

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

SUNDAY, APRIL 12, 2026

KNOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

“The Day After Tomorrow”

Based on 1 Peter 1:3-9

Peter was in a pickle.

- The Romans had their eyes on him, and it was likely that the end of his life and his ministry were close at hand.
- The leadership among the Christian Movement was wobbly at best.
- The doubt of that Easter Morning persisted.

How could he, the supposed “Rock” of the Christian Church, the leader who had emerged from an emotionally ragged bunch of disciples, move the world forward in their belief, while he himself prepared to die for the cause?

From our comfortable pews, we would like to think that the work of Jesus continued smoothly after the events of Calvary; that His disciples just picked up the pieces, preaching and teaching as crowds began to gather again, and in a few years, the church as we know it began to take shape. The truth is, it would be generations before the institutional church, as we understand it, became

anchored in the consciousness of society.

As Peter wrote, some fifty or sixty years after the fateful events of Easter, there were three great worries on his mind:

- What the Romans might do to believers?
- The return of Christ?
- Convincing those who had never seen Christ, that His story was true and His promises were real.

The persecution of Christians did not end at Calvary. In fact, it got worse. We know that the disciples hid themselves during those fateful days. Thomas’ story of doubt is only one example of the fear within the community of believers.

The Romans were very keen to stamp out any thought of a return to this Jesus Movement. If Jesus could be crucified, so could others, to ensure a quiet and stable city to report to Rome. Remember, Paul himself had been hired to do just that: root out Christian believers, shame them, intimidate them, put them in jail or worse, to ensure the message was clear: “No Christians in Roman occupied territories.” The

Roman authority was brutal and unpredictable.

Also troubling Peter was the uncertainty about when Jesus was going to come back and rescue them all. We have a very different understanding of the second coming of Christ today. Back in those early days, the disciples thought that when Jesus said He was going to return, He meant...in a few days or a week or two, almost as if He was going to take a vacation and then be back on the job.

Jesus appeared and disappeared several times after the resurrection, as the scriptures report. His ascension into heaven before Pentecost was not seen as the last time but just another appearance. However, Jesus did not return in bodily form again. Time continued to move on. Days became weeks and weeks became months. And then, years.

People started asking questions. The disciples were wringing their hands wondering what to do and how long they were supposed to wait. It took more time than you would think for the disciples to realize, “It’s up to us now.”

Then there was the insidious work of doubt. We all know how doubt can creep into our thoughts, cloud our judgement, challenge our courage. Scriptures tell us repeatedly how the disciples doubted that Jesus was alive

It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense.

~Luke 24:10-11

But [Thomas] said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."

~John 20:25

Even though they had been right there, and watched the events of Good Friday unfold, the disciples still struggled to believe that Jesus was alive.

- How much more difficult it must have been then, to convince men who had not been there to see with their own eyes, that the story was true.

- How much more difficult it must have been to convince women who had heard the gossip in the market, that this was not a fanciful tale, but truth.

The people Peter were speaking to were common folk, with simple lives, a curiosity of faith, a desire to believe, but a fear of harm to their families if they made their allegiance to Christ known publicly. How could one story, that seemed impossible by their standards, be a steady enough rock for them to risk their lives? What would be the one thing Peter could give them to help them stay resilient, push fear aside, and continue to be a voice for the cause after he was gone?

Hope.

Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy...

~1 Peter 1:8

That 'glorious joy' Peter spoke of: that calm assurance, a gladness, a quiet serenity. Peter was not speaking about jumping up and down as if dancing joyfully, but of the emergence of a sense of wonder and delight that comes when the window of hope and possibility is opened within your heart.

- When the situation seems impossible, it is hope that sees you through.

- When fear of the unknown overwhelms you, it is hope that walks alongside that fear and encourages you to continue.

- When today you are stuck, it is hope that whispers, tomorrow will be different.

It has been my experience that hope almost always arrives in small packages. Often unseen or unnoticed by the rest of the world but important or even pivotal to one. When we pay attention to the small details, when we make the effort to give hope to another, we share the resurrection story, to believers and non-believers alike.

Peter could not take away the realities of the men and women of his day.

- He could not stop the Romans.

- He could not say for certain when the Saviour would return.

- He knew that the story he shared brought raised eyebrows and doubt

So instead, Peter gave the people hope.

The Christian story survived, because of hope.

Here we are today, wondering where the Christian story fits into the world once again.

Give people hope.

That is all.

Amen.