

## Hope Has Not Been Cancelled

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Our last two years have been filled with schedule adjustments and cancellations. Many graduation ceremonies, doctor appointments, and anticipated trips have been crossed out. Many lives have been flooded with sorrow, anxiety, or frustration. Feelings of hopelessness - about our society or our own lives - have increased. But the good news of Easter speaks truth to our hearts: hope has not been cancelled.

Hope is a key concept in the Christian gospel, and the great thing about the Christians' hope is that there is nothing iffy about it - gospel hope cannot be cancelled. We tend to use the word *hope* for something we wish for but aren't sure about. But in the Bible, God uses the word *hope* for something that is still future, yet is absolutely certain. The gospel gives us hope that is "an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast" (Hebrews 6:19).

Every Spring, God teaches us to hope by what we see in nature around us. Grey, silent mornings are replaced by bright days filled with the chirping of birds. A few months earlier, dead leaves fell off trees and the landscape looked brown and barren; now a canopy of green begins to grow, and from dead seeds, flowers sprout and blossom. Spring is the time of year when it feels like everything in the natural world is coming back to life. God is reminding us that the hope of new life cannot be cancelled. But on that Spring morning of ancient history when Easter was born, God did something extra special, to give us eternal hope. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1Peter 1:3).

The Lord Jesus' death was not a result of natural processes, nor was He helplessly overcome by evil men. His death was purposeful, sacrificial, and victorious. He died willingly so that we could live eternally. He laid down His life to pay for our sins. As evidence that His payment was accepted, that He had broken sin's power and defeated the one who had the power of death, God raised Him from the dead. When those who rejected Jesus' gospel sent Him to the cross, they thought they were cancelling Him, "but now Christ is risen from the dead" (1Corinthians 15:20). Gospel hope cannot be cancelled.

The Easter message of Christ's death and resurrection justifies our anticipation of better days - a new world, where righteousness, peace, and blessing extend to all in the coming kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. Sickness, fear, and death will ultimately be eliminated. Hope has not been cancelled - hope for life and eternity are found through believing in the resurrected, triumphant Christ. "Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:13).