

Alright. Hey, everybody, welcome to Valley Creek. Come on, wherever you're at today, Denton, Flower Mound, Gainesville, Lewisville, The Venue, watching online, somewhere in the world, come on. Oh, come on, come on. You can do better than that today. Come on. We are so glad you are here with us wherever you are in the world.

And before we get started, in the midst of all of the craziness, in the midst of all of the chaos that's in the world around us, let me go ahead and just start today by just reminding you that Jesus is still Lord, that God is still in control, that His Kingdom is still advancing, that hope is still on the move, that you still have the Spirit of the living God inside of you, that you are still empowered to disciple nations, that you are still empowered to be a hope carrier, that God is still good, Jesus has still forgiven you, you are still loved and everything is still possible, okay? Come on, you are people of the kingdom and you've been prepared and equipped for such a time as this. In the midst of all the craziness and all the chaos in the world around us, God has empowered you to live with the heart of a king.

And that's the series that we're in, The Heart of a King. And we're taking a few weeks to just talk about the life of David. We're reading through first and second Samuel together, and we've said that in Jesus, we've been given the heart of a king. That we were created to live a life of royalty, and virtue, nobility, and purpose, humility, honor, passion, submission. That we're not meant to live down to the world, we're created to live up to the Kingdom of God. That we all start with the heart of a rebel, the heart of an orphan, or a Pharisee or a slave. And yet when we invite Jesus to become the king of our heart, he gives us the heart of a king. And knowing that your royalty doesn't make you selfish, it makes you selfless. Because kings don't live for themselves, they live for the good of others and the glory of God. They spend their life blessing and serving, ruling and reigning with God.

Ruling, coming under and lifting up. Reigning, releasing God's victory into every area of authority and influence that they have. I mean have you ever seen somebody have joy in the midst of sorrow? That's the heart of a king. Have you ever seen somebody have peace in the midst of panic? That's the heart of a king. Have you ever seen somebody have confidence in the midst of chaos? That's the heart of a king. Have you ever seen somebody have hope in the midst of despair? That's the heart of a king. And Jesus is the best example of what the heart of a king, of what royalty looks like. And he has come to show us what that looks like. And if we're created to be transformed into his image and his likeness, then he is shaping and molding within us the heart of a king. So it's almost like every command, every invitation, every declaration that God makes over your life is like Jesus saying to you, this is what a king would do. Now, what are you going to do?

Now, I know a whole bunch of you are just sitting there, and you're like, did you really have to say that all again? Like you've been starting every message for the past bunch of weeks that same -- did you really have to say that? And the answer is yes. For two reasons. Number one, every weekend, it's somebody's first time. And so if they don't understand that context, the

rest of the message from this point on doesn't make any sense. And the second reason, is faith comes by hearing. So whatever I'm hearing, my faith in that thing is growing. And let's be honest, over these past seven months, we've been hearing all kinds of things. And what we really need to hear is somebody declaring our identity over us. We need to hear that we're royalty, that we're a part of the kingdom, that God has given us the heart of a king. We need to literally be transformed by the renewing of our minds because if we change the way we think, it will change the way we live. And I told you that this series, I'm trying to inspire you and challenge you.

And I know the last couple of weeks have been challenging. And you've done an amazing job leaning into those, but I'm also watching your heads get lifted up. I'm also watching the inspiration start to take place. I'm watching your head like come out of the ground and starting to rise up and be like, wait a second, there is more. That I've been given the heart of a king and I want to learn how to live like that. You see, as we keep going in this series, what I want you to get today is that what really defines the heart of a king is hope. If you want to know what's at the core of the heart of a king, it's hope. Kings are defined by hope. They have a confident expectation in the goodness of God. They believe that God is working behind the scenes.

They know this is not as good as it gets, they believe that wherever they're going is better than where they've been. They believe the best is yet to come. They believe that they're going from glory to glory and victory to victory and breakthrough to breakthrough. Come on, hope defines the heart of a king. In fact, do you know what doesn't belong in the heart of the king? All of the words that start with the letter D. Ready for this? All of the words in this world that start with the letter D like depressed, discouraged, defeated, despair, daunted, doubting, depressed, shall I go on? You'd be amazed at how many words start with the letter D and they belong in the heart of a king. Why? Because no one goes to a king to see a king be depressed, defeated or discouraged. You go to a king for hope. You go to a king for somebody who believes in the goodness of God, somebody who believes that God is still on the move even though things don't look so good on the surface.

And so what you have to understand is that royalty is not only a privilege, it's actually a responsibility. When you've been included in Christ and you're brought into the kingdom, yes, royalty is this amazing privilege that you're now a part of the royal family, but there's also a responsibility. And that responsibility is to live a royal life and represent God and His Kingdom. And part of that responsibility is to cultivate the heart of hope in a world full of despair. I mean think about it, if kings rule and reign with God, then we actually have to believe that the goodness of God is going to come into the areas that we have authority and influence over. So you actually have a responsibility to cultivate the heart of hope for the people in your life. You owe it to your spouse, to your kids, to your friends, to your employees, to your business, to your team, to cultivate the heart of a -- to have an atmosphere of hope that when they come

into your atmosphere, they are experiencing the hope of the kingdom instead of the depression and the despair of this world.

That is the heart of a king. And that's what makes David so amazing. See, David, if you read -- if you've been reading with us all through 1 Samuel, like somehow David always had hope. No matter how bad it was, no matter how awful the circumstances, no matter how impossible the situation, somehow David was a man of hope. And when you look at David's life, he had a 10-year run that was more difficult than most of us experienced in our entire lifetime combined. And yet somehow he had this heart of a king, this heart of hope. And in 1 Samuel, chapter 30, I think it's one of the most significant passages in David's entire life. I think it's actually a defining moment that shows us who David is.

Let me just set this up for you. Like David has this 10-year run that's beyond challenging. Like when we first meet David, David is rejected by his own father. His own dad doesn't even think he can be a king, so he doesn't even bring him in when Samuel is there to anoint the new king. But then David does get anointed to be the king. And so Saul, the current king, spends the next 10 years chasing David, trying to kill David, trying to take him out, so David lives in the desert, he lives in the wilderness, he lives in caves. Then David's best friend, Jonathan, dies. Then David's mentor, Samuel, dies. Then David's own people are about to turn him over to Saul. So David has to go live with his enemies. But the enemies don't really like him. Like does this sound like 2020 yet? Okay. So then David has to go live with his enemies. And while he's living with his enemies, the Philistines, they're getting ready to go have battle with the Israelites, David's people, who he supposed to be king over. And David is willing to go to battle with the Philistines against his own people.

And when they're on the journey to get there, the enemy kings decide, David might turn on us in battle, so we don't want him. So they send him back home. I'm just saying, it's bad when your enemies don't even want you to fight with them. And while David and his men are heading back home to this foreign town that they're living in, in the distance they see smoke rising. And they get back to Ziklag, where they're living, and another set of enemies has come in, raided the whole town, burned it to the ground, taken all the women, all the children, all the plunder. And in that moment, it says, David's men literally picked up stones and talk about stoning David. Hashtag 2020. From bad to worse to you got to be kidding me. And do you know what David does in that moment? When his men pick up stones and they're about to stone him and kill him?

You know what he does? He says, I'm done. And he quits and he goes home. No. He sits down and he starts complaining, why is my life so bad? No. He looks at his men and he says, are you kidding me? You wouldn't have nothing if it wasn't for me anyways. No. He gets real offended at God and says, are you kidding me God? I'm trying to live my life for you. No. Check this out. 1 Samuel chapter 30, "David was greatly distressed because the men were talking of stoning him. Each one was bitter in spirit because of his sons and his daughters."

Ready? "But David strengthened himself in the Lord his God." This one verse in my own defines the entire journey of David's life. This my friends is the heart of a king.

When everything is against you, when the world is falling apart around you, David chose to strengthen himself in the Lord. In other words, while his men were literally bitter, defeated, picking up stones, this is the crazy part about circumstances. Circumstances will either lead you deeper into the kingdom of darkness or deeper into the Kingdom of God. They cause you to respond with the heart of a rebel or the heart of a king. While David's men were bitter and talking about stoning David, David was strengthening himself in the Lord. He'll ask you a question, while the world is bitter and wanting to throw stones at everyone in this season, what are you doing? Are you cultivating a heart of hope in a world full of despair? And you say, what does it mean to strengthen yourself in the Lord? It literally means to look to the Lord for hope instead of to the world for any D word you want to pick. And David finds hope. And he looks at his men and he says, our women, and our children, and our plunder is gone, let's go get it back. And somehow because David had hope in that moment, his men dropped the stones and decided to follow him because hope is that powerful.

Whoever has hope has the most influence. It doesn't matter what your job is, what your title, what your role is, I've been telling you this for the last couple of years. He who has hope has the most influence. And because David had hope in that moment, his men followed him. They went, they defeated the enemies, got all of their families back, got all of the plunder back. And do you know what happens in the very next chapter? Saul is killed. And 2 Samuel starts and David becomes king. In my opinion, this was the last test that David had to pass to actually become king. This is the defining moment of David's life. Could he strengthen himself in the Lord, cultivate a heart of hope even though the world around him was falling apart? That is the heart of a king. And the most important skill you will ever have as the heart of a king is the ability to strengthen yourself in the Lord.

Hope is what needs to be cultivated in here in the midst of the depression, the discouragement and the defeat out there. Come on. Hope is not wishful thinking. Hope is not an emotion or a feeling. Hope is not ignorant optimism, like it's all going to be okay. No, no. Hope is a person and his name is Jesus. And if Jesus is the living hope, then when I look to him, I'm living hope. If he literally is the living hope, then when I look to him I'm living hope. So to choose Jesus is to choose hope. To invite Jesus into my life is to invite hope into my life. To take a next step towards Jesus is to take a next step towards hope. So when I'm strengthening myself in the Lord, I'm actually strengthening myself in hope. And it's my responsibility to make a choice to strengthen myself in here regardless of what's happening out here.

So here's my question. How's your hope? Like how's your hope in this season? If we're real honest, you and me, right now, if we're just doing like, how's your hope? Maybe let me ask it to you like this, how's your heart? Because if we've gone through a widely challenging 2020, I would bet your heart's got damaged in this season. Like David, wave after wave, and

brokenness after brokenness, and challenge after challenge, and difficulty after difficulty, and school, and sports, and economy, and sickness and death, okay all these things. Like how's your heart, man? I bet it's got all kinds of damaged and bruised in the process. I mean I remember a couple of years ago sitting with my son, he just wasn't himself for a couple of months and it was just bothering me and it was concerning. I couldn't figure out what it was. So finally one day I sat down with him and I just said, hey buddy, I said, like what's going on because you're just not acting like yourself? And he sat there for a few moments and he said, I don't know dad, maybe I can just explain it to you like this, he said, I feel like God has given me this multicolored heart. That my heart has all these colors and it's vibrant and it's radiant, and it has all these facets to it. He said, but then every day I go to school and it's like the world takes all this black dust and puts it on my heart and covers up all the color that God has given me. And I sat there with this young boy and I thought, that is one of the most profound things I've ever heard. Because you realize in Jesus, he's given you a new heart, a multicolor, radiant, multifaceted, Technicolor heart. He's removed your heart of stone and given you a heart of flesh. As he is, so you are. You've been included in Christ, a new creation. You're a part of a divine nature. He's given you this amazing Technicolor heart. In fact, that's why our series graphic, look at this.

Our series graphic is this colored heart. Like God has given you all these facets and all these radiant things that are supposed to shine and be brilliant and come out of you. But then yet, if we go through life, all of a sudden it's like the pain, and the brokenness, and the sin, and the shame, and the guilt, and the depression, and the despair covers our heart with all this black dust. And all of a sudden, all the hope seems like it's gone, buried under depression, and discouragement, and defeat, and despair, and doubt, and so on and so forth. And yet, our theme verse in this whole series has been Proverbs 4:23, "Above all else, guard your heart, for it's the wellspring of life." In other words, above all else, make sure you know how to strengthen yourself in the Lord. That you know how to keep your heart full of hope in a world full of despair. Why? Because it's the wellspring of life. Whatever is in here will flow out into all the other areas of your life. And we've been looking at this verse and we kind of think to ourselves, but how do I actually do that? Well, just look at the two verses that come before it. "Listen closely to my words. Do not let them out of your sight. Keep them within your heart. Above all else, guard your heart for it's the wellspring of life." In other words, what he tells us here is that God's word in a way is the purifying, cleansing agent of our heart. That when our heart gets full of the black dust of this world, when we look to God and his promises, and his word, and his truth, it starts to wash our heart clean. The truth will wash out the lies. And grace will wash out the shame. And hope will wash out the despair. And love will wash out the fear. And faith will wash out the doubt. Strengthen yourself in the Lord. Cultivate a heart of hope in a world full of despair. Are you with me on this? You see, the reason this matters and the reason the moment I even start asking you, how's your hope, how's your heart, we start leaning back is because when you don't have hope, you stop moving forward.

When you lose your hope, you lose your life. And we all know this is true. Like come on, if you don't have hope about getting healthy, you're not going to get up and work out. If you don't have hope for getting debt-free, you're not going to save and try to pay off your debts. If you don't have hope in that relationship going to the next level, you're going to stop investing into it. We know that's true. The moment I lose hope in something, I stop moving forward. The problem is, though, as a king, we were created to rule and reign with God, to have authority and influence. So kings are future-oriented. We're creators. We're dreamers, we're innovators, we see what can be in the midst of what is. We pioneer. We don't just react to what's happening, we initiate and move forward. In fact, Jeremiah 29, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans for a hope and a future." In other words, the future is always full of hope with God.

The problem is sometimes we lose sight of that hope. In fact, check this out, Hebrews 11 says, "Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see." Faith is confidence in what we hope for. If we're honest most of us have more confidence in what we have than we hope for. We have more confidence in what is than the expectation of the goodness of God tomorrow. And the problem is if you have more confidence in what you have than what you hope for, then you're going to stop moving forward. Why? Because if I have more confidence in what I have in the condition of my marriage today, why am I going to try to move forward into tomorrow? If I have more confidence in the brokenness, or the pain, or the situations, or the circumstance, or job, or school today, then why am I going to have hope and move forward into the future tomorrow? This is why right now it's so hard to move forward in life. Anybody else feel like they're swimming through peanut butter?

Do you know why? Because I think right now, we have more confidence in what we have than what we hope for. We have more confidence in the virus, and the brokenness, and the pain, and the chaos, and the shutdown, and then this isn't going to change. And so this season, we've used all these big declarative words over our lives. Like always and nevers. It's always going to be this way. It's never going to change. All this -- maybe we need to just repent of some of those things and say, no, no, no, no, I'm not a victim, I'm victorious. And the decisions you make today determine the future. You're going to live in tomorrow, so you know what? Maybe I should strengthen myself in the Lord today because that's going to create the breakthrough I'm looking for tomorrow. Kings have hope and they move forward into that hope and create a better future. And part of the way you have to do that is by holding on to your destiny. Come on, in this moment, when David's men are picking up stones -- David's been running for 10 years, man. He's so tired, he's had enough.

And they're about -- and David's got to be thinking like, are you guys kidding me? And they pick up stones. You know what he's sitting there thinking? Hang on a second, this isn't how this ends. God told me I was going to be king. So it can't end like this. This isn't the last chapter. This isn't the last line. This isn't the last verse. No, no, no. This is not how it ends. God told me I'm going to be a king. So you know what? I'm going to be a king. And so he

held on to his destiny, strengthened himself in the Lord and decided to move forward. The problem is for us, we get so consumed with the circumstances in front of us, we forget the calling upon us. I mean check out this verse in Lamentations, talking about Israel, "She did not consider her destiny. Therefore, her collapse was awesome." In other words, she put no thought into her future, the destiny, the promises of God upon her, so she completely fell apart.

Can I tell you one of the reasons we're falling apart in this season, collapsing just because we're just not holding on to our destiny? Because we're not holding on to the promises of God. Just I don't know my destiny. Okay, well then, just what are the promises that God's given you? He's promised this. That he has come so you might have an abundant life. Is your life abundant right now? If the answer is no, then this is not the end. He's promised that he will do immeasurably more than you can ask or imagine.

Is he doing immeasurably more than you can ask or imagine in your life right now? If the answer is no, then this is not how it ends. He said that you will do even greater things that he has done. Are you doing greater things than Jesus did when he was on this earth? If the answer is no, then this is not the end of the story. He says he's going to give you the Spirit of the living God, to come inside of you, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, self-control. Are all those things flying out of your life? If the answer is no, then this is not how it ends. This is not the end of the story. We've got to take authority and grab a hold of the promises of God and hold on to the destiny that He has in store for us. Come on. Are you with me on that? Like too often, we have this vision of who we don't want to be. We just look at life and we're like, I don't, I don't ever want to be like my dad. I don't ever want to be like my boss. I don't ever want to be like that -- I don't want everyone in that -- and the extent of the vision for our lives is what we don't want to happen. Come on, have a vision for your life. Ask God about your destiny. Grab a hold of some of the promises of God that when things come against you, you can say, this is not how it ends. Remember, fear is faith in the inferior. And so if I'm afraid of this happening, I'm having faith in the inferior. And fear attracts that which it's afraid of. So I will set in motion the very thing I don't want to happen. Faith is belief in the superior. And faith attracts what it hopes for.

And it draws that vision, that destiny, that promise of God into its life. I mean come on. Look at Abraham in Romans chapter 8. Check this out, it says, "Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations." He's a hundred years old. God has promised him he'd be the father of many nations and Abraham doesn't have a kid. I would say that's against all hope. In hope, he believed and became. He did not waiver through his unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God.

In other words, Abraham looked at the impossible situations around him and he said, I don't know how God's going to do it, I don't know when God's going to do it, I don't know where

God's going to do it, I don't what it's going to look like when God does it. I just know this, he has promised me that I will be the father of many nations, so this is not how it ends. This is not as good as it gets. This is not the last chapter. This is not the last verse.

So he strengthened himself in the Lord, found hope, cultivated hope in a world full of despair and that glorified God. Come on, are you with me on that? You see, here's what I'm trying to tell you. We have got to get to this place where we refuse to quit. Like you're not going to like this. Ready? Quit quitting. Seriously, man. Quit quitting.

I'm watching people in this season quit like nobody's business. We're like quitting everything. We're quitting jobs, we're quitting marriages, we're quitting our relationships, we're quitting our faith, we're quitting church, we're quitting our calling, we're quitting our teams. It's like people are quitting like left and right. Why? Because they are not holding on to their destiny. Don't make major life decisions in the midst of a storm. Can you imagine if the disciples were in the middle of the Sea of Galilee and the storm comes, if they made their decisions about their future in that moment?

Yeah. I'm going back, I'm done. No, they had to get to the other side. Storm was over, they could see Jesus. I'm still in. Yeah. Still be in. Come on, you might be one step away from a breakthrough. You might be one day away from victory. You might be one moment away from your 2 Samuel where all of a sudden you passed the test and now God can promote you into this new space. You see, we don't quit because it's hard. We quit because we lose hope. You can deal with hard. You can't deal with a heart full of depression, and despair, and discouragement and defeatism. And hope and despair can't exist in the same heart because they sit in the same seat. And what happens is we don't see instant results and so we kind of give up. It's too much for us. We want to follow and see instant fruit. We want to trust and see instant answer.

We want to obey and see instant breakthrough. But I think some of the season, God is just saying, will you keep following me even if you don't see results? It's literally an invitation I feel like God's -- will you keep following me even if you don't see results? See, nobody can stop you from your destiny. The only thing between you and where God wants you to go is your willingness to strengthen yourself in the Lord, to look for him for hope instead of the world for despair. Like this is why Nehemiah, I love this, Nehemiah while he's rebuilding the wall, Nehemiah says, "I am carrying on a great project and cannot go down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and go down to you? While all these people were coming to try to discourage and defeat, and bring despair into Nehemiah's life. He's like, hey man, I'm doing a great thing here. And when you realize you're doing a great thing, you don't want to go down to the word, you want to stay up in the kingdom of God. Can I just tell something? You just need to hear this today.

You're building a great life. You're building a great legacy. You are building a great family right now. You're building a great marriage. You're building a great business. You are a part of building a great kingdom. You're a part of building a great church. Come on, this is not the season to quit. This is the season to strengthen yourself in the Lord and look to him for hope instead of the world for despair and hear me, this is not a onetime even, it's a lifestyle. It's a daily choice, man. And this is what David did when he had the bear, he strengthened himself in the Lord. When Saul wanted to kill him, he strengthened himself in the Lord. When Jonathan died, he strengthened himself in the Lord. So by the time he gets to 1 Samuel 30, this is like the way that he lives his life. That's what I'm trying to tell you. So what do you do when the bully comes and the marriage is falling apart, and the economy is stinks, and maybe your political party isn't getting what you want to see? All those different things all coming at you, what do you do? You got to strengthen yourself in the Lord.

Come on, we all want to be conquerors, we just don't want to conquer anything. We all want to be overcomers, we just don't want to any obstacles. We all want to be victorious, we just don't want to face any battles. But this is why 2 Timothy 2:13 tells us, "If we endure, we will also reign with Him." Do you know why we don't reign, experience the victory of God? Because we don't endure. We just quit too fast. Come on, the greatest thing you can do for the people in your life is strengthen yourself in the Lord. And it's a choice, it's a decision. And here's what's amazing, it takes no talent, it takes no gifting, it takes no ability, it takes no education, it's a choice. It's ownership, it's responsibility. I know a whole bunch of you are sitting here like, well, how do I do it? How do I do it? How is the wrong question. Who do strengthen yourself in is the right question. Ability doesn't matter.

It's not about ability, it's just simply about taking ownership and authority in my life to say, I refuse to allow this amazing, Technicolor heart that God has given me to be covered up with despair, depression, discouragement, the blackness of this world, so I'm going to make a choice to strengthen myself in the Lord. Are you with me on that?

Okay. And so for you, real practical people, I don't have time for this. This is some of the ways that we got to do it. There's a whole lot of other ways that you can do it, but I'll tell you this, you can't strengthen yourself in the Lord without these five things. There's more, but this is the foundation. Real fast, let me show you these from David's life. First thing is this, and this is real quick. So just jot this down, you got to read God's word. Look at what David says, "You are my refuge and my shield. I put my hope in your word." David's hope was not in his feelings, it was not in the situations, it was not in the circumstances, it was in the word of God. He held on to God's promises, God's truths, God's declarations in the midst of all of the despair in the world.

So hear me, if you never put the word of God inside of you, but you're constantly doing Netflix and social media and the news, your despair is self-induced. I know some you don't want to hear that. But you just got to look at this reality, if I never put hope in my heart, then I'm the

only one who can blame when there's no hope in here. I can't keep putting the blackness of the world on my heart and then expect me to be strong. So you got to read God's word. Second thing is just pray. Think about David, David constantly, it says, "He was inquiring of the Lord. Jesus withdrew to lonely places. You know what it means to pray? It literally means to take all of the despair, the doubt, the discouragement, the daunting realities of your life. Lay them at the feet of Jesus and in exchange take his hope. So just talk to him and tell him honestly where you are. Read the Psalms. David pours out his heart to God. He's basically saying, God, I got all this junk in here and I don't want it in here.

Because there's so much problems out there, so I'm just going to confess and put it all out there to you. That's why Jesus says, "Come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest. Come on, have you prayed at all in this season? We should be praying and seeking God more in this season, maybe more than any time in our life.

Third thing, you got to build godly relationships. Come on, so comfort each other and make each other strong as you are already doing. In other words, we need each other to be strengthened in the world. You need amazing godly relationships, people who are moving in the same direction, and on those days you have no hope, they give you hope. Now, as Jonathan for David, it literally says, "Jonathan came and strengthened David. He needed him. And you need each other. This is why we do circles where we simply get together and read the Bible and talk about the weekend message and pray together. And I know you're like, yeah, but I don't need a circle. Again, I would just say to you, if this literally tells us this is what happens and you want nothing to do with the circle, then some of your despair and discouragement and defeatism is self-induced.

Because he's telling us this is the antidote. Listen, I heard a story of a 20-something guy in our church. That the moment he realized what was about to happen with the COVID, he realized he had some mental health challenges. And he said, I know I can't go through this season by myself. So he got in a circle. And in this pandemic loneliness, isolation season, he said that he has been more healthy in this season even though he's been isolated with his mental health challenges because of the circle of men in his life. That is strengthening each other in the Lord, okay?

Fourth thing is simply this. Gather with the church. "Let us not give up meeting together but encourage each other." Like I'm just telling you, I don't know how you do life without this. Maybe you can, I can't. Worship attracts hope. The reason we say this is a harbor of hope is because when you have no hope, you come into here and we get in the presence of God together.

And hope starts to wash off all of the darkness of your heart. So don't not gather because of convenience or comfort.

And then the last thing is just simply this. Serve someone else. Freely you have received, freely give. Listen, God has poured so much hope into your life. The problem is when it's not flowing out, it's like a kink in the hose. When we give to someone else, when we serve with no strings attached, what you're literally doing is you're taking hope out of the spiritual and you're making it physical. You're taking hope out of the invisible and you're making it visible. And so when you give hope to somebody else, all of a sudden now your eyes see that hope and it starts to fill your heart back with hope because you're actually seeing it as a reality in your life. Serve someone else. And so if you look at this list, I get it, this is not epic.

There's nothing about -- some of you are sitting here, you're like, oh man, I was really excited to figure out how to have hope. That's really disappointing. I know. It's not epic. It's systematic. It's discipline. It's commitment. It's choice. If you've been reading 1 Samuel with us, this is David's life. See, we want the moment. We want the, my men are about to throw stones at me, so give me the epic moment. What's the magic thing to do? It's got nothing to do with that moment, it's got everything to do with what David had been doing the 10 years before that. And I get it, you're like, but I haven't been doing these. I know. Then start today. Listen to me, if hope is a fire, then this is the kindling in our heart. If hope is a fire we're supposed to tend in here, then this is the kindling that keeps it going so you got to just keep throwing it under. You're like, but I read 1 Samuel 16 one day it didn't do anything.

Great. Read 1 Samuel 17 the next day. And you say, but I prayed and God didn't answer it that day. Great. Ask Him about it again tomorrow. You say, but I went to a circle and it stunk. I know, there's some really bad circles out there. Try another one and do that one. You said, but I came to church and it wasn't my favorite songs. Okay, well, come next weekend as well. I tried to serve, but I didn't know where. Okay, groceries are coming up. There you go. Come on, throw kindling in the fire over and over and over again because you have to take the responsibility for you. I think one of the tricks Satan is trying to trick us in this season is that we are in reaction, that we are in the passive seat, that we are in the passenger's seat, that we are just trying to survive all these things that are coming at us. No, this is not the end. This is not as good as it gets.

Grab on to a promise of God, hold it in your heart and every day when that darkness comes against you, you stand strong and say no, in Jesus' name I got hope. I'm cultivating a heart of hope in a world full of despair.

Come on, last verse. 1 Samuel 30:6, "But David strengthened himself in the Lord his God." But you strengthened yourself in the Lord your God. But in sickness and the pain, in the brokenness, in the despair, in the hardship, in the agony, economy, and the relationships, and all the trials, all the struggles, and all the difficulties of this season, I strengthened myself in the Lord my God. This is not the time to quit. This is not the time to sit down and complain. This is not the time to blame everybody else. This is not the time to be offended in God.

This is the time for you to look to the Lord for hope in a world full of despair, in Jesus' name. Come on. Kings cultivate a heart of hope, especially when it feels hopeless. So close your eyes with me. Come on, maybe even let's just take one minute and even do this right now. Can you look to Jesus for hope in the midst of all of your discouragement and despair.

Part of strengthening ourselves in the Lord is just looking to His goodness, His grace, His love, His mercy, His faithfulness, His promises. And even right now as we lift up your head towards the God of hope, I see picture over your life of the streams of living water washing off the black dust that's on your heart. I see the hope of Jesus cleansing that despair. I see the grace of Jesus washing off that shame. I see the love of God washing off that fear. I see the faithfulness of God removing all of that doubt.

I see the truth of God washing the lies away in this vibrant, Technicolor, beautiful, hope-filled, life-giving heart arising and shining through. See, hope is simply a byproduct of love. Strengthening ourselves in the Lord is just the choice we make to look to Jesus and his love in the midst of all that's happening around us. So I speak over you today hope in Jesus' name. I speak over you today life in Jesus' name. I speak over you today healing in Jesus' name. And I speak over you today strength in Jesus' name. May today be a day that you choose to say, I'm going to take authority back over my life. I'm going to take ownership back over my life. And I'm going to do some things that don't require talent, skill or ability, that just require commitment and discipline. So Jesus, may we be a people who strengthen ourselves in you, who cultivate a heart of hope in a world full of despair. Thank you God for giving us the heart of a king. And may we learn to steward well. In your name we pray, amen.