

*Note: This sermon may be adapted to meet your congregation's needs, your preaching style, and preferred time length*

### **Excerpt of "The Hope of Easter" Sermon**

Happy Easter! Welcome to our Easter service. This morning, we are joining Christians all over the world in celebrating the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Easter is truly a wonderful holiday, and a very popular one, with lots of enjoyable traditions. The day is often filled with sunrise services, honey-baked hams, egg hunts, and the biggest candy-fueled sugar rush this side of Halloween. Traditionally, Easter Sunday also means huge attendance spikes for churches, which pastors love to see! In 2015, for instance, a CNN report found that half of all Americans planned to attend an Easter service.

In a crowd this size, there are bound to be many different reasons why people have come. While I certainly don't know all of the reasons, my guess is that most of you fall into three different categories: Many of you are believers, here to worship our Savior once again and delight in the glorious message of hope found in the empty tomb. Others here today are seekers. You've heard of Jesus. You're intrigued by this famous man who reportedly died and returned to life two thousand years ago. You're curious about Christianity and want to know more. Perhaps some of you walked through the doors today because life is a struggle right now. You're tired, frustrated, and searching for answers in the midst of great personal trials. You are simply looking for hope.

As for the rest of you? I guess you thought we were giving away free chocolate bunnies today. Sorry to disappoint.

No matter why you've come, I'm so glad you're here. Today's sermon is entitled "The Hope of Easter." The hope of Easter is found not just in a holiday or a bunch of traditions but in what Easter actually celebrates: the resurrection of God's Son, Jesus Christ. Here's what I want you to understand today: *The resurrection of Jesus guarantees life-changing hope to all who believe, both in this life and the life to come.*

*Hope* is a beautiful word. Biblically defined, it means more than just mere desire. It goes beyond a longing that may or may not be fulfilled. We can hope for a better-paying job or for our favorite sports team to win a championship, but it might not happen. We can hope for a terminally ill loved one to be healed, but maybe healing won't come. We can hope that Hollywood doesn't produce yet another *Rocky* movie. Good luck with that.

This isn't the hope we're talking about. In Scripture, *hope* means "to expect with confidence." Christian hope is the eager anticipation of a guaranteed outcome. This is the hope found in the resurrection of Jesus Christ!

In a few minutes, we'll discuss the hope that the resurrection provides to us right now – in our everyday lives. After that, we'll discuss the hope that the resurrection provides for our future – the life to come. But first, let's spend some time discussing Easter's backstory. To put it in dramatic terms, you can't fully appreciate the climax of a story (that is, Jesus' resurrection) if you don't know the introduction and rising action that led to that climax. This will help us grasp the breathtaking implications of that first Easter Sunday morning two thousand years ago.

So let's go back to the beginning. The hope of Easter doesn't start at the empty tomb, Calvary, or even the Bethlehem manger. No, it began long before that. It

dates back to *eternity past*, a term that Bible scholars use to describe the mysterious expanse of time that predates creation.

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**The full sermon is included in “The Hope of Easter” Church Event Kit:**

[www.outreach.com/THOE](http://www.outreach.com/THOE)

**Full sermon is 3,338 words.** Adapt to meet your congregation’s needs, your preaching style, and preferred time length