

Given that understanding of hope, from Paul's words to the Romans, how would you define hope today? Write your thoughts here and ask God for a deeper understanding of hope as the result of living fully in our faith.

### **Thursday, April 4**

Read John 20:1-18 and Ezekiel 37:1-14. The Easter Miracle was a surprising miracle but it was not new. What God offers to each of us as a result of that first Easter morning is a significant part – to be sure – of the salvation history. “Salvation History” refers to the entirety of God’s desire for all humanity – from the beginning of creation – to be saved. It is God’s desire that all people be saved (I Timothy 2:3-4).

This “Salvation History” represents God’s efforts through the patriarch of Hebrew ancestors and through the judges and prophets to save us for the proper (i.e. righteous) relationship with our Creator God. It is represented in the hopeful words of Ezekiel. This salvation history found its fulfillment in Jesus Christ and it extends to each of us today! How do you see yourself fitting into the salvation history of God? Write your thoughts here and praise God for his loving salvation offered to us even before we existed!

### **Friday, April 5**

Read John 20:1-18 and Ezekiel 37:1-14. As certain as God has worked throughout history to save all humanity, each of us has a place in that history. All that remains is the question, “Will we embrace the salvation God has offered and continues to offer through the Holy Spirit? You can receive this wholeness at any time in your life – even if you have been a part of church for decades! Embrace the gift of salvation and wholeness that God has offered since creation; embrace your place in the people of God who are marked by forgiveness, redeemed by God’s love!

## *Message Notes – March 31, 2024*

# *Just An Old-Fashioned \* Love Song*

- I. The best thing about the retro movement is the \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. There’s something a little disconcerting about having the music that was popular in your high school days being played on \_\_\_\_\_ stations, however, \_\_\_\_\_ music is \_\_\_\_\_ music.
  - B. Our scripture lesson from John tells the story - “Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the \_\_\_\_\_.”
    1. Can you imagine her \_\_\_\_\_ at that time?
    2. The man upon whom she placed her \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ – her savior – was dead.
    3. Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ salvation – wholeness.
      - a. In the words of the song, “And wrapped around the music is the sound of someone \_\_\_\_\_ they’ll never go.”
      - b. Wrapped around the song of \_\_\_\_\_ promised by Jesus is the sound of Jesus promising that he will never go.
  - C. So there was Mary nearing the tomb, somber and quite likely \_\_\_\_\_.
    1. She lifted her eyes from the ground toward the tomb and saw that the \_\_\_\_ had been removed.
    2. She ran back to the disciples never thinking of the \_\_\_\_\_ of that empty tomb.
    3. So off to the tomb the disciples \_\_\_\_\_ to see what had happened.
      - a. There they saw the \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus’ body being gone.
      - b. And that was it . . . for the \_\_\_\_\_.

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\*John 20:1-18 and Ezekiel 37:1-14

- c. We're told by John that \_\_\_\_\_ stood outside the tomb crying.
- d. She was ecstatic to see \_\_\_\_\_.
- e. No doubt her despair was alleviated and her hope \_\_\_\_\_.

II. The Easter Miracle was a surprising miracle but it was not \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. What God offers to each of us as a result of that first Easter morning is a significant part – to be sure – of the salvation \_\_\_\_\_ illustrated so well by the Hebrew people and then the New Testament Christians and continues even to this day.
- B. The story of salvation is one that has its basis in the promise of \_\_\_\_\_.
  - 1. That story flows through the Patriarchy of \_\_\_\_\_, and the history of the \_\_\_\_\_.
  - 2. It continues in the words of the \_\_\_\_\_.
  - 3. It is herald by the Apostle \_\_\_\_\_.
  - 4. It \_\_\_\_\_ through you and through me.
- C. This is just an old fashioned love song, one I'm sure \_\_\_\_\_ wrote for you and me. Just an old fashioned love song, coming down in three-part harmony.

## ***Daily Meditations and Study Guide***

The following is a daily meditation and study guide meant to enhance your understanding of the message and grow as a Christian.

It is offered for your personal reflection or to share with others.

### **Monday, April 1**

Read John 20:1-18. Imagine how Mary Magdalene felt that first Easter morning. Everything Jesus had given her – forgiveness, hope and dignity – was gone. Jesus, by all accounts lay dead in a hastily secured tomb. Imagine the emotions that welled up in Mary's soul as she approached the tomb to prepare Jesus' body

for final burial. Despair and depression had overshadowed the love and life Jesus had given her.

Can you think of a time when you experienced great despair and even depression? Meditate upon but do not dwell on that dark time in your life. How did you emerge from that dark time in your life? What part did faith play in your "recovery?" Write your thoughts here and thank God for the gift of faith that sustains us in difficult times.

### **Tuesday, April 2**

Read John 20:1-18. Yesterday you thought about desperate times in your life. Mary certainly was living in a desperate time after Jesus had died on the cross. Without understanding Jesus' promise of resurrection, she possessed no hope.

Today, think about hope. What part did hope play during that difficult time in your life? Would you describe yourself as a hopeful person? How important is hope in your faith? What is your definition of hope? Write your definition and other thoughts here and pray that God will instill in you every reason to rejoice in hope.

### **Wednesday, April 3**

Read John 20:1-18 and Romans 5:1-5. Review your definition of hope that you wrote yesterday. Now read again and carefully Romans 5:1-5. So often hope is confused with wishing. Eugene Petersen, the Bible translator who created *The Message Bible*, translates hope as "alert expectancy." Hope isn't simply wishing something will happen. Hope is active in our lives. It is the result of relying fully on God and receiving blessing. Hope is the result of enduring hardship and developing character. True hope is woven into the very fabric of our lives.