

5/22/18

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

What hopes do you harbor in your heart? The human heart may swell with hope for good health, only to be dashed by tragic accidents or serious sicknesses. The heart may hope for a brighter tomorrow, but shortly that hope is dimmed by the specter of death. The sinful human heart is often broken by a fixated pursuit of fleeting hopes.

In your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. ... For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. 1 Peter 3:15,18

Christ fills the empty and broken heart with hope that never disappoints. Jesus provides *healing* hope. This hope springs eternal through his life-giving gospel. Jesus saw our hopeless debt of misspent years and misplaced hope. The Savior paid the ultimate price of his life to assure us of his healing hope. The Savior sacrificed himself for us—for all! Jesus dispels our hopelessness with the certainty of the forgiveness he won for us.

Jesus fills us with *confident* hope. Questions abound in the hearts of many people concerning mankind's existence. "Where did we come from?" "Why are we here?" "Where are we going?" The Lord lovingly provides unchanging answers in the Bible. His word is truth. The Holy Spirit fills our hearts with faith to believe the Bible's life-giving message. He also strengthens us to confidently share that message with those who are searching for the firm answers that only the Bible provides.

Jesus graciously gives us *lasting* hope. Earthly hopes can quickly erode; Easter hope endures forever. The heart that sets apart Christ as Lord has hope that will never fade. The Savior who died for sins once for all has risen! We eagerly look forward to the eternal life in heaven promised to us by the risen and ascended Lord.

Our Christ-centered hope will always give us rest in the unrest of the world. It will also give us reason to give an answer to others for the sure hope that we have.

Prayer: *Risen Lord Jesus, thank you for the living hope you have won for me through your life-giving gospel. Renew my heart to be set apart for you now and always. Amen.*

(WELS E-Devotion, adapted)...See you in worship.

Keep looking up because the Lord is always looking down – Psalm 121

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