

love me, and someone to love.

That's my hope, to share a loving relationship with Jesus; in the warmth of the summer, in the changes of autumn, through the chill of winter, and in the excitement of new life in the spring. Jesus is my hope, the one I need, the only one I need, for with him comes everything.

And so Jesus one command is; 'Love one another as I have loved you'. Where is Jesus allowing the fresh spring of love to surface in your life? Where is he weeding out something that is strangling his love for

you and it finding expression in your life? Is trying to break a bad habit, like anger which pushes people away, or is he seeking to bring forth love for people instead of love for money, wealth and pleasure. Where is Jesus allowing the fresh spring of love to surface in your life? Where is he breaking up some hard ground that won't let love take root and grow? A resentment being held onto. A desire for revenge. Fear that has produced a hard impenetrable barrier. Where is Jesus seeking to let the fresh spring of love breakthrough in your

life? So that you can discover the joy of being love as Jesus loves you, and loving others as Jesus loves you.

Let us pray. Jesus we thank you for the Spring times of life, where you walk with us as we discover the joy of your love. The joy of being loved, and the joy of letting that love fill our lives. Fill our relationships. Fill our work. Fill our play. Fill the way we use the resources you have so graciously given us, so that we might be able to love as we are loved by you. Amen.

28 August 2011

Walking With God—5



What comes to your mind when you hear the word 'Spring'? I think of new life, of new beginnings, of leaving winter behind and enjoying the warmth of the sun. I think of hope.

Today I'm reminded that in Jesus, I walk with a God of hope. Jesus said; "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep... I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me..." (John 10:11,14) What a beautiful relationship is pictured here.

Just before this Jesus said; "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I

have come that you may have life, and have it to the full." (John 10:10) And part of a full life is hope. The thief steals our hope, kills our hope, destroys our hope. So if you're feeling hopeless, its not from Jesus.

Jesus is the Lord of hope. He brings life out of death. Jesus promises us resurrection. That's new life. That's a hope nothing and nobody can take.

But don't confuse this hope with comfort. One of the devils lies to steal our hope is that when things are going wrong, when our comfort is well and truly shattered, is

to believe that Jesus can't be trusted. Then we slowly begin to believe that the situation is hopeless. Which is a lie. If you build on a lie, then yes the situation will be hopeless, for none of the Devil's lies have the power to give life.

One of his lies is that life is found in comfort, in pleasure, in the good life. That's a very attractive lie, but no object and no experience no matter how good or pleasurable has the power to give life. They are by their very nature lifeless objects. Have you ever been tempted to put your hope for life in a lifeless thing? I

Christ Church Lutheran

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am

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Reaching Out with the Love of Jesus that All my Know, Worship & Grow in Christ

have. And once the initial experience passed, all I had was a passing memory. And with my memory, that's not very much!

Jesus has come to share himself with us, inviting us to share life with him. Jesus has the power to give what he promises. Jesus has the power to give life, to raise us to new life.

Jesus is the Lord of resurrection, new life in the face of death. Jesus exudes hope, for he is able to do what he promises.

Notice; Jesus is able to do what he promises, not necessarily what I want. Jesus isn't my slave called to do my bidding, according to how I want things to work out. Again that's the devil lying and in doing so

killing our hope. For we begin to think; "I asked Jesus and he didn't do what I asked. Therefore he's not real." "I'm in pain and Jesus hasn't fixed me, he can't be real." How many times has the devil lied to you, getting you to doubt.

Jesus is the Lord of Hope.

Is doubt the opposite of hope?
In our Gospel reading for today it's interesting that Peter wanted Jesus to fit into his hope for the future. Peter was longing for a political solution to the Roman occupation. His hopes and dreams were in political independence. So when Jesus started talking about dying Peter sets about

putting Jesus on the right track. After all how can a crucified Messiah be of any good to anyone?
What hopes and dreams do I have that compete and seek to destroy Jesus' hopes and dreams?

Jesus didn't mess around; "Peter, get out of the way. Satan, get lost. You have no idea how God works." (Matthew 16:23) That must have set Peter back a bit, and probably the other disciples as well. I know at times I'm tempted to be like Peter and want to inform Jesus on the best way forward. Which usually has me being healthy, wealthy and suffering no pain.

What was Jesus response; "Anyone who intends to come

with me has to let me lead. You're not in the driver's seat; I am. Don't run from suffering; embrace it. Follow me and I'll show you how. Self-help is no help at all. Self-sacrifice is the way, my way, to finding yourself, your true self. What kind of deal is it to get everything you want but lose yourself? What could you ever trade your soul for?" (Matthew 16:24 -26 Msg)

Today I'm reminded that Jesus is able to use suffering to raise me to the new life he offers. But to be raised has the unpleasant step of dying first. Dying to me being in control, that I might be raised living with Jesus in control. Usually in a different way than I would have expected. My expectations are

always; no pain, no suffering, comfort, pleasure, all my wants and desires meet. Which is the best way to end up totally lost.

Jesus' goal is to raise me to new life with him. A life which is beyond my abilities

Is doubt the opposite of Hope?

to fully understand, let alone create. My hope is in Jesus, not my intellect, not my feelings, not my bank balance.

My hope is in a person who loves me, Jesus. My hope is in sharing life with Jesus according to his hopes and dreams, which far exceed anything I've ever come up with, let alone understood. I trust Jesus and his

power and authority, and his ability to know what's going on when to me everything seems a total mess.

Then I hang onto Jesus, trusting his love. Trusting his ability to work it all out. Trusting him to raise me to new life, believing that Jesus is all I need, and everything else is a passing.

This is the point of resurrection; Jesus is the one reality that will last. Jesus, his grace and mercy, will last. Jesus, his forgiveness which opens life with the Father, will last. Jesus, the person who loves me more than his own life, will last. Jesus is who I need. I don't need a what, a thing, to make life great. I need a who, a person, someone to