

1. We are continuing this morning with our series "Hope Dealers".
2. We were not created to live hopeless lives.
3. As believers in Jesus, we have been given life, and life more abundantly.
4. And that is a really wonderful thing because it doesn't take very long looking around our world today to spot hopelessness.
5. The things and the people and the stuff we have put our confidence in in years past are not there anymore.
6. For decades we have been able to count on certain things, and now about the only thing we can count on is that things are going to change seemingly by the moment.
7. So, the Lord has placed us here on this earth to be carriers of hope. To be dealers of hope.
8. We are to carry with us the hope of Jesus Christ to a lost world.
9. And so last week we said that in order to do that effectively, we have to know some characteristics about hope.
10. The first thing we discovered is that hope is not a thing, hope is a person. **2 Corinthians 4:6** For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ.
11. The light that we need. The light that this world needs in the midst of darkness is the light of Jesus Christ.
12. Jesus told us in John 8:12 that he is the light of the world.
13. The only constant. The only true, unchangeable being or person is Jesus Christ. And because of that we have hope.
14. Hope is not a thing. Because if hope is a thing, when I have the thing, whatever it is, then I feel hopeful. But when I don't have the thing, whatever it is, I do not feel hopeful.
15. If we are going to have hope, that hope must be based on something that is not here today and gone tomorrow.
16. Rather it must be based on the one who was and is the first and the last. The beginning and the end. The constant, true, unwavering savior and that is none other than Jesus Christ.
17. Secondly, we said that hope and struggle go hand in hand. (Box)

18. 2 Corinthians 4:7-9 But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. **8** We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; **9** persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.

19. The treasure is Jesus and the jars of clay (these fragile, easily broken vessels) are our lives.

20. Jesus gives us hope as we carry him around in these earthly vessels that are prone to struggle.

21. We are going to be hard pressed, perplexed, persecuted, and even knocked down.

22. But because of the Jesus who lives inside us we are not crushed, not in despair, not abandoned, and not destroyed.

23. Hope is not the absence of struggle.

24. Thirdly we said that struggle and hope are not random. In other words, God always has a purpose for the struggle he allows.

25. 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. **17** For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. **18** So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

26. As believers in Jesus, this world is not our final destination. Our final destination is a place called heaven.

27. And in heaven, our wonderful father is preparing for us an eternal glory that is far superior to the struggle that we face in this life.

28. This life is just practice for the next life.

29. And so Paul said the key to victory is to fix our eyes not on what we can see, (the struggle) but on what is unseen. (The hope of heaven)

30. Because the struggle is temporary, but heaven is for eternity.

31. This morning I want us to build on this idea of fixing our eyes on what is unseen.

32. Particularly the hope that lives inside us.

33. For the next few weeks we are going to be studying in the book of Philippians chapter 4. Would you turn there.

34. In Philippians chapter 4 I believe we find some extremely powerful keys to living a life of hope.

35. For time's sake I am only going to read one verse.

TEXT: **Philippians 4:4** Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

TITLE: **Hope IN Christ.**

INTRO:

1. I could spend quite a while talking this morning about how praise and worship are powerful aspects of our hope. And they are.
2. There is something very powerful about thanking and praising God in the middle of struggle. Because that worship and that praise forces us to get our eyes off the struggle and onto our savior who is with us in the struggle.
3. And that change of focus and that change of perspective bring with it hope.
4. But this morning I want us to dig a little deeper under the surface.
5. Because in this one short verse is a powerful concept that really is at the heart of what we believe as Christians.
6. Paul tells the Philippian believers to rejoice in the Lord always.
7. And this appeal is so important that Paul repeats it. I will say it again: Rejoice.
8. But this isn't just the first and second time Paul is encouraging them to rejoice. It is actually the 3rd time in this short letter he tells them to rejoice.
9. **Philippians 3:1** Further, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you.
10. Basically what Paul is communicating is this. I know I am repeating myself. But I don't mind, and it really doesn't matter if you mind either, because what I am telling you to do is a safeguard for you.
11. It is something that protects you.
12. And a part of that safeguard is to rejoice in the Lord.
13. Now. You might ask. What does that have to do with hope?
14. I believe it has everything to do with hope.
15. Since hope is not a thing, but rather is a person, Jesus Christ; we need to be reminded that this hope we are talking about is not something that is outside of ourselves.

16. This hope is something that lives inside us. When I need hope. When you need hope. We don't have to go looking somewhere for it.
17. As believers in Jesus Christ hope (the person of Jesus Christ) lives in us all the time.
18. Paul says in Philippians 4:4 rejoice in the Lord.
19. Now I am pretty simple minded, and often need more information to completely grasp something. So I began searching for a way to put the word rejoice into language that I could more easily understand.
20. What I discovered is that to rejoice is one thing. It is one thing to rejoice about something. Generally, when we rejoice about something, we are rejoicing about something that is outside us.
21. But to rejoice in something has a completely different meaning.
22. Paul does not say rejoice about the Lord always. He says rejoice in the Lord always.
23. **To rejoice IN something indicates that we have or possess the thing we are rejoicing in.** (pause)
24. Paul says rejoice in the Lord always. Meaning, the Lord is someone you have or possess inside of you.
25. We know that is a foundational belief of Christianity. We believe and teach that when we accept Jesus as savior that he comes to live inside us. His Spirit makes his home inside us.
26. **1 Corinthians 3:16** Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? (ESV)
27. **Romans 5:5** and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. (ESV)
28. **John 14:16-17** And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. (ESV)
29. **1 John 4:13** By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. (ESV)
30. **Ephesians 3:16-17** I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. (NIV)
31. So, hope is not a thing. Hope is the person of Jesus Christ.
32. And as believers in Jesus, Jesus lives inside us through the Holy Spirit.

33. So again I say, hope is not something that lives outside us, something that we have to go searching for, hope lives in us through the power of the Holy Spirit.
34. And that's part of the reason why Paul tells the Philippian believers to rejoice in the Lord always, because the Lord is always present. Having accepted him as savior, he is always, constantly, and continually inside us.
35. Our hope is in Christ, who lives in us.
36. So the question I want to focus on and answer for the remainder of our time this morning is this.
37. What exactly do we have IN Jesus Christ?
38. Said another way, what exactly is it about Jesus living inside us that gives us hope?

Jesus (hope) is always the same.

1. Hebrews 13:8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.
2. Hope is not a moving target.
3. The hope that we have living inside us, through the person of Jesus Christ, is not all over the map.
4. Is not one thing one day and another thing the next day.
5. Hope is not hiding one day and in plain sight the next day.
6. Hope is not one thing for one situation and another thing for another situation.
7. Hope is the same yesterday, today, and forever because Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever.
8. The problem may change. The struggle may change. My feelings may change. My mood may change. But my savior, and as a result my hope does not change.
9. That means the craziness of our world has no affect or bearing on our hope. Hope is hope, no matter what happens in the world.

The grace of Jesus (hope) is always enough.

1. 2 Corinthians 12:8-9 Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. 9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

2. Another word for grace is power. Paul was struggling with something in his life. He describes his situation as one of torment.
3. And so like all of us Paul asks God for the obvious. Lord, I'm tired of this. Will you please take this thing away from me so I can stop being in torment.
4. And rather than taking away the torment, Jesus gives him something better.
5. Jesus says, my grace is sufficient for you, my power is made perfect in weakness.
6. The power that we need to face struggle and difficulty is not something that is outside us, that we have to go look for.
7. The power to face that struggle lives inside us through the person of Jesus Christ.
8. And that power is sufficient, that power is always enough to meet the challenge.
9. You and I have hope because no matter how powerful the attack or the battle, the power of Christ living in us is more powerful.

The blood of Jesus (hope) never loses its power.

1. 1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.
2. I don't know about you, but one of the things that challenges my hope is when I become aware of my sinfulness. When I become aware that I have disobeyed the Lord, or blown it big time.
3. Partly because it is in those moments of sinful failure that our enemy, the accuser of the brothers, arrives on the scene to make sure we hear the message that we are utterly worthless.
4. In times of failure he will lie to us and tell us if we really loved the Lord we would have done better. We would have obeyed better. We would have understood better. That our faith would have been stronger.
5. But John here reminds us that the blood of Jesus purifies us from all sin.
6. So when my hope is challenged from the inside, from my sinfulness, the savior who lives inside us is always there to remind us that his blood has us covered.

7. Our savior is always there to remind the enemy that our sin has been covered by the blood of the Lamb and that we are forgiven.

The righteousness of Jesus (hope) is everlasting.

1. In the book of Daniel chapter 9, there is a description of the sinfulness of the children of Israel.
2. Daniel is so overwhelmed by how terrible the people have lived that he falls down before the Lord in repentance for the entire nation.
3. But during that time, an angel arrives and begins to re-assure Daniel that he is highly esteemed and highly loved.
4. And the angel also prophesies that this punishment will not last forever. It will last for a specific period of time.
5. And then this is what is promised **Daniel 9:24** to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the Most Holy Place.
6. All throughout history the sinfulness of mankind has ebbed and flowed.
7. For seasons of life the world has seemed to love and serve the Lord, and then in other seasons it seems as if our world is going to hell in a handbasket.
8. It can be downright discouraging.
9. It can feel hopeless at times to attempt to live a life pleasing to the Lord when it seems everything around us is heading for destruction.
10. But we need to know that the sinfulness of this world changes nothing about the righteousness of God and neither does it rock the hope that lives in you.
11. The condition of this world is not a reflection of who Jesus is. Jesus is still the righteous king. In him is still the way and the truth and the life.
12. And that way. That truth. That life lives inside of you.
13. You are not wandering around aimlessly; you carry within you the hope and the truth that the world desperately needs.

Jesus' (hope's) love is everlasting.

1. **Jeremiah 31:3** The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness.

2. Romans 8:38-39 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
3. You want to talk about hope. There is no event in this world, no matter how terrible, no matter how hurtful that removes you from the everlasting love of Jesus.
4. We all go through times where we don't feel loved. We all go through times when we don't feel all that loveable, and yet the love of Jesus is not only with us, but the love of Jesus is in us.
5. The events of this life don't separate us from the love of Jesus because they physical can't separate us from His love.

Conclusion:

1. Hope is a part of our lives when we recognize that Jesus lives in us and is not just with us.
2. John 8:12 "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."
3. How can we never walk in darkness? When we recognize that we are never separated from the hope that we have in Christ Jesus.
4. Philippians 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!
5. What is our motivation to always rejoice in the Lord, because the Lord is always in us.
6. He never takes a day off or goes on a vacation.
7. He is never out of the office.
8. There is never a do not disturb sign on the door.
9. As followers of Jesus he lives in us and as a result hope lives in us.
10. Would you join me in thanking Jesus for this hope that lives in us.
11. Salvation call.
12. Hand out elements.
13. Communion service.
14. Colossians 1:27 To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.
15. As we consider the death of Jesus on the cross.

16. As we consider the body of Jesus that was bruised and the blood of Jesus that was spilt, I believe it is good to be reminded that this was more than just something did for us.
17. He did do it for us. But he also died on the cross so he could live in us.
18. He died on the cross so he could work in us.
19. And because he is in us, that means hope is always in us.

1Co 11:23 For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, **1Co 11:24** and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me."

1Co 11:25 In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

1Co 11:26 For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.