

**Victory of the Lamb – Foolproof Series – 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 – Foolproof Hope  
February 13, 2022 - Pastor Bill Limmer**

It was an early October Saturday, several years ago. We were hoping to get a day pass from the hospital so she could go home and watch the Badger football game from home. But she felt a little queasy, so we didn't get the afternoon pass. But we were still hoping that with a good rest of the day she would be able to go home the next day and recover from her latest round of chemo before the next round would begin.

But the next morning she didn't feel better. She actually felt worse. The pain in her stomach was intense. I was hoping that she would be able to lay still for the MRI but the pain was too much. Instead of taking the 13-minute car ride home to watch the Packer game, we took a 42-minute Flight for Life helicopter ride to Children's Hospital.

During the flight, I asked the medical team through my headset, is she doing, ok? They of course needed to say at the time. What they said, "She is doing ok." I believe she coded twice. As I got out of the helicopter, a doctor met me outside on the roof top and said your daughter is a lot worse than she was when you left GB. Her amazing medical team took her into surgery as a last-ditch effort. And they thought when the surgery doors shut behind them that the door of hope shut.

Have you ever sensed the door of hope was shut on you?

Today we are finishing up our series Foolproof, a study of the book of 1 Corinthians. And we are going to answer this question: **How can you keep from losing hope?**

So let's go to 1 Corinthians 15. **1 Corinthians 15:1 Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you.** Some of us are familiar with the term gospel and some of us aren't. The word gospel means "good news." Now if there is good news, we know there must be bad news.

Losing hope is bad news. People in every culture, are on a hunt for hope. Paul mentors the young pastor Timothy and he says to him, 1 Timothy 6:17

**"Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to**

**put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain.”** Some of us are living our lives like if I just get the promotion, if I picked up a side job, if I just got struck by lightning twice – I mean if I just win the lottery, if I just pay off my debts – my future will be great. Well, perhaps. But money, checkout the stock market, is uncertain.

The Superbowl . . . I was hoping, I mean with Aaron Rodgers who turned out to be the NFL’s MVP, and with Davante Adams one of the best receivers in the game, I was hoping that the Green Bay Packers were going to be playing today. I was hoping that they were not only going to be playing today but that they were going to win today. But Robbie Gould’s field goal on the last play of the game went through the uprights. And well . . . that shut the door on my hope.

Hope in outward circumstances is also uncertain. You know that. You are running late to pick up the kids or grandkids from school and the light that is never red, is red. And your blood pressure skyrockets. One of the things the pandemic has made clear is our circumstances in life are so uncertain.

You know what else is uncertain? We are. Have you ever broken a promise? About two weeks ago, I told Jacky I would replace the water filter in the refrigerator. I meant to. We already had one. I just kept forgetting. Fail. And it gets worse. Have you ever been like Paul, the author of 1 Corinthians and me? He said, the good I want to do, I don’t do. The evil that I don’t want to do I keep on doing. Ugghh. I can’t stand that. That’s bad news. Isaiah 59:2 says, your iniquities have separated you from God. Our shortcomings have shut the door of hope.

Let’s be transparent. There is a lot of stuff out there that is scary and tough. A loved one with an addiction, a loved one with a health crisis, a loved one who says they no longer love us, mounting bills, a clueless co-worker, mental health issues, a loss of job, loss of life, racism, drug abuse, misunderstandings, inflation, the inability of our elected officials to work together. You think you hit the bottom, but you get nailed by another round of misery. And before you know it, you feel fearful, overwhelmed, rejected, trapped and powerless. And you just feel the door of hope is shut.

**How can you keep from losing hope? 1. Don’t put your hope in the uncertain.**

Doctor Dale Archer said **“If I could find a way to package and dispense hope, I would have a pill more powerful than any antidepressant on the market.** God knows that we need hope. And so Paul continues in 1 Corinthians 15:2 **By this gospel you are saved, . . .<sup>3</sup> For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance<sup>[a]</sup>: (here is the good news) that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup> that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, <sup>5</sup> and that he appeared to Cephas,<sup>[b]</sup> and then to the Twelve. <sup>6</sup> After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. <sup>7</sup> Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, <sup>8</sup> and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.**

Sin caused brokenness and the bad news in our world. We see that in fires, floods, tornadoes, and pandemics. Sin causes brokenness in people we see it from doping Olympic scandals, to sickness and even death. Death stings. It seems so final. Some of us know that up-close and personal.

Isaiah 53 written 700 years before Jesus speaks of the way of redemption for the broken. **He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.** (He was a weird guy, loving all people, sharp with wisdom) <sup>4</sup> **Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted.** (We thought he was getting what he deserved. We didn't know the whole story about him but someone must have). <sup>5</sup> **But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.** <sup>6</sup> **We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.** <sup>7</sup> **He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.** <sup>8</sup> **By oppression<sup>[a]</sup> and judgment he was taken away. Yet who of his generation protested? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was punished.<sup>[b]</sup>** <sup>9</sup> **He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death.**

Christ died for our sins just as the Scriptures says and he rose again just as the Scriptures said he would. So, he defeated sin and death. Sin and death are the very thing that closed the door of hope.

Here is the thing about Christianity that makes it different than every other religion. If there is no resurrection, then Christianity is not true. And there is no hope. There have been a lot of theories to try and discredit the resurrection including the swoon theory. The swoon theory states that Jesus didn't really die, he just fainted. But that is such an affront to the murder squad of Roman soldiers. They murdered and killed on a regular basis. They knew when someone was dead. When they pierced Jesus side water and blood came out, a sign of death. He died.

But he didn't stay dead. Three days later, just like he said he would he came back to life. He resurrected. Sin and death closed the door to hope. But Jesus defeated death. Jesus' resurrection has reopened the door to hope. Hope in Jesus is all about a sure future.

**How can you keep from losing hope? Put your hope in the work and character of God who never fails.**

Here is a truth that you know: when we get overwhelmed, when we feel hopeless, it is because we are looking at our circumstances instead of looking at God and what he has done. Paul also wrote this in Romans: **Therefore, since we have been justified (declared not guilty) through (not works accomplishments, worrying, anxiety, fears, avoidance, comparisons, materialism, personality) faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. )** This is hope. It is outside of us, and it is based on the work and character of God).

The glory of God is that he has done what we couldn't even begin to do. We couldn't live a sinless life, but he did. We couldn't pay for a single sin, but he paid for them all. Jesus suffered what we deserved but he didn't stay dead and alienated from God. When Jesus walked out of the tomb, he took the door of hopelessness off its hinges so that we can walk into the glory of God. The glory that God brings is not that we are striving to reach God, it is that God is striving to reach us. It is not the lengths to which we will go to reach God but the lengths to

which God goes to reach us. The glory and hope of God is that when we don't see a way God has already provided the way.

Jesus is the hope that changes everything. The glory of God is already with us. In many instances our circumstances will not change but how we view them will change. If I stand outside my house at 10:30 pm and look west I can only see so much. But if I put on night vision goggles it changes my view. When we are in the struggles of life things can appear to be really dark and without hope but through the lens of Jesus' life, death and resurrection, we have hope. We can be resilient not because life is easy but because Jesus is with us always even in the hard, dark, and difficult times. Jesus said, "In this world you will have trouble, but don't be afraid I have overcome the world."

What can help us put our hope in the work and character of God? In other words, **how can we take the message of hope with us in real life?**

1. **Stop the spin** – lack of hope is fake news – your enemy is lying to you
2. **Replace the spin with the good news of Jesus** – Found in a book that was written over the course of about 1500 years
3. **Share your heart with God** in prayer
4. **Share your heart with a friend** who knows and loves Jesus to.

And the world will think you are foolish, but you will be living a foolproof life founded on the power, work, and character of God and you will have certain hope in Jesus.