

Week Beginning: 5<sup>th</sup> May 2019

Worship Series: #3 in series



**lifegroups**  
live life abundantly

living sharing growing

### Theme Verse

"Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

Revelation 3:22

### Remember This Week

Jesus loves you too much to pamper you. If it's comfort, strength and encouragement you need to hang in and hold on, he loves you enough to give that to you. But if you need to be challenged in areas where you are compromising your relationship with him or his witness to the world, he loves you enough to discipline you and warn you. For having paid the ultimate price to get you back and give you life, he cannot bear to lose you again.



**Great is the Lord, and most worthy of praise,  
in the city of our God, his holy mountain.  
Beautiful in its loftiness, the joy of the whole earth,  
like the heights of Zaphon is Mount Zion, the city of the Great King.  
God is in her citadels; he has shown himself to be her fortress.  
As we have heard, so we have seen  
in the city of the Lord Almighty in the city of our God:  
God makes her secure forever**

**Psalm 48:1-3, 8**

Risen Lord Jesus Christ, your love for people and your Church is wider, longer, higher and deeper than we can ever understand; a love so great that you willingly paid the cost with your own life to make us yours forever. Open our ears to hear what your Spirit says to us as your Church today and give us honest hearts to acknowledge where we are at, that we may daily live in your resurrection victory and fulfill your good and gracious purposes in our lives. We ask this in your precious name, for you alone are worthy of our love, our worship and our praise. Amen



1. *Share your highs and lows since you last met with one another.*
2. *Share how you went with your living purposefully from last time?*
3. *When you look into the mirror, what do you consider to be your best feature and why?*
4. *What do you least like about what you see in the mirror?*
5. *Who was your first love?*

Have you ever stood in front of a mirror and taken a long hard look at yourself? Forget about your hair, the wrinkle lines, zits or makeup and look at yourself. Who is that? Do you have the courage to speak honestly about who/what you see or do you look away? Today Jesus walks alongside his Church - the Church he loves, the Church his blood has bought, the Church he holds securely in his hands, and asks us to answer honestly, "What do you see reflected back. What sort of Church are we? A good honest look at ourselves can be confronting, challenging, even convicting but Jesus knows what is at stake. So he calls us out, warns us of danger, but above all reminds us of the incredible promised blessings given to those who live in honesty and claim daily his resurrection victory.

Read Revelation: 1:10-20



6. *What encouragement do these verses give to the Church before they receive Jesus' letter as to the State of their Church?*
7. *How would you describe your Church today? Where do you think it falls short of what you read about in the early Church such as in Acts?*



Read Revelation: 2 & 3

As you finish each church, just stop and reflect as a group:

- for what is this Church commended?
  - for what is this Church warned
  - to what degree do you think that your Church needs to hear these words?
8. *What is something in this text that you need to find out more about in order to understand what the message is to the Church?*
  9. *If this was the only literature you had to get an impression of what the Church is like, what would you conclude about the Church?*
  10. *What things in church life can compete with Jesus for our first love?*
  11. *Where does the Church face the pressure to compromise today?*
  12. *Which two churches are not rebuked and what is similar about each of these Churches? What can we learn from that?*

The letters are very confronting and convicting for us as a Church today, for in every Church, which is made up on individuals, we each face pressure and temptation and even persecution. We need to constantly ask the Spirit to reveal to us what he sees. Have we become a cold or forgetful church? Have our hearts become infected by worldly priorities? Have we given way to a mechanical orthodoxy, more comfortable with the holy rather than being in awe of it? Have we lost our evangelistic zeal and see the world as our enemy instead of our mission field? Do we genuinely love our brothers and sisters or have we become cold and insensitive letting gossip, pride, jealousy, bitterness, attitudes of spiritual one-up-manship, and a host of other ungodly things, to dwell within us? Have we lost our first love? Are we a hurt Church, under attack from the growing pressure that is being placed on us? Do we feel like we are taking a battering. Do you need encouragement to keep going, to hang in there? Are we a Church that has wedded itself to the world, willing to compromise to be seen to be relevant? Are we a wayward Church that lacks consistency, afraid or unwilling to speak up and proclaim truth? Do we struggle with accountability in our own lives, do we court sin in secret, on the internet? Are we a church that rests on our reputation, doing all the right things, that looks alive but is actually dead? Are we a loyal Church, who know the pain of exclusion, and are willing to open the door to invite others to journey with us. Or are we a blind Church like Laodoea, neither hot nor cold - a Church that has become self-reliant rather than a Church that runs only on grace, receiving healing from being filled up with the grace received in the Lord's Supper or the renewal of life in the sustaining waters of baptism?

Each of these Churches needed Christ and his word. The same is true today. But don't forget the promise that Jesus gives to each Church when they repent and overcome in his strength. That's our hope for today and what enables us to live the resurrection victory daily in our lives. The Spirit speaks. What is the Spirit saying to us...to you?



Most newer cars have lights that flash when a car is in your blind spot. It's a safety feature because we all have them. Christ knows our weak points. He knows we are all prone to spiritual deception; to overestimate our spiritual condition, to think that we are fine when we may be far from it. So he challenges us to hear what he has to say to us as a church and as his disciples. To let him show us our blind spots, where we let our hearts deceive us.

13. *Where is your Church's blind spot at this current time? Where is your own blind spot?*
14. *At this point of time in your life, what would Jesus commend or rebuke about your faith?*
15. *What is the one area of your life that you will work on as a result of this passage?*



- \* Praise God that he is making all things new in the Church today. Thank Jesus that he holds the Church in his hands even when we fail to live out his purposes for us. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you hear what he is saying to your Church that you may reflect his purposes in the world today.
- \* Pray for the Church that it may never become complacent, wayward, given to compromise or lose its missionary zeal.
- \* Pray that you may claim your part in a body of believers that is unstoppable and exuberant, for it's not just possible—it's promised.
- \* Pray for a willingness to accept the discipline of a God who loves us and cares for us.

Turn to the person next to you and make the sign of the cross on the palm of their hand or forehead as you say:

*Name, Christ has conquered all things for you. Amen.*

