

Week Beginning: 26th April 2020

Worship Series: #2 in series

MOVE
together



lifegroups
live life abundantly

living sharing growing

Theme Verse

Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart.

1 Peter 1:22

Remember This Week

Convictions on the inside will always show up on the outside. People convicted by the love of Jesus are a hope filled people. Hope filled people are a loving people because they know they cannot lose. What God has given, his Word and promises are eternal and cannot be taken away



Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb

Revelation 22:1

Lord and giver of life, as you broke through the darkness of sin and death in order to move us from death to life, we ask that you would fill us again with your Spirit of life as we gather around your word; your word which has the power to bring life and light to all those who hear it. 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. *What things in life are you certain of (apart from death and taxes)?*
4. *What things that you thought were constant and reliable, have proven to be otherwise recently?*
5. *How do you understand the concept of conviction? What different ways can that word be used and understood?*

It's a basic reality that anyone in the emergency response, law enforcement or the defense forces will tell you - in crisis or threat situations almost no one "rises to the occasion," but almost everyone "reverts to their training." That's why schools practice fire drills & lock-down drills That's why firefighters train under difficult circumstances so that when the real crisis comes, they will "revert to their training", fires will be extinguished and lives protected. What is most ingrained in our lives, our deep convictions are what is displayed in times of crisis, when the heat's on, when push comes to shove, and when backs are against the wall. That's why Peter writes to the church in crisis and under threat. He wants to deepen their conviction, fortify and strengthen their faith, reinforce the truths in which they have been trained, so that in difficult times they can continue to function dynamically – moving together with convictions that hold firm whatever is experienced.

Read 1 Peter 1:17-25

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 letter was addressed to Christian 'exiles' scattered accross Asia Minor. What do you think these words might have said to them, scattered and isolated from other Christians?*

Josh McDowell, a Christian leader and author from America gives us this definition of conviction, **"Having convictions can be defined as being so thoroughly convinced that Christ and His Word are both objectively true and relationally meaningful that you act on your beliefs regardless of the consequences."** When we talk about conviction we are usually drawn to a related word,





'convinced'. To have conviction is to be confidently convinced of the truth or reliability of something. This kind of assurance helps us to stand up in the face of opposition to our convictions.

9. *What do you suppose the consequences of proclaiming the resurrection might have been for those early 'exiled' Christians that Peter wrote to?*
10. *What would be some of the possible consequences of us defending our faith or openly sharing it with others today?*
11. *Where does Peter direct his readers to look for conviction and certainty in their uncertain situation?*

Peter talks a lot about perishable or temporary things compared to imperishable or eternal things. He encourages us to remember that our new life in Christ is eternal. That we have been saved by the 'living and enduring Word of God'. Jesus Christ, the Word of God made flesh, is living and he endures forever. For Peter, this seems to be where he draws much of his confidence and conviction.

12. *What other parts of scripture help you to find courage, confidence or conviction about your salvation through Jesus?*

God's Word provides more than one type of conviction though. While it puts up the convincing and convicting case of Jesus as God's salvation for humanity, God's Word also convicts us of our own sin. Both of these convictions are important and in the church we usually talk about them using the terms 'Law' and 'Gospel'. Without being convicted of our sin by God's righteous law, we would not recognise our need for a saviour like Jesus. Without the Gospel, the good news of Jesus life, death, and resurrection, we would all be left hopeless in our sin.

13. *A common response to Christianity or the Bible is this, 'the Church just seems to want to tell me I'm a bad person and make me follow rules. I don't need that.' Why do you think some people have that kind of reaction?*
14. *How is your confidence or commitment to the good news of Jesus resurrection affected or influenced by your conviction of your own sinfulness?*

You will often hear Christians talking about how the Holy Spirit 'convicts' us of our sin. While this may be true it is important to make the distinction between conviction (making something known to be true) and condemnation. As Paul writes in Romans 8:1, there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Read Romans 8:38-39

The conviction of Paul in these two verses is the kind of conviction that Peter is talking about. This absolute assurance that nothing can separate us from God's love, through Jesus our risen Lord, empowers and enables us to act on our beliefs regardless of the consequences.

15. *Sometimes in our spiritual journey we walk with the strength of our conviction and at other times we walk with timid steps? How might you find ways to walk with conviction more regularly?*
16. *In a sporting team, success only comes when the whole team is focussed on the same objective. Each individual may have a different role to play on the team but they are all working toward the same goal. What is the goal of the church? What part are you being asked to play right now?*
17. *A popular saying states, "If you don't stand for something, you will fall for anything". Think of one area of your life where you might have compromised your faith in Jesus. Spend some time in prayer this week asking Jesus to help you take back that lost ground.*

- * Praise God for his life giving Spirit, which both convicts us of sin, but also gives us faith in Jesus, the answer to our sin.
- * Ask God to help you spend more of your time in his living and enduring word.
- * Pray for those who are at risk of letting go of their faith in Jesus due to the difficult circumstances of their life. Ask God to provide them with people of conviction to uphold and support them, to pray with them and encourage them and to bring them back to the one eternal truth of life in Jesus Christ.
- * Continue to pray for those who have difficult decisions to make regarding Coronavirus and for those who are working on the front lines to contain the pandemic.

You might like to address one person in your group and make the sign of the cross in the air as you say...
Name, God's word is unfailing in your life. Amen.

