

Spread hope \* April 2, 2020  
Langford Community Church \* Graham Gladstone

Hello everyone, so glad you could be here. We had a good talk at the board meeting last night about how to approach Easter and we're going to celebrate Easter online this year. Keep an eye on your email and we'll send you details on how to get connected in. Even if you don't have a computer, you can actually 'old-fashioned' phone in too, so however you connect, we would love for you to be involved – Palm Sunday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

With the coronavirus on the loose, we're all very aware of what we're spreading, aren't we? We're washing our hands extra carefully, wiping down surfaces that lots of people touch and standing on the lines that they have taped on the floor at the grocery store. And those are all very good things. We WANT to stop the spread of COVID-19.

As Christians though, there's one thing that we don't want to stop spreading, and that's hope. Hope that people will act in selfless and sacrificial ways. Hope that we'll all get through this together. And above all, hope in the never changing, never ending promises of God.

That's the foundation we stand on, isn't it? The anchor to which we tie our souls.

There is nothing that can prevent us from receiving the eternal inheritance which Jesus our Lord secured for us on the Cross. There is nothing that can separate us from the steadfast, unflinching love of our Lord. And that gives us hope.

Lamentations 3 puts it like this: 21 *Yet* [in the midst of these trials] this I call to mind and therefore I have hope:

22 Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail.

23 They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness (Lam 3:21-23 NIV).

Because of God's great love and new-every-morning faithfulness, we have hope.

And not 'gee I hope we get through this' but a confident, unshakeable assurance that God is working for good and that we are safe in His hands.

Because the LORD's compassions never fail, we have hope.

And that hope should really radiate out from us to encourage other people.

Paul writes in Philippians 2 –

14 Do everything without complaining or arguing, 15 so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe 16 as you hold out the word of life--  
(Phi 2:14-16 NIV).

That is, let your light shine to give others hope. In a world where people are hoarding food so others don't have it, in a world where people are charging exorbitant prices for !toilet paper!, in a world where people are desperate because of fear – you – energized by God's unflinching commitment to you, hold out

hope to those around you. Shine like lights against a backdrop of darkness. Act with confidence and grace and peace, knowing that in Jesus' hands, you are secure. Lift people up instead of weighing them down and above all, point them to Jesus so that they can have real hope too.

So let me ask you, what are you spreading these days? Farmers will be spreading something on the fields soon; is that what you're spreading to the people around you? Or are you spreading hope? Peace? Joy? Confidence in the unfailing love of God?

The Lord's compassion will never fail – day by day He gives us what we need. Let your hope in Him spread to other people.