

HOPE IN AN UPSIDE-DOWN WORLD, PART 5

Scripture used: [Philippians 1:21-25 \(NLT\)](#)

OVERVIEW

Pastor Hurmon continued the sermon series “Hope in an Upside Down World!” We’re trying to understand how we, as Jesus followers, should behave in this overwhelming moment. That is why we’re spending so much time on Paul’s letter to the Christians in Philippi. They were struggling through a time of crisis. They felt the same emotions that we are grappling with today. They were tempted in the same ways we are. Paul reminded the Philippians it’s better to live, no matter how hard life can be, because we can always find ways to “experience the joy of [our] faith.” The question is not whether life is worth living. The question is whether we will step into the role that God has for us in His plan to redeem the world!

KEY POINTS

- 1) **We all get overwhelmed sometimes.** Paul understands how we feel. So do the Christians in Philippi that he was writing to. They were being wrongly persecuted by the Roman government and the Jewish leadership. They were just as tempted as we are to give up. Like us, they sometimes thought of quitting life, or at least giving up on dreams for a better life. This is why Paul’s letter is so important. He reminds us that God has not forgotten anyone. He sees each and every one of us. And He loves us.
 - a. **It’s okay to weep.** Jeremiah wept for Jerusalem in [Psalms 137 \(NLT\)](#). Jesus wept for Lazarus when he died. It’s okay to cry. Pastor Hurmon shared his own personal story of weeping this past week as he reflected on the injustice of Jacob Blake, an unarmed black man shot 7 times, while an armed white man was safely apprehended just a few days later in the same town.
 - b. **It’s okay to tell others.** Paul poured out his heart in dozens of letters to early Christian churches. He shared his deepest fears even though he knew these letters would become public. He knew that other Christians would connect to his fears. They would get comfortable sharing their fears.
 - c. **It’s okay that we’re not okay.** We are in the middle of a global pandemic, made worse by an economic crisis, political toxicity, and racial reckoning. Pastor Hurmon said “Of course we’re not okay!” No one expects us to be okay in this situation, so stop pretending.
- 2) **Resist the seduction of emotions.** It is so important to acknowledge how we feel. That is the first step to finding hope in an upside down world. But we also need to beware of our emotions. If we’re not careful, we can become lost in how we feel. Our feelings can start to consume us, and we forget about other people and even God.
- 3) **Faith is the antidote to despair.** One of the scariest things we can believe in is that life is pointless. That is how we end up in the basement of despair, even though the stairs are not blocked and the door is unlocked. We can leave whenever we want if we embrace something bigger than ourselves through faith.
 - a. **Connect to God’s power.** God makes all things new. He is working through all of us to redeem the world. We are a part of His story. This is what gives meaning to our lives.
 - b. **Connect to God’s work.** God needs each of us to do our part. His living spirit can come into our lives and motivate us to do His work, as Paul described in [Philippians 1:19 \(NLT\)](#).
 - c. **Connect to others.** There are people all around us who need us: parents, siblings, friends, co-workers, and neighbors. They are looking for hope, and we can be God’s instrument for delivering hope to them!

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - Pastor Hurmon reminded us of the emotional turmoil that early Christians went through. The church was born in a world a lot like the one we are in today. Does it feel like Paul is writing to you?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - We were made to be God’s instruments in this world. What sort of purpose do you think you could fulfill in this troubled time? Can you volunteer, donate, or simply listen to someone else who is feeling overwhelmed?
- 3) **DO** - Our affirmation this week is “I choose to live, serve, and love!” If you are in a dark place and feel tempted to quit life, please talk to professionals at the suicide crisis hotline: 1-800-273-8255. For the rest of us, Pastor Hurmon asked us one profound question: What step can you take toward serving God and/or others?