

Shift from the Drift

The goal of this message is for you to be more aligned with what God has for your life and actively engaging in all that God has for you.

Heb 2:1 - We must pay the most careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away.

Do you remember way back in the day when you were allowed to go to the beach, before Zoom, Amazon, Disney Plus, and Netflix took over our lives? And when you went to the beach, you could enjoy the sun, the water, relax, go for a swim. And because we're remembering it fondly, one thing that we've forgotten about when it comes to swimming in the ocean is that the ocean has tides.

Every time you go swimming at the beach, it always feels like someone moved your stuff. You put all your stuff down, you set up your ugly green tent that you never use, and you walk in a straight line to the water.

And when you look back at the shore, you can't find your stuff. It's moved, you look around and your tent is gone, your things are gone, your friends and family are gone. Why did they leave you? Why did they move without telling you? Why didn't they wait for you?

But then, as you're looking around, you spot your friends, and they're much further away than you expected, it's far off to the right instead of in front of you where you left it. And you start wondering why they moved everything, but then what you realise is that they didn't move, you moved. You drifted because of the tide. You didn't realise it, you didn't do it on purpose, but you are no longer where you started.

It didn't take any effort to drift away, the tide took you. The uncontrollable forces around you displaced you. Drifting doesn't take any effort, staying faithful takes effort. Focus takes effort. Commitment takes effort, but drifting is automatic.

Right now, during this pandemic, the automatic thing to do is to drift away. The way we live our lives right now is completely different than what we're used to, our relationships are different, our finances are different, our lifestyles are different, and these uncontrollable forces, if we let them push and pull at our lives, will displace us. We will not be where we used to be, we won't be where we started.

It's not that we intend to drift away from the principles of God, from God's plan for our lives, from God's calling on our lives, but because of these circumstances, we're just not where we started.

We can feel like we're in the ocean looking back at the shore, and we ask God, "Where are You? Why did You leave me here? Why did You move? Why did You abandon me?"

But the truth is, God hasn't moved, God's purpose for your life hasn't changed, God's love for you is steadfast, God is STILL calling you, God is still faithful. But maybe we've drifted. These things have caused us to move away from where we were.

Heb 2:1 - We must pay the most careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away.

The key to not drifting away is to pay careful attention to what we've heard. What was the last thing God said to you that you haven't done yet? Sometimes we drift away because we didn't pay attention to what God said.

That thing God said, it would've kept us safe, it would've kept us grounded, supported, it would have made sure that we were right where we were supposed to be. But maybe it didn't sound important, it felt like too small of a thing, or maybe it was too big of a thing and we didn't want to take that step of faith, or it would've been uncomfortable for us, so we didn't pay attention to it.

The good news is that it's not too late to hear God again. What's God saying, what has God said, and what can we do to actually pay attention to it, to put it into practice.

James 4:8 - Come near to God and he will come near to you.

One of the greatest aspects of God is how He responds to us. We see this in this scripture, with the prodigal son in Luke 15, how Jesus talks about Jerusalem in Matt 23, and it's this sense that God really longs for us. Like God has this immediate response when we go to Him. As soon as we make a move towards Him, God rushes over to meet us.

God rushes over as soon as He sees you coming. His response to meet you where you're at. Because remember, God didn't move, we moved. We drifted away, not God.

God never moves away from you, God draws near to you. God doesn't create a gap, He closes the gap. We do the drifting away, but as soon as we turn around, God starts chasing after us, He comes near to us.

1 John 1:9 - ⁹If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

In other words, if we admit to God that we made a mistake, we messed up, we're not where we're meant to be, God is faithful, He will forgive us, He will purify us. We just take that first step of admitting we're wrong, and God is faithful to do the rest.

Heb 10:22

²² let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

In other words, we draw near to God knowing that He cleanses us, forgives us, puts us back in the right place. When we turn towards God, God finds us and He catches up to us, He meets us where we're at. And then our **DISPLACEMENT**, turns into God's **PLACEMENT**. **We can shift from the drift.** God can begin a new thing with where we're at, we just need to allow God into the picture.

See turning back to God doesn't necessarily change all of your circumstances, but what happens when we do repent, is that now God is in the situation. God is going to use your displacement as

your new placement. He's now able to work in you and through you to help restore relationships, to manage your finances, to establish your identity, from where you're at now. From here on, things will be different, not like they used to be and not what they are currently, but now you're allowing God to do something great in your life.

Heb 10:23 - ²³ Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.

Those uncontrollable forces haven't changed, we need to hold unswervingly to the hope, it's not going to be easy, continue to HOLD, have a tight grip on the hope that we have in God. God is faithful, continue to trust God, that even though it's difficult to not get frustrated at your kids, to be generous to others, to encourage others, to put your identity in Christ alone, you're still going to do it, you're going to hold onto Jesus, trusting in His faithfulness.

Heb 10:24 - ²⁴ And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds

A spur is a spiked accessory on a shoe that you use to 'encourage' the horse to go faster. It's a little bit painful, but it's useful.

So the bible tells us to forcefully push one another toward love and good deeds. It's not just 'love when you feel like it', 'do the right thing and be helpful when it's convenient', but it's a forceful and a little painful at times. It means calling someone out if they're not being loving. It's being purposefully and extravagantly encouraging to others, even when it's inconvenient. It's being generous to one another, even if it costs you something.

If loving others is not central to our lives, we will drift away from God.

1 John 4:7,8 - ⁷ Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸ Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love."

If we want to continue in all that God has for us, loving others has to be central.

Heb 10:25 - ²⁵ not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

The final thing we can do to avoid drifting away is to not give up meeting together but encouraging one another.

What does meeting together look like now? We can't meet at church physically, we can't even have people over at our homes. We can still meet together, but we do it differently. And it's not the same, it feels different, it looks different, but different is better than non-existent. Different conversations are better than non-existent conversations. Different catch ups are better than non-existent catch ups. Different church attendance is better than non-existent church attendance. Different encouragement is better than non-existent encouragement.

The purpose of meeting together is to encourage one another, and we can't do it the same way, but we can still do it. We can't encourage like we used to, but we can still encourage.

Maybe it's catchups over zoom, byo coffee and hang out with a couple of people, talk about life, share each others burdens, support and encourage each other.

Maybe it's discipleship over the phone, doing daily devotionals in a group chat, hosting zoom bible studies, just texting someone an encouragement or a scripture regularly.

Let's continue to meet, different is better than non-existent.