

HOPE IN AN UPSIDE DOWN WORLD, PART 9

Scripture used: [Matthew 5:43-48 \(NLT\)](#)

OVERVIEW

This week is special for several reasons. First, we are wrapping up the Hope in an Upside Down World Series. Second, we have Nancy Ortberg delivering an amazing message for our community, representing her leadership of Transforming the Bay with Christ, an organization with whom our church partners. And third, Pastor Hurmon opened the message with a prayer for the recovery of our President and his wife, who both tested positive for COVID-19, along with the millions of others around the country and world who are dealing with the virus.

KEY POINTS

- 1) **Hope arrives in 3 different ways that we might miss.**
 - a. **Hope comes in small packages.** Jesus loved to describe hope in terms of small things. In [Matthew 5:13 \(NLT\)](#) He used the example of salt, flavoring and preserving life. In [Luke 13:21 \(NLT\)](#) He used the example of yeast, with only a little bit permeating every part of the dough. Nancy described her work with [Transforming the Bay with Christ](#), which is quietly doing amazing work supporting at-risk communities. Sometimes these examples of hope are so small that they only get us through the day. But that is all we need for today!
 - b. **Hope makes us wait for it.** The modern world has trained us to want things immediately. Contrast that with the patience of Abraham, who waited for decades between God's promise and its fulfillment. Paul also wrote extensively about patience, using Abraham's example in [Romans 4:18 \(NLT\)](#). He also said we must wait "patiently and confidently" in [Romans 8:25 \(NLT\)](#). The Israelites knew this, having struggled to maintain hope during 400 years in captivity in Egyptian, 40 years in the Wilderness, and another 400 years of silence from the book of Malachi to the birth of Jesus.
 - c. **Hope emerges from suffering.** Paul reminds us of this process in [Romans 5:2-4 \(NLT\)](#). We all know that it is the hardest periods of our lives — the losses, the traumas, the sufferings — that were also the times of greatest growth. Looking back on them, we can see how God carried us through difficult trials. Despite knowing this, we still choose to avoid these same conditions today!
- 2) **We are miners of hope.** Nancy told a story about her childhood reading through a history textbook. She saw the pictures of dirty, exhausted, emaciated miners who came to San Francisco during the Gold Rush of 1849. These 49ers went through so much to find a little earthly treasure. But what about heavenly rewards? How hard are we willing to work for them? That's what Jesus described in [Matthew 13:44 \(NLT\)](#) when a man sold everything he had to buy the field where he knew treasure was buried. That man knew it would be hard work but he didn't care. The effort would be worth it!

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - We should expect to gain hope little by little, not all at once. As we grow in hope, we need to share that hope with others. In [Romans 1:11-12 \(NLT\)](#) Paul described how much it meant to him that others shared their stories. Our walk with God should bring others to Him. Who in your life needs an extra bit of hope, and how can you be a carrier of hope to that person?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - Pastor Hurmon followed up the message with a specific question he wants us all to consider: "How might I currently be missing the hope God wants for me because I'm not paying attention to small things, am too impatient, or want to avoid suffering?" Consider especially [Romans 5:2-4 \(NLT\)](#). Have you seen this process at work in your own life? Are there ways you have resisted or interfered with this process?
- 3) **DO** - Pray that you would be God's instrument of hope to another person this week - perhaps in your family, workplace, or friendship circles. Then, look for an opportunity to act! We look forward to worshipping together again next Sunday!