

“Keep Moving!”

1 Peter 1:1-2:25

For the past seven weeks, we have explored various ways God is our help during this unprecedented season as we face COVID-19. I hope you were encouraged in your journey to know God is our refuge, to stay connected and fight anxiety, to experience God’s comfort and hear his voice, as well as thinking about living by God’s grace in our perspective and our relationships. There were so many great truths we considered together!

Introduction: Pg. ____

Today, I’m excited to jump back into our “Keep Moving!” Series through the book of 1 Peter. We started this series at the beginning of the year when we met at Medford High (Do you remember those days? :)), and since we took a seven-week break, I want to bring you up to speed by covering highlights from the first two chapters of 1 Peter.

As I thought about relaunching this series, my mind went to one of Medford’s finest, Dave McGillivray!

Dave is not only the Race Director of the Boston Marathon, but his list of professional and philanthropic accomplishments are about 26.2 miles long.

Run Across America - 1978

Pic: of Dave McGillivray

Medford’s Own! Dave McGillivray

Perhaps most famously, in 1978, Dave ran from Medford, OR to Meffa, MA. That’s right 3,452 miles in 80 days (almost 2 marathons each day!!!). Absolutely insane & absolutely inspiring!

Thankfully, Dave kept a fascinating diary by sending a postcard back home to friends each day of his journey. It tells his story of running through the 100 degree desert heat in Nevada and over the Rockies in Colorado. It records the intense hip pain during the first week of his trip and how had to go to the ER on Day 16 because of pain in his knee. He logged 50 miles on Day 38, crossed the Mississippi on Day 51, ran 57 miles on Day 61, and finally arrived back in Boston to standing ovation before 32,000 at Fenway Park August on Day 80!

How did he do it? I’m not sure. He chalks it up to a little 23 year old naïveté and big dreams. I think you and I would add a massive load of discipline and a herculean dose of endurance. 42 miles a day for 80 consecutive days! Each and every day, Dave McGillivray simply kept moving!

That’s the message of 1 Peter. The Apostle Peter, one of Jesus closest followers, wrote this letter to a group of people who experienced various forms of suffering because they lived in a culture at odds with their commitment to Christ.

That’s why Peter wrote his letter to encourage them (as he says explicitly at the end in 5:12). That’s why he says to them, and says to us today:

The Point: No matter the challenge, keep moving in Christ!

I want to give you two simple encouragements that will help carry you through the complexities of life.

1. Keep Moving. Look what Christ has done! (1:1-12)

Peter strategically and immediately turns their attention, not to the difficulty of their situation, but to the amazing realities that are true for them because of the work of Jesus Christ. (Somebody needs to hear that today!)

If we want to keep moving, we have to keep looking and remembering who God is and how much God has done for us!

Peter says, "Look! You've been raised to a whole new life!"

1 Peter 1:3 displayed

- Peter is saying, once you did not have spiritual life. You were spiritually dead. Now, you are spiritually alive!
- We now have a LIVING hope, a hope that delivers present confidence because God has given us his spiritual life! We have power to tackle anything in front of us! Our batteries are charged because the very life of Christ flows in our veins, right now!
- But the reality of resurrection also gives us the greatest hope for the future.
 - In a time where death is on everyone's mind, we don't fear death because we know we have victory over it through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- Following Jesus means it's Easter every day! Let me ask you, are you feeding off the power of Christ that is presently alive and working in you. We should pray for one another like Paul in Ephesians 1, that we would know the power of his might that is working in us, the same power that raised Jesus from the dead.

Peter says, "Look! The life of Christ is YOURS! (Colossians 3:3; Galatians 2:20)." But that's not all... he also wants us to see that God is transforming us through our trials.

1 Peter 1:6-7 displayed

I love how Pastor Jon put it. Suffering both authenticates our faith and purifies it!

- Authenticates.
 - Trials stamps our faith as real. There is no forgery or counterfeit work going on.
 - How do trials do that? When we undergo difficulty, when we experience opposition, when crisis comes our way, it's like gold under fire. Real gold gets brighter under the flame, not darker.
 - In the same way, the crucible of life exposes what is truly in our hearts. It tests the genuineness of our faith.
 - Will we depend on ourselves or depend on God?
 - Will we remember God's faithfulness in the past or be consumed by worry in the present?
 - Will we give up? Or will we keep moving?
 - Trials authenticate our faith, and they also...
- Purifies.
 - Trials purify our faith. They have a way of removing the impurities. We learn to go to God allow him to take away the distractions and sin that so easily entangles us.
 - This pandemic is a trial and a test we are facing together. Don't miss this opportunity for God to speak to you and refine your faith in ways that you will make you stronger because you went through it!
 - I love what Jesus says in John 15:2 – "Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit."
 - Let this be a John 15:2 season for you... Jesus refines us that we would bear more fruit in our lives!

Look at what Christ has done... he's given you life, he's making you better (like him!) and he has brought you into a salvation full of joy and wonder!

Read 1:8-12 – WOW!

Don't miss this: Peter's introduction is a word of Praise. We can praise God in our pain, and when we do it shifts our focus and equips us to do the next thing God is calling us to do!

T: That's why Peter begins here. Our ability to keep moving forward is fueled by seeing what Jesus has done for us!

2. Keep Moving. Live your new identity! (1:13-2:25)

When we think about our identity, we are talking about the essence of who we are.

There are many false narratives floating around about identity in our culture. You are what you feel. You are the sum of my experiences. You are what others say about me.

No, you're not! Those are false identities.

You are who God says you are!

"You are my child."

We've been born again into God's family. That makes us his children. Children at a fundamental and essential level, reflect their parents. This is God's plan for us...

1 Peter 1:15-16 displayed

A life aligned with the heart of God. Think, Want, Love, Feel, Act... Actions only (moralists... reductionism)

This is an incredibly high calling!! Higher than you can imagine. Why? We're so used to comparing ourselves against the people around us. God is saying: "They are not the standard. I am!" And God is infinitely holy. He has no flaw, impurity, or imperfection, and he's calling us to reflect him.

At the heart of our vision this year to see God's work of multiplication among us, is the first command to human beings in Genesis 1. "Be fruitful and multiply." That doesn't primarily mean have a bunch of babies (although that is part of it - :)! It means to fill the world with people who live out their primary calling and purpose, which is to glorify God, reflect who he is!

If you're wondering why you're here, there it is! You were made to know and be known by God, love God and be loved by God, and reflect him in everything.

That's why this call to live a life aligned with the heart of God is so important. [[Holiness is about 1,000 no's and 10,000 yes's!!]]

Word & Prayer, Word & Prayer. 8am prayer calls with Pastor Steve and a variety of leaders. Community Groups (who's thankful for your CG?!) Raise your hand! Give me a comment!

"You are my child, and you belong to my family, my house." We see this in...

1 Peter 2:4-5 displayed

- Look at this rhythm... We come. He builds. Coming to him means believing in him, trusting in him with our entire lives, not as a one-time act, but as day by day journey of faith. As we surrender our lives, he works through us and builds us up together!
- The term “house” in the Bible often referred to the temple, which was the place God chose to make his presence known in a special way as people gathered there to worship.
- We are God’s new temple, God’s new house going up one stone at a time. Consider this in two senses... 1) For starters, as more and more people say, “I want to accept Christ (maybe that’s you today - the invitation is in your hands), then more and more stones are added to God’s house. 2) Number two, because we take on the identity of Christ, we are building that reflects his beauty.

We said at the beginning of the season... a virus cannot stop us from being the church. A church is not a place you go, it’s a people you run with, the TRIBE of Jesus!

I can’t begin to tell you how proud our pastors are of our house, our church family!

You have exemplified the words of 1 Peter 1:22-23. “Having purified your souls by obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart.” Don’t miss those two words that capture how we are to love one another.

- A “sincere brotherly love” means there’s no show. There’s no hypocrisy.
- The word “earnestly” refers to a love that is fervent, a love that goes all out. It reaches to the furthest extent.

This is what we’ve seen over these past 7 weeks!

- You have stayed connected!
 - CG #s... CG involvement
- You have served faithfully.
 - Medford Community Market
 - Phone calls to people in the community and in RHC.
 - Delivering groceries. Delivering meals.
- You have given generously.
 - In a time of greater financial uncertainty for so many, we have given above and beyond our regular financial gifts in big ways!
 - We exceeded our Multiply March goal of \$3750, bringing in \$4200!
 - And after sharing about our Benevolence Fund just two weeks ago, we’ve already seen \$12,600 come in! CLAP...
 - That’s amazing! And we’re not done yet.

“Love one another earnestly!”

Conclusion:

Here’s what excites me the most: as we look to what Christ has done and live our identity as the family of God, verses 9 & 12 of chapter 2 WILL COME TO LIFE come to life!

1 Peter 2:9, 12 displayed

“We must recognize that the [power of our words] isn’t always that our message is more believable than another, but that it’s more desirable. In evangelism, we don’t simply make a logical case, but a doxological one. We aren’t just talking to brains. We’re speaking to hearts that have desires and eyes that look for beauty. We’re not merely trying to convince people that our gospel is true, but that our God is good.”

Invitation... You may be watching today and you're hearing all this about about hope and joy and love and real transformation, and you may be saying: I want in on this. If that's you, I'm saying, Don't wait. Make the best move of your life to join the family and love mission of Jesus Christ. Our team is ready to serve you right now...