stones away and pray that God would reveal Himself to them. Ask God how you can be used in their lives to help them each understand the love our God has for them.

HIS FINISHED WORK...OUR FUTURE HOPE

"Glorious Day"

by Pastor Ryan Drew

"We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his." Romans 6:4-5

I cannot think of anything that rivals the truth that because of who Jesus is and what he has accomplished on the cross, dead people can be made alive. The hope of salvation has been shown to all mankind because of the finished work of Christ on the cross. I want you to take just a few moments and consider the worst of your sin. I know this may be uncomfortable, but think about your sinful nature and your inability on your own to escape from this sin and its consequences.

It's overwhelming, right? The first few lines of the song *"Glorious Day"* communicate the heaviness of what we feel. "I was breathing, but not alive. All my failures I tried to hide. It was my tomb, 'til I met You." But the beauty is that if we truly believe what scripture teaches us, that is, that if we have been crucified with Christ, then this body of sin has been *"brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin."* Romans 6:6. It seems strange to celebrate death, but when we are celebrating the death of our old sinful nature, it makes perfect sense. The old us is no more! We have been made new through Jesus!

The resurrection of Jesus is the cornerstone of Christianity. That miraculous moment in history changed everything for all those who will call on the name of Jesus. We have not just been saved from the consequences of sin. We have been changed.

We are being transformed. We are truly united with Jesus in a resurrection like his!

*I needed rescue, My sin was heavy
But chains break at the weight of Your glory
I needed shelter, I was an orphan
But You call me a citizen of Heaven
When I was broken, You were my healing
Now Your love is the air that I'm breathing
I have a future, My eyes are open*

This bridge to the song communicates the heart of the transformation that each of us can know. I encourage you to take a few moments this morning to read through the rest of Romans chapter 6 and consider a few questions.

Do you know Him as your Savior? If not, there is no better day than today to be set free from the penalty of sin and death!

Do you still struggle with the weight of your old sinful self? Remember this truth- That's not you anymore! What Jesus did was enough, you have been set free from sin.

Are you living each day with eternal perspective?

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“The Cross Has The Final Word”

by Pastor Glenn Cohrs

The song “*The Cross Has The Final Word*” is one of those simple songs that speaks volumes. This song with just a few word changes in each verse to me clearly paints the Hope we find in Jesus. Listen to these words from the song:

Sorrow may come in the darkest night
But the cross has the final word

Evil may put up its strongest fight
But the cross has the final word

The Savior has come with the morning light
The cross has the final word

He traded death for eternal life
The cross has the final word

It is so easy to lose hope living in this fallen world of ours. Honestly, I don't know how people do it without Jesus. Yet so many people are trying to face it alone, without the help of Jesus. I believe so many people think the Gospel message is too simple; that there's got to be more to it than just accepting the gift of Salvation by believing in Jesus and asking for forgiveness.

Yet the Bible clearly tells us that “God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16. God himself loved me, loved you so much that He gave His Son up for us. Not because He needed us, but rather solely because He LOVED us. He knew we were hopeless without Him. He knew the only way for us to have Hope would be for His Son to face the cross. “The Cross” to a non-believer is truly a sign of pain, torture and end. Yet to a believer, we see this grotesque symbol as the greatest symbol of Love. Satan believed that he had won by getting Jesus on that cross, but we know different as we know Our Savior wasn't defeated on the cross, but actually defeated the cross when He rose again that wonderful Easter morning many years ago.

So, what do you see when you look at the cross. Do you see the end with no hope, or do you see the greatest symbol of love and hope? Maybe you think it's too late for me, Jesus couldn't love someone like me. Well, I want you to know it's never too late for anyone. We see that in the story of the crucifixion when the thief on the cross next to Jesus, (who truly deserved the punishment he was receiving), asks Jesus to forgive him, Jesus says these amazing words “I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise.” (Luke 23:43). The thief had nothing to offer Jesus, no chances to do better, no hope of proving himself worthy of salvation. Yet Jesus in love, forgives him. So why not ask for forgiveness today, and start looking at the cross in a whole different way.

See, it's not the actual wooden cross that is special, but instead, it's the person who hung on the cross that makes the cross so special. The words of the song so wonderfully describe where real Hope is found:

There's nothing stronger, nothing higher,
Nothing greater than the name of Jesus.

All the honor, all the power,
All the glory to the name of Jesus.

So this Easter as we remember what Jesus did for us on that cross, let's truly remember where our Hope comes from. It comes from our wonderful, powerful, beautiful Savior, Jesus Christ. May we live our lives to bring him all the glory and honor He so deserves.

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“Death Was Arrested”

by Pastor Brian Ingraham

One of my favorite passages in the Bible is found in the book of Ephesians. In Ephesians 2:1-10, Paul teaches about the desperate sinful state of man and the great mercy of God. It's essentially the heart of the gospel message and why I love it so much. We, as desperate sinners, need to depend on the marvelous mercy of God to save us. This Easter, we can look at these verses and relish in the grace that has been given to us through Christ, knowing that we each have been miraculously saved for a purpose.

A song that really helps to express the grace we have been given through Christ is called *“Death was Arrested.”* As I listened to the song and heard the writers describe the meaning behind it, I was amazed at how well it communicated the heart of the gospel. Eternal death and separation from God was arrested through Jesus' death. By his death on the cross, we could have new life through Him. The first verse in the song reads . .

*Alone in my sorrow and dead in sin
Lost without hope and no place to begin,
Your love made a way to let mercy come in,
When death was arrested and my life began.”*

This song verse captures the idea found in Ephesians 2:1, where it says we were all dead in our sins. Dead is dead. Dead people can't save themselves. We were without hope and objects of the wrath of God (Ephesians 2:3). Ephesians 2:4 goes on to say that because of God's great love for us, we were made alive in Christ through his great mercy.

Another part of the song I really like is the chorus. It reads . .

*Oh, Your grace so free washes over me
You have made me new now life begins with You
It's your endless love pouring down on us
You have made us new now life begins with You*

Jesus' death on the cross gives us life and gives us hope. As we put our trust in Jesus to forgive our sins, we are given new life. Ephesians 2:8 says “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God.” It's so important to remember that we didn't do anything to earn the free gift of salvation. We are undeserving recipients of that grace, saved for a purpose. Ephesians 2:10 reveals that we are God's workmanship and that we were created to do good works. God has a purpose for each of us. He has called us into relationship with himself through the gift of Jesus and tells us to share this hope with those God puts in our lives.

I would encourage you to listen to the words of *“Death Was Arrested”* and also read Ephesians 2:1-10. What a joy to be able to live with the hope that comes through a personal relationship with Jesus! As you celebrate Easter, revel in the fact that each of us are dead in our sins but have been saved by grace. Death was arrested because of God's love for us A gift from heaven that is incredibly undeserved, but completely free!

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“Sweet Exchange”

by Pastor Aaron Robb

When I was a very little boy, my dad caught a record-setting salmon in a river in Oregon where I grew up. I can remember two things about that day. First, I remember the size of the fish. Second, I remember the size of my jealous heart. Not only was I jealous that dad caught the fish and I didn't, but I was jealous of all the attention he was getting. Instead of enjoying his moment of triumph, my dad had to listen to my non-stop whining that I wanted it to be my fish. I finally made him an offer he couldn't refuse. I reached in my pant pocket, pulled out a penny, and asked him if I could buy the fish. In a moment of exasperation, my dad took the penny and said the fish was mine. That must have been enough to shut me up long enough for him to get his picture taken and the salmon officially weighed and recorded. I remember thinking that I had just made the greatest exchange in history!

One of my favorite songs in this year's Easter Musical, *“The Cross Has the Final Word”*, is *“Sweet Exchange.”* I think the chorus is especially powerful:

*What a sweet exchange, how can it be;
Where I give my pain and you give Your peace?
What an odd display salvation brings;
You washed away my sin and shame,
And in it's place you left your grace. What a sweet exchange.*

The Easter season reminds us why we are truly hopeless apart from Christ. On our own, we bring nothing more than shame, brokenness, sin and death to the table. We're constantly looking for peace and purpose, but in reality we have nothing in and of ourselves to make that a reality.

That's why Jesus' finished work on the cross is so beautiful. He brought everything to the table-forgiveness, salvation, purpose, peace, and hope-and was willing to exchange all of that for our brokenness and spiritual poverty. Through His gracious love, we, indeed are recipients of the greatest exchange in history. 2 Corinthians 5:21 captures this truth so well:

“God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

This Easter season, take time to reflect on the fact that we, indeed, were recipients of the greatest exchange in history. Humbly thank God for making you heirs and sons of the King, despite being spiritually poor and empty-handed.