

HOPE IN AN UPSIDE-DOWN WORLD - PART 2

Scripture used: Philippians 1:20 (NLT)

OVERVIEW

Pastor Hurmon continued on the theme of finding purpose and hope in an upside-down world. This is our world today, where disappointment, suffering, and the abnormal have become the new normal. In our Scripture, the Apostle Paul had a dream of going to Rome - the center of the Western world - to preach the Christian gospel and make disciples, but he ended up in Rome as a prisoner in chains. Yet, he maintained hope that his life would bring honor to Christ, whether he lived or died.

KEY POINTS

- 1) Paul's spiritual posture gives him sustainable hope. His vision amplifies his most ambitious dreams, and he wants to honor God in every circumstance. He acts as a vehicle of God's love and work. He also is intellectually and emotionally sober. He takes stock of his life, his values, and his priorities. He is not sleepwalking, or "drunk on the wine of the world." (1 Thessalonians 5:6)
- 2) Our young parishioner Justin Hunter lost his middle-aged parents Eugene and Vera to COVID within a few days of each other. That is truly a world turned tragically upside-down. COVID has already taken 165,000 lives in the US, twice as many as the entire American casualties from the Vietnam War. It's fallen disproportionately on minority folks, partly due to social determinants of health, and lack of readiness in the frontline healthcare system.
- 3) We must stay clear-headed and alert, wrapped in the armor of faith and love, and confident in our eternal salvation. Indeed, we must keep the belief in our salvation, even in death (Romans 10:9-10). We can be touched by grace, free from the obligation to be flawless; at-ease with the gap between our faithfulness and the reality of life. We can have peace, freedom from fear and worry, and the certainty of completion. We must tell & show loved ones that we care for them on a regular basis, express that people have a special place in our heart. Finally, we must think in terms of becoming, growing in knowledge and understanding.

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - Are you focused on what matters? Are you driven by impure motives such as jealousy, or pure motives?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - How can you surrender to God's work in your life, and trusting Jesus with your eternity?
- 3) **DO** - Tune in next week for Hope in an Upside-Down Part 3 as Pastor Hurmon will share more practical lessons on what Scripture can teach us about surmounting overwhelming challenges in ominous times -- with great relevance to our own times and tangible calls to action!