

1. We are continuing this morning with our series **Hope Dealers**.
2. We are living in some pretty hopeless times, but as believers in Jesus Christ we are not hopeless.
3. When we accepted Jesus Christ as our savior, we also accepted this wonderful hope that goes along with that salvation.
4. And that is highly important because not only do we need hope, we are living in a world that needs hope.
5. We have been called to be carriers of that hope to the world around us.
6. That makes us hope dealers.
7. Let's review what we have covered so far.
8. In week 1, we said that hope is not a thing, hope is a person. Hope is found in Jesus and only in Jesus.
9. In week 2, we discovered that this hope, in the form of Jesus, is not a hope that is outside of us, it is a hope that is inside of us. The hope that we have in Jesus lives inside us through the power of the Holy Spirit.
10. In week three we discovered that hope and anxiety cannot function in the same space. They are polar opposites.
11. Our enemy, Satan, wants us to internalize our problems. Our struggles and our fears. We said we internalize those things by talking to ourselves about them.
12. Meaning we try and process them on our own. But one of the keys to hope is to talk to God about it.
13. **Philippians 4:6** Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.
14. Prayers, petitions, and thanksgiving to God are actions that indicate that our hope is in Jesus and not in ourselves.
15. Last week Pastor Jeremy talked about a peaceful hope.
16. **Philippians 4:7** And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
17. The result of putting our hope in Jesus is peace.
18. A peace that is greater than we can comprehend.
19. A peace that guards our hearts and minds.

20. Hope in Jesus is like a security guard at the door to our heart, and every time hopelessness comes knocking, our hope in Jesus says, not today. No entry.
21. Because peace is not a feeling that is a result of what is happening around us. Peace is a result of who Jesus is. Peace is found in Christ Jesus, through the living hope that is inside us.
22. Let's move on today to verse 8.

TEXT: **Philippians 4:8** Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things.

TITLE: **Hope as our filter.**

INTRO:

1. The word filter keeps coming to mind when I read this verse.
2. I think most of us understand the idea and the function of a filter.
3. A filter is something that something else passes through so that what comes out of the filter is different or better than what goes into the filter.
4. Explain the coffee filter.
5. As we have seen hope is not a thing, hope is in the person of Jesus Christ. And as believers in Jesus this hope lives inside us.
6. But how many have discovered that everyday life. The stuff of life. The stuff going on in our lives and the stuff going on around our lives are constantly working to erode or eat away at the hope we have in Jesus?
7. I can be full of hope at 5am in the morning, but by the time I have made it through the day I have experienced enough difficulty, trouble, and heartache that the measure of hope I ended the day with is very different than the measure of hope I started the day with.
8. Am I the only one who experiences that, or can you identify?
9. What Satan desires for us to do is he attempts to get us to filter our hope through our experiences.

10. I start out with hope. It passes through the filter of life. The troubles. The tribulations. The hardships. The pain.
11. And what comes out the other side isn't the same hope that I had before.
12. When we filter hope through the experiences of life, we wind up with a version of hope that isn't very much help.
13. What the Lord desires for us to do, with the help of the Holy Spirit, is to filter the stuff of life through our hope.
14. Rather than hope passing through the filter of life, we need to filter life through the hope that we have in Jesus Christ.
15. When we filter our hope through the experiences of life, then hope is this random, haphazard, never the same thing that leaves is feeling pretty insecure.
16. But when we pass the experiences of life through our hope, through the abiding person of Jesus Christ who lives inside us, what changes, what is transformed, is the stuff of life rather than our faith.
17. When we pass the experiences of live through our hope in Jesus Christ, then the experiences of life become manageable and bearable.
18. I believe it is that concept that explains what Paul says just a few verses later.
19. **Philippians 4:13** For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength. (NLT)
20. In that verse, Christ is the filter through which everything else has to pass.
21. So, lets take a look at the filter that Paul reveals to the Philippian believers.
22. **Philippians 4:8** Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things.
23. What are the layers of the filter?
 - Whatever is true.
 - Whatever is noble.
 - Whatever is right.
 - Whatever is pure.
 - Whatever is lovely.
 - Whatever is admirable.

- Whatever is excellent.
 - Whatever is praiseworthy.
24. Now. We could go several directions this morning with this message.
 25. We could spend the remainder of our time dissecting what each and every one of these words mean.
 26. Another direction we could go would be to focus on how that our minds and our thoughts are the holder or the place where the filter goes.
 27. Both of those are good and both of those would be beneficial studies.
 28. However, I am going to move into a much more basic direction. In fact, when I am done this morning, you may think to yourself, well any first grader could have taught that. And you would probably be correct.
 29. But what I have found, at least in my own life, is that what should be obvious isn't always obvious.
 30. So, the question I want us to consider today is where do we locate these different aspects of our hope filter?
 31. Where can we find, where should we look, where should we focus in order to have the necessary elements to have a healthy hope filter in place?
 32. If whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, or praiseworthy are the different elements of our hope filter, then where will we locate them?
 33. The obvious answer is that the best place to look to locate those things, or those qualities, is none other than Jesus Christ.
 34. If we are talking about what is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, or praiseworthy, then Jesus fits every one of those standards.
 35. But I have a problem. In fact, I am going to go out on a limb here and say that all of us share some aspects of this same problem.
 36. And the problem is my heart doesn't always live out what my head knows.

37. It's been said that the longest distance is the distance between your head and your heart.
38. Now when it comes to living for the Lord, living life, we need both our head and our heart.
39. But if all I ever do is live out of my head, what I can understand, then I will never have faith in Jesus Christ because my head will never understand everything about him.
40. So because we don't fully understand him, we tend to live a lot out of our hearts.
41. Our instincts. Our intuitions. Our emotions.
42. And the problem with living mostly by our heart is that often times my instincts, my intuitions and my emotions don't line up with the truth of who Jesus is.
43. When I live only by my heart, I start looking for the elements of my hope filter in other places besides Jesus.
44. Let's look quickly at three of those faulty places.

Myself.

1. None of likes feelings of hopelessness, so it is common for us to long for and look for hope.
2. And one of the first places we often look is within ourselves.
3. Paul puts it this way **2 Corinthians 10:12** *We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise.*
4. The great problem with looking for elements of our hope filter from within ourselves, is that living inside all of us is this sinful nature.
5. This side of us that isn't all that nice to think about.
6. And when we start thinking about things like what is true, noble, excellent, and praiseworthy, it doesn't take long to figure out that we just don't measure up.
7. Every person has some aspects of what is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, or praiseworthy inside us because each and every one of us were made in the imagine of God.
8. You were created with the DNA of God the father inside you. So we have aspects of those qualities living inside us.

9. But none of us. I hate to burst your bubble. None of us are 100% true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, or praiseworthy 100% of the time.
10. So if we start looking inside ourselves for these aspects of hope to filter life through, we are either going to become extremely depressed because we don't measure up, or we are going to become extremely delusional trying to pretend we do measure up.
11. Either way hope will be absent from our lives.
12. Another faulty place to look for aspects of our hope filter is in...

What is going on in our lives.

1. **Philippians 4:8** Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things.
2. Paul is not saying here, look around at your life, what is going on in your life.
3. Find some true things in your life some noble things going on around you, some right things, pure things, lovely things, admirable things, excellent or praiseworthy things.
4. Locate some of those things happening in your life and think of concentrate on those things. Because what is going on in my life isn't a good source of hope either.
5. Sure there are good times. High times. But there are also low times.
6. There are trials, tribulations, suffering, heartache, pain, wounds.
7. And sometimes we go through seasons of struggle.
8. Sometimes the season lasts minutes, hours, or days.
9. Sometimes those seasons of difficulty last for weeks, months, years and even decades.
10. Consider the woman in **Mark 5:25-26** And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. 26 She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse.
11. Anyone who has suffered for any length of time will tell you that in the depth of that struggle, identifying what is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, or praiseworthy can be a tough row to hoe.

12. So, picking out the high spots in life and focusing on them doesn't always work.
13. A third faulty place to look for aspects of our hope filter is...

The world around us.

1. This is how Jesus described what is going on, not only in our present world, but what has been going on since the beginning of time.
2. **Matthew 7:13-14** For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. 14 But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.
3. Just to be clear. Everything is not bad in our world today. There are some good, positive, wonderful things.
4. But as a whole. Step back and look at the big picture, what we find is that the vast majority of this world is on a path of destruction, and the path is not a pretty one.
5. It's bumper to bumper traffic. There are horrific accidents with hurting people strewn all along the way. Parts of cars and debris litter the highway.
6. Road rage is going on and people are fighting and clawing and cutting one another off. Hurting one another and doing everything they can to get one up on the other person.
7. Let's be clear. Paul wasn't telling the Philippian believers to look around at their world and pick out some positive things going on and think about those things.
8. Because those positive things might be few and far between.
9. He was telling them, and us, to look for a much higher source of what is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, or praiseworthy.
10. And again I say. As terribly simplistic as this message is. I need to be reminded from time to time that the only true source of all of those things is Jesus.

Conclusion:

1. I believe it was Jeremiah of the Old Testament who may have said it best.
2. **Jeremiah 10:6-7** No one is like you, LORD; you are great, and your name is mighty in power. **7** Who should not fear you, King of the nations? This is your due. Among all the wise leaders of the nations and in all their kingdoms, there is no one like you.
3. **Jeremiah 10:8, 10** They are all senseless and foolish; they are taught by worthless wooden idols. **10** But the LORD is the true God; he is the living God, the eternal King.
4. **Jeremiah 10:11-12** "Tell them this: 'These gods, who did not make the heavens and the earth, will perish from the earth and from under the heavens.'" **12** But God made the earth by his power; he founded the world by his wisdom and stretched out the heavens by his understanding.
5. **Jeremiah 10:16** He who is the Portion of Jacob is not like these, for he is the Maker of all things, including Israel, the people of his inheritance-- the LORD Almighty is his name.
6. Jeremiah was called the weeping prophet.
7. At the time that he lived every evil, terrible, difficult, and unimaginable thing that could happen was happening.
8. And he cried a lot because of how hopeless everything looked.
9. But praise the Lord he located the one and only source of true hope.
The Lord is his name.
10. **The filter is Jesus.** He is the constant, true, unchanging God.
11. In him and only in him can be found what is perfectly true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, or praiseworthy.
12. How can we tell if Jesus is our filter or the experiences of this life is our filter?
13. When this life is the filter, and I try and filter my hope through it, I generally feel hopeless.
14. But when Jesus is the filter, and I force everything about this life to pass through him. I generally feel hopeful.
15. Let's put the filter in place today by identifying him and exalting him and praising Him and worshipping him for being the only true source of hope.
16. I'm not asking you to respond out of emotion, because you feel it.
17. I'm asking you to respond out of truth, because you know He is the way, and the truth, and the life.
18. Time of worship.

19. Salvation call.