

Week Beginning: 10<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Worship Series: #4 in series

**MOVE**  
*together*

living sharing growing

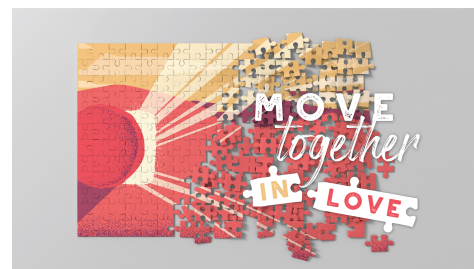
## Theme Verse

To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you,  
leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

1 Peter 2:21

## Remember This Week

You are called to suffer. Expect it. It is part of the rhythm of a Christ-centred life. Yet in suffering, God's grace is at work taking us beyond the boundaries of our own wisdom and strength and transforming us to live credibly so we can move together in love in the world, for Christ's sake.



**"Hear the word of the Lord, you nations;  
proclaim it in distant coastlands:**

**'He who scattered Israel will gather them and will watch over his flock like a shepherd.'"**

Jeremiah 31:10

Loving heavenly Father, as we gather together to hear your word, a word of steadfast and enduring love, grant us ears to hear your call to love one another, in Jesus name. Amen.

1. *Where have you seen God's power at work in your life this last week?*
2. *Share how you went with your living purposefully from last time?*
3. *As a group, how many song titles with the word 'love' in them can you think of? What do these songs have to say about love.*
4. *What makes you feel loved? What would be the best way someone could show you that they love you?*
5. *Apart from Jesus dying on the cross, what is the greatest act of love someone has done for you?*

It's said that credibility is the currency of trust. If that is true, then many leaders, governments and organisations are insolvent! Whether it's the World Health Organisation coming under fire for criticising travel bans or disseminating false information that the virus cannot be transmitted between humans or the conjecture surrounding the virus' origins. Whether it's State or Federal leaders saying one thing only to have a minister in their cabinet say another a few hours later, or experts encouraging school return in one state while in another saying, "keep them home". With the mixed messaging being given, is it any wonder that people are confused and don't know who or what to trust? Is it any wonder that people are asking what is credible and what is not? This credibility deficit has been years in the making. Our political leaders have squandered trust over decades, banks and big business are still under a cloud for their excesses, abuses, and identified illegal behaviour, and the practices of the Church have come under close scrutiny. It's an issue of credibility and it's the same issue Peter addresses today. As people being again into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus, how credible is our witness? How would people know that we are telling the truth? Peter tells us that Christians are most believable, most credible when our lives look like Jesus, when we move together in love and enter into and share the pain and suffering of those around us. It's a living that is credible and missional and we'll explore that today.

Read 1 Peter 2:19-25

6. *What key words/thoughts/ideas/questions arise for you as you hear this text?*
7. *What do you hear this scripture saying to you right now?*





8. *This verse talks a lot about suffering. How do you connect the idea of love with the concept of suffering?*
9. *In verse 21, Peter says that Christ's suffering for us was also to be an example for us to follow. How do you feel about being called to suffer for others?*
10. *How have you seen people react differently to the struggle and suffering they are experiencing at the moment because of Coronavirus?*
11. *How does God work grace in our hearts through moments of suffering?*

C.S. Lewis once said, "Do not waste time bothering whether you 'love' your neighbor; act as if you did." We can all be guilty at times of falling into the trap of thinking that we can't love someone unless we have some kind of positive feeling towards them first. We can buy into the lie that love always makes us feel good, that it should be easy. Peter reminds us that the love Jesus showed us was demonstrated through his own pain and suffering for our sake. Jesus' love was a choice. He had the power and ability to avoid the cross but he chose death so that we could avoid death and be reconciled with God.

12. *In what ways is our own suffering and willingness to enter into the suffering of others a missional act?*

Read Romans 5:6-8

In this passage, Paul echoes the sentiment of Peter. God's love for us is demonstrated, not only by the fact that Christ died for us, but that he did this while we were still sinners, still enemies of God. Now if we are commanded to love as he loved us (John 13:34-35) this means moving in love and joining with others in their suffering.

13. *How can we as a Church move together in love in our community at this time?*
14. *Who are we being called to suffer with and what does it mean to live credible/believable lives among them?*

God's love is not dependent on our actions. God loves us despite all of our failings. This is the kind of love he calls us to demonstrate to others; a love that acts for the benefit of the other, that lives for others whether we think they deserve it or not.



The phrase 'Where love comes to life' has been the tagline of the Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand for a number of years now. It is certainly true that love comes to life in us only through the life and love of Jesus Christ. We experience those things most concretely as we encounter God through his word and the sacraments as we come together to the Lord in worship. However, if our love only stays inside the church and is only encountered inside our buildings, if we are not living credible lives once we leave the Church, we send confusing messages to the world. When we live in love, by grace, trusting in Christ alone, our lives become believable and others begin to take seriously what we say. When we move in love into the suffering of those around us to share the pain of life with them, love comes to life in a powerful way.

15. *What is one change with God's help that you will make in your life in these next weeks to live a more credible/believable life?*
16. *As the Church scattered in and through multiple communities at this time, how can you move in love into the suffering of another. What do you hear God's Word calling you to do? Be specific.*



- \* Praise God for the love being shown across the world as we isolate ourselves to protect those vulnerable to the Coronavirus. Give thanks that this seems to be making a difference.
- \* Ask God to protect those who show their love for others by putting their own health and safety on the line, our healthcare workers, emergency service workers and defence force personnel.
- \* Pray for teachers and students who are moving to increased face to face contact at this time that they will be safe.
- \* Pray that the church around the world would be a place where love not only comes to life, but where it grows and is shared with others regardless of the cost.
- \* Pray for each other that your live may live faithful, credible lives wherever you go as a witness to God's love in the world.

You might like to address one person in your group and make the sign of the cross in the air as you say...  
*Name, move in Christ's love to live and share his love in the world. Amen.*

