

Coach House Church BEACONS

P E R S P E C T I V E

2 2 N D M A Y 2 0 2 0

1 Peter 3:15 (NLT)

..you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it.

Now here's a thing.

Hope is something that has to be viewed from a particular angle, in order for it to make any sense to us, given that the word 'hope' can mean different things to different hearers and readers.

I'm Andy, and I want to look at what this hope is, that we should be ready to explain.

If you have been a regular listener to the Beacons, then you will have already heard me talking about my rescue from the Irish Sea.

You may have noted that the thing that concerned me and made me panic was the sight of the Fast Ferry bearing down on me as I floated helplessly in its path.

The reality was that the Ferry had been stood still for 20 minutes and wasn't moving at all. I didn't know that though, and what I thought resulted in panic and desperation.

Would I have panicked if I had known the Ferry was motionless?

I don't know the answer to that because in my predicament I didn't have the information, so to me the ferry was doing as it should ... steaming full ahead for the harbour!

It is all a question of perspective.

For a full week now, I have been up high above the church in a cherry picker doing lots of work in places you may never look up and see.

The work needed doing though, whether you can see it or not. I know it's done and you will just have to take my word for it.

From up high, you can see things as you look down from above that could not be noticed any other way. We might experience the result of something we cannot see, say, water dripping on our heads if we stood in a certain place, but we would need to get above to see the hole in the roof where the water originated.

Do you get what I am trying to say?

When we view things from a different angle , we can see much more, understand more fully and grasp the full intent of the information given to us.

In The good old US of A , they have printed on the rear view mirrors of their cars, 'Warning, objects may appear close than they actually are'

In other words, the magnifier on the lens gives a distorted view, and this needs to be clearly understood by the driver in order to take the correct action. Is it safe to pull into the lane or not?

One of my favourite comedy programmes had a sequence where two friends on holiday were looking at cows in a field from their caravan window, One holds up a small toy cow and saying "small" and then pointing at the cows outside "far away"!

It's all about perspective.

So I guess my question would be, how do we explain our 'hope', within the view , lens or context of the words we started with from Peter's first letter , chapter 3 and verse 15.

First of all , who is Peter writing to?

Well if you were to look in a Bible, it is fairly obvious that this letter is from Peter, who calls himself an apostle_(which is an eye witness to the death and resurrection of Jesus), and is written to believers in Jesus Christ, in various churches throughout the regions of what is Turkey today. These believers had been dispersed in the region from their own homes and safe surroundings and were living as foreigners.

See how this changes the view already?

By the time you hear this, I will have officiated at a funeral of a fellow believer in Jesus.

Everyone at the funeral would have had some form of hope, or desire that the future will be kind to them.

But this is not the hope that we are discussing in this beacon, this is not the kind of hope that Peter is urging the believers to explain. Those at the funeral with a belief in Jesus, carry the hope that Peter is talking about.

It isn't hopeful, or wishing for something good, it is much deeper and far more fulfilling than that.

And it has more to do with the 'hope giver' than the hope itself.

The hope that we have, the hope that Peter urges the believers to have an explanation of, is better expressed as Assurance. It something which is sure, steadfast, unchanging SOLID!

It isn't just a desire, wishful thinking, it is a solid dependence on a solid promise, given by a solid promise giver.

Jesus was pure and lived a human life without sin, This means that he doesn't lie to us. His promises therefore of eternal life with Him, our reconciliation with a Holy God they are going to happen! Without any shadow of doubt.

You see one kind of hope carries with it an element of doubt. We might wish for something good, but there is a chance that it might not happen, or what we want doesn't materialise.

The hope we are talking about, the hope that Jesus gives us, is absolutely going to happen. There is no changing of minds, change of plan or diverted outcome.

The hope that Christians have is based on the undeniable trustworthiness of the one who gives the promise.

We are so used to promises being broken, of being let down (even by those closest to us) that we have learnt to live a life which is suspicious, heartbreaking and lonely. This is not what God intended for you! Jesus died and rose again (remember that this is what Peter was an eye witness to – so he wasn't just making something up!) - He did this because God had a plan to bring us back into relationship with Him.

The only way for sin to be dealt with was for a sacrifice to be given which was acceptable to God. One that met all of His Pure, Holy requirements.

Jesus was that sacrifice.

So God provided the sacrifice, approved the sacrifice and now allows us to reconnect – to have our relationship restored. So Jesus was the fulfilment of promises made throughout history – all the way from Genesis the first book of the bible – right the way through to the eye witness accounts of the disciples and apostles.

God has always made promises of mankind having its relationship restored, and Jesus was the bearer of that promise. A promise that as we accept this sacrifice provided for us, that we will be made right (our lives are poor reflections of it so far), and that we will welcome us into His presence for ever.

This hope, of real promises, made be a real God, purposed for us by a real Jesus, dying a real death, but then coming back from the dead and being really alive again, is guaranteed. Set in stone.

All we need sometimes is a readjustment of our sight our thinking, to see that God is all about relationship with His creation. He hasn't given up on it, will always Love it, and is calling out to us everyday.

Perhaps you need a change of perspective, to grasp as Paul writes in his letter to the Ephesians, chapter 3 verses 14-19 – and I'll make this my prayer....

When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father,

¹⁵ the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth.

¹⁶ I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.



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