

THE ABIDING MEANING OF EASTER

Sermon for the 2nd Sunday of Easter 2026

1 Peter 1:3-9

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is taken from 1 Peter 1:3-9, our Second Reading read before:

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth, Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

For many people, Easter is over. The four-day weekend is finished, and they are back at work. For these individuals, Easter wasn't a time to reflect on our saviour's completed work, but simply a period for enjoyment. Plus, look at what happened over Easter. Every day from Good Friday to Easter Sunday, thousands of people rushed to the football grounds. I wonder why thousands didn't head to church.

However, for all of us—those who worshipped our Saviour, followed Him through His passion, saw Him hang on the cross, and rise again—we are living in the afterglow of Easter. The events of that day, so beautifully recorded for us in Scripture, still ring in our minds. Our hearts continue to rejoice when we think of the open tomb and the angels' joyful refrain. We share in the joy of the women who went to the tomb that day and the wonder of the apostles. With the Emmaus disciples, our hearts burn within us as the Scriptures are fulfilled and the Saviour is revealed.¹

For us, Easter isn't just an annual event to prepare for, celebrate, and then forget. It's not merely a time to fulfil our "Easter duty" to the church, only to overlook it for another year. It is the foundation of our Christian faith and the driving force of our Christian life. Therefore, the significance of Easter is of utmost importance. Easter day has passed, but its meaning remains, so today, let us reflect on the abiding meaning of Easter.

First of all, Easter means that we can hope. The Apostle Peter begins by saying, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to His great mercy, He has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

Spiritually, we are dead by nature. There is no spark of spiritual life or capacity for growth within us. But praise be to God, He has shown mercy on our wretched, lost condition and has "caused us to be born again," making us new creatures and giving us new life through His Word and Sacrament. The Spirit has worked within us, so we can hope—and the source of our hope is God's mercy.

Peter describes this hope as a "living" hope, for it is drawn from a living God, with a guarantee made "through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

Jesus is not a dead hero, a noble martyr, or a living legend, but a living Lord. His life is real, so His resurrection is real. And as His resurrection is real, so our hope is real.

Easter signifies, therefore, that we can hope in the enduring power of His resurrection in our lives; hope in the resurrection of our own bodies from the grave; hope in the joyful reunion with our loved ones; and hope in the eternal vision of our resurrected Lord.

Furthermore, the object of our hope, Peter describes as "an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you."

The hope of resurrection is our inheritance—granted to us by our gracious Father as His children’s eternal heritage. Heaven is our true home and a reward that is “imperishable, undefiled, and unfading.” It is a treasure that neither moth nor rust can damage, and robbers cannot steal.² An inheritance safeguarded for us by the promise and power of God; it is the stronghold of His everlasting arms.

By virtue of that promise and that power, we are kept through “faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”

Through faith in the atoning merits and victorious resurrection of His Son, we hold tightly to God’s promises and make His life our own. In this way, He guarantees us salvation—both our present possession and our future inheritance.

That salvation is the focus of our hope and the reason for our rejoicing!

We rejoice in that salvation because we already have it now. We recognise its power, feel its joy, and share its blessings. But we also rejoice because the full measure of that salvation’s power, joy, and blessings will be revealed in the last days. For us, the best is yet to come.

But before the best can come, we must go through the worst.

Christ could not enjoy the triumph of Easter without enduring the suffering of Good Friday. Through the cross to the crown was the journey of our Saviour, and through the cross to the crown is a principle of the Christian life. So, Peter goes on to show that Easter signifies that we must also suffer when he writes, “In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials.”

It is no accident that our Lord taught His disciples to pray, “Lead us not into temptation.” Temptations are such an unavoidable part of the Christian’s experience that we need plenty of God’s help to ward them off or ease their impact. In every stage and situation of life, temptations surround us: the lure of the world, the pride of life, the concern for things— things of the body, things of the day, things that are bound to pass away.

The devil is full of ideas about how he can lead us astray spiritually. The Bible we neglect to read, the hands we forget to fold, the love we fail to show, the hasty words we speak, the jealous thoughts we have, and the vain ambition—all these are the devil’s devices. He aims to tempt us away from God in these ways. And among all the temptations we face, the worst is that we feel immune to temptation.

If we are honest, then we admit that we feel temptation at every turn in life. We walk in constant danger, and the pressure of temptation brings us the suffering Peter describes in our text.

We struggle not only because the devil tempts us to sin, but also because our patience and hope are frequently tested. Illness at home, problems at work, anxiety about the future, the unfaithfulness of friends, worries about finances, a death in the family—all these present real trials for even the most steadfast Christians. These are part of the heavy burden we must carry as we journey through life.

However, these trials and temptations, grievous as they are, are part of God’s design for our lives. Peter says that God regards them as “more precious than gold.” The comparison is fitting. Just as gold must be treated in the hot fire to become bright and pure, so too the Christian must be tested in the furnace of affliction to remove the impurities of sin and cleanse him from the alloy of unbelief. And, Peter urges, if this purging process is necessary for perishable gold, how much more so for the imperishable soul of man!

Even as Peter indicates that trouble is unavoidable for the Christian, he offers a note of optimism. These troubles, he assures us, will only be “for a little while.” They will last only as long as God considers it beneficial to us. And these troubles will occur only “if necessary.”

God's aim is not to punish, but to bless. For, after all, the promise of God holds good, "No temptation has overtaken you except what is common in all human beings. But God is faithful. He will not allow you to be tested beyond what you can bear. Rather, when you are tested, he will also make the way of escape, so that you may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. 10:13).

God's purpose in sending us the cross isn't to cause us pain and distress. He doesn't take pleasure in our suffering. His only aim is for our good that we may love Him more and serve Him better, and that our lives may be more beneficial to others and more aligned with His will. Peter states it this way: the "genuineness of your faith... may be found to result in praise and glory and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

Jesus Christ, at His return, will wipe away our tears, mend our wounds, and soothe our troubled hearts. Then there will be joy instead of mourning, songs instead of sighs, and peace instead of conflict. Finally, we shall see how our steadfastness in trials, our resistance to temptation, and our hope amid hardships have come together to glorify His name and demonstrate that He is our faithful and unfailing God. To that God, we shall behold, serve, and worship when Jesus Christ comes again.

This sure and fearless hope is ours once more this Eastertide, for in the victory of our risen Lord, we see the full and ultimate meaning of Easter for ourselves.

This brings us to our final point: Easter signifies that we shall triumph.

Peter assures us that, despite trial, temptation, and all the assaults of hell, we shall nonetheless be protected by God's power. This safekeeping will endure until the "revelation of Jesus Christ." And of this Christ, Peter says, "Though you have not seen Him, you love Him."

In human relationships, it is unthinkable that we should love someone we have never seen. But our fellowship with Christ is of a higher order. He who died for our sins—shall we not love Him? He who has made us His own—shall we not love Him? He who cleanses our heart—shall we not love Him? Indeed, "we love Him because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19).

This is a kind of love that does not rely on sight. Our union with Christ is not based on what we see, but on faith. Our passage clearly shows this: "Though you do not now see Him, you believe in Him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory." Our fellowship with Christ gives us joy now, and glory later, that will be the consummation of our faith and our eternal salvation, as we obtain "the outcome of (our) faith, the salvation of (our) souls."

Dear friends, this is the true meaning of Easter for us: Because Christ rose, we shall also rise. Because He defeated the evil enemy, we shall share in His victory forever. Because He lives, we shall live too. No, more precisely, because He lives, eternal life is already ours here and now!

Easter signifies that "life is hope." Easter signifies that we have endured suffering. Easter signifies that our victory is certain. Easter signifies that throughout life, He will guide us with His counsel and, in the end, receive us into glory. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

1 Luke 24:32

2 Matthew 6:19
