

1. We are going to wrap up our series this morning, **Hope Dealers**.
2. Turn to Philippians chapter 4.
3. All along the way we have identified that hope is not a thing, hope is a person.
4. **Hope only comes through Jesus Christ**, who desires to live and work inside of us so that the cares and worries of life don't have room there.
5. One of the most hopeful blessings the Lord offers us is peace.
6. In Philippians chapter 4, verses 4-8, I recognize that the word hope is not mentioned, however, can anything be more hopeful than when we are at peace in an unpeaceful world?
7. When all around us the storms of life are raging, to have and experience peace is about as hopeful as it can get.
8. We discovered that when we talk to Jesus about the struggles and anxieties of life rather than internalizing those struggles, the result is that we are given a peace that passes all understanding.
9. A peace that guards our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.
10. We all know however, that our enemy doesn't want peace to exist in our lives.
11. He attempts to get us to filter our hope through the stuff of life.
12. But a key to victory is to filter the stuff of life through our hope in Jesus Christ.
13. **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.
14. In one of the simplest messages you have ever heard, last week we identified that when Paul tells the Philippians to think about these things, he is not telling them to look...
 - Inside themselves and pick out good qualities about themselves.
 - At the circumstances going on in their lives and pick out some positive things.
 - At the world around them and pick out some uplifting things to focus on.
15. The only source of what is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, or praiseworthy is the Lord Jesus Christ.

16. In him and only in him are contained all of the elements necessary to have hope.

17. **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.

18. If we are going to filter the stuff of life through our hope, then the only sufficient filter is who Jesus is.

19. There is none like him. He is like no other.

TEXT: **Philippians 4:9** Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me--put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

TITLE: **Spreading Hope**

INTRO:

1. I want to summarize this message today, and I would like to make a statement that ties everything together that we have learned so far.
2. The purpose for our having hope is not just so we can have hope. The purpose of our having hope is so we can spread hope.
3. The Lord Jesus Christ doesn't give us hope just so we can possess hope, he also gives us hope so we can share that hope with others.
4. The end result of hope is never simply our having hope. The end result of hope is when someone else receives the hope that we spread to them.
5. A hope that ends with just us having hope is a very incomplete hope.
6. A hope that ends with just us having hope is a very weak and ineffective hope.
7. A hope that ends with just having hope is a very selfish hope. Strong words.
8. If I have hope, and I know the source of hope, Jesus Christ, but that hope doesn't compel me to share hope with others, then what does that say about my dedication to the mission of Christ?
9. **Luke 19:9-10** Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

10. Is there anything more hopeful in all the world than when a person who was lost and on their way to hell, can now testify that the lord Jesus found them, and they are on their way to heaven?
11. Hope that isn't shared, that isn't poured out, is no hope at all.
12. Illustration of a coffee pot.
13. **Let's go back to Philippians 4:9** Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me--put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.
14. Paul in this verse again mentions peace. And as we said, peace is one of the great elements of hope.
15. But I would like to point out that the wording Paul uses in this verse is different than the wording he uses in verse 7.
16. **Philippians 4:7** And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
17. So, in this verse he says the peace of God.
18. But in verse number 9 the words are in a different order. In verse nine, rather than offering to us the peace OF God, Paul offers us the God OF peace.
19. As I read and studied and prayed about the use of the word peace here in this passage, I realized that there is more than just one element of peace.
20. In other words, peace is not mentioned just one time in the bible, it is mentioned 231 times, and in many of those cases we are given a part of the recipe to peace.
21. So if we miss a part of the recipe, then what we are left with is a partial peace. But what I believe we are seeing in verse number nine is we are seeing perfect peace.
22. Perfect peace is when the God of peace is with us rather than the peace of God being with us.
23. The God of peace has much higher value than the peace of God.
24. The God of peace is perfect peace.
25. That two-word phrase perfect peace is used only once in the bible.
26. **Isaiah 26:3** You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you.

27. I really like that word steadfast. That word **steadfast; loyal, faithful, committed, dedicated, dependable, constant, firm, resolute, relentless, unwavering, unyielding, unflinching, and uncompromising.**
28. The Lord will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast because they trust in Him.
29. Just to be clear. We are not trying to say that the only way we can have perfect peace is to have a perfect faith or a perfect trust in the Lord.
30. We are not perfect, and we will never be perfect until Jesus returns.
31. But we can have perfect peace, the God of peace, when our minds are steadfast in our trust of the Lord.
32. When our minds are made up.
33. But we also need to be aware, as we have said before, that trust in the Lord is not just based on what we believe. Trust in the Lord is also based on obedience.
34. **1 John 5:3** In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome,
35. **Luke 6:46** "Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?"
36. **Luke 11:28** He replied, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it."
37. **John 14:31** but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. Rise, let us go from here. (ESV)
38. How many would agree that according to those passages of scripture trust in the Lord is not based only on what we believe, but also based on our obedience to what we believe?
39. So, the God of peace offers us perfect peace.
40. And perfect peace is for those who are determined to not only believe the commands of God but obey the commands of God.
41. You say what does that have to do with hope? I believe it has everything to do with hope.
42. **Let's go back to Philippians 4:9** Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me--put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.
43. So what is the command? Whatever you have learned, received, heard, or seen in me, put it into practice.
44. In other words, imitate me.

45. When I read that the image that comes to mind is a spiritual parent.
46. In a natural child/parent relationship, this imitation happens, almost automatically.
47. Nobody has to tell an impressionable child to imitate what they have learned, received, heard, or seen in their natural parent. They just do it.
48. But when it comes to a spiritual child/parent relationship, a command is necessary.
49. Spiritually, imitation is not so automatic. So, because of that, Paul makes it clear that part of what opens the door to the presence of the God of peace is Godly imitation.
50. And so, my question would be, imitation of what?
51. To answer that question we will need to go back to the book of **Acts chapter 16**.
52. For the sake of time I will not read this passage because it comprises 24 verses. Instead I will give you the short version.
53. On Paul's second missionary Journey, Paul and Silas are sent by the Lord to Philippi.
54. Philippi is a place where the Truth of Jesus had never been proclaimed.
55. In fact, there was not even a Jewish temple in the city.
56. Paul and Silas go out beside the river to pray. They meet a lady named Lydia who worships God, but has never accepted Jesus.
57. She accepts Jesus, she and all her household are baptized, and she invites Paul and Silas to stay at her home.
58. Later in their stay they encounter a fortune teller who is possessed by an evil spirit. She is a slave and makes a lot of money for her owners.
59. For several days, this lady walks behind them yelling at the top of her voice.
60. Paul becomes so annoyed that he flips around commands the evil spirit to come out of her and it does.

61. But that makes her owners extremely angry because they have lost their hope of making money.
62. They drag them before the city leaders, lie about them, and Paul and Silas are thrown in Jail after they have been severely beaten.
63. That night, when an earthquake shakes open all the jail cells, the jailer becomes distraught and is going to kill himself, but Paul and Silas share Jesus with him and he and his whole household are saved.
64. The next day Paul and Silas are released back to the home of Lydia.
65. Soon later they leave the city.
66. So the Philippian believers have this experience of spending time with Paul and Silas, and then they have the letter Paul wrote them, which is what the book of Philippians is.
67. So what have the believers in Philippi learned, received, heard, or seen in Paul?
68. They have seen him share Jesus with unbelievers.
69. They have seen him baptize those believers, and then spend time with them helping build their faith by receiving training.
70. They have witnessed Paul not be happy with what is going on around him.
71. They have heard about the beating they received in Jail and how the jailer and his family were saved.
72. They have talked with Paul and Silas after the fact, and they have witnessed that they are unwilling to give up even in the face of extreme difficulty.
73. How many are still with me?
74. These are the things they have learned, received, heard, and seen in Paul.
75. And now he tells these spiritual children that in order to fully experience the God of peace, they should imitate, or put into practice all these things.
76. So Paul wants these Philippian believers to share Jesus with unbelievers.
77. Train up those new believers until they are mature in their faith.

78. He wants them to love one another even when they are annoyed and upset.
79. He wants them to comfort one another when they go through difficulty.
80. He wants them to nurse one another's wounds when they are hurt.
81. He wants them to be spiritual parents to others. The hope of Jesus they have received is not supposed to end with them; the hope of Jesus must be shared.

Conclusion:

1. So if we go all the way back to the beginning of Philippians chapter 4.
2. The command isn't just to rejoice always.
3. The command isn't just, don't be anxious about anything, but in everything talk to God about it.
4. It wasn't just, look to the Lord to find what is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, or praiseworthy.
5. But the command was to do all those things and imitate Paul.
6. To be a hope filled, peace filled, presence of God filled believer in Jesus, who also spreads that hope to others.
7. Not just with our natural family or those who are already a part of the family of God, but to those in our lives who are lost and without Jesus.
8. Those who are struggling.
9. Those who are hurting.
10. To let them see us experience all those things and still be people of hope.
11. I believe the Lord has called us in these unsure times to be carriers and spreaders and dealers of hope.
12. As we close today, I believe the Lord is asking us to answer that call.
13. How do we answer that call? By dedicating ourselves to that call to be hope dealers.
14. Every so often we bring a small child up on the stage with their parents and we dedicate that child to the Lord.

15. I have thought for years that we should change the name of that ceremony.
16. I believe we could change it to Parents Dedication, and it would be appropriate.
17. Because as I examine that ceremony, it is really the parents who are dedicating themselves to be tools in the hands of the Lord to love and teach and train that child and to give them an opportunity to accept and serve Jesus as their savior.
18. I believe it is appropriate from time to time for us to do the same thing with ourselves on behalf of our...
 - Neighbors.
 - Co-workers.
 - Classmates.
 - Friends.
 - Even perfect strangers who the Lord would bring across our path.
19. Will you join me this morning in dedicating yourself to being a hope dealer to those around you, especially those who don't know Jesus?
20. Would you come forward to the front?
21. Lord Jesus. I give myself to you. To be a spreader of hope. I ask you to help me be obedient to your commands. And as a result be a person who is filled with hope.
22. And then Lord Jesus. I ask you to open my eyes, and my heart, to those whose paths I cross each day, to be a carrier of hope to them.
23. Help me share the love of Jesus. Especially with those who don't know you. Help me to not hide my struggles, but point to you in my struggles.
24. Help others, to see a hope in me, that they will want for themselves. In Jesus name.