

TOGETHER IN CHRIST – SENDS US

There is something about corporate worship – where we see God or get a glimpse of God – that moves us to see the things God longs for. How many of you have a family member, co-worker, neighbor, friend – **that you long to see** – come to know Christ? You long to see them turn to Jesus in repentance and find life. *Raise your hands – look around many of us.* How many of us who are Christ followers – **long to see Christ move in our lives?** How many of you want your hunger for God's word and prayer to increase and grow? *Raise your hands...* Question – Do you believe this can happen?

Len Ravenhill, 20th century pastor & author *Why Revival Tarries*, “The hammer of logic and the fire of human zeal will fail to open the stony heart. Only unction – the power of Spirit filled and Spirit enabled prayer will succeed. If we want to be a part of God's moving, restoring work in this world – this must come first.

There are many of us in this room – and some not here today – that long to see God move in us and thru us! I want this too. *And, I believe God wants this. This is what He always wants to be about in and thru His church - His people.* I have 9 more weeks here at the Summit – and I have purposed in my own heart that this time is not spent taking trips down memory lane. It is good to reflect and be thankful – we will do that at appropriate times – but our call as God's people is to daily live in the gospel in such a way that it moves us to live for the gospel. I – like you want to see and be a part of God's move now. Honestly, I don't want you to spend the next 9 weeks coming to hear about the past or coming to listen to me for old times sake. We are the living breathing church of God – and we will celebrate and rejoice in the next 9 weeks – but I - like you long to see and be a part of God's move now.

And truth is – that we live out this call of God – has very little to do with who is preaching. My neighbor – barely knows what I do and she doesn't care who preaches here. She wants to know is Jesus real and she is evaluating most of that by his followers - like you and me - by our words, actions, and love. Your neighbors don't care either, and the 67% of St Charles that never walks into a building where worship of Jesus occurs, doesn't care either. They are not staying away because of bad preaching and they are not flocking to churches because of great preaching. Don't get me wrong – I believe Spirit empowered gospel preaching matters – but it is but it is but one small part of God moving in and amongst his people. Leonard Ravenhill was just saying what Jesus said in **JOHN 6:33 (ESV)** “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all.” God's move through His people is not dependent on one man – or woman. It is dependent on His Spirit and a people – a whole body of His people living daily in the power of his gospel.

To that end – we are going to spend this summer asking God to move – in us and through us. We are going to pray and pray and pray – and move toward others with the humility and love of Jesus. This is our mission – and because our values express this call – we want to take a break from our Luke series to walk through our Values. Not to just to educate on our values – but hopefully to let the Spirit empower God's word to move us to prayer and humble love with others.

This could be another summer, where we watch a lot of Cardinals, eat a lot of good food, and enjoy the summer sun. Nothing wrong with all that – and I hope that happens. But what if in the midst of that – we asked God to awaken souls & save souls. What if in these ongoing prayers and engaging others with his humble love became a way of life – not just something we did in the summer of 2018? This would be a summer we would never forget & more it would be **the BEGINNING** of something that would affect this church called the Summit & the community we live in for years to come.

Will you join us? Will you join me? Today – we are going to focus in on our value of LIFE TOGETHER. We will define this simply as “together in Christ”. Life together is those who are in Christ – living together – in the life and power of Christ. Or – “together in Christ.” Here is our big idea or truth for today: **Together IN Christ – sends us.**
Today – we will see that when we are “together IN Christ” – we will be **sent to his body, God, and others.**

Together IN Christ – sends us.

ACTS 4:23-31 (ESV) 23 When they were released, **Back story:** Peter and John had healed a 40 year old lame beggar who had been crippled from birth. God used this miracle to allow Peter to preach the gospel (*life, death, and rez of Jesus and how it makes us right and acceptable before God*). This angered the top Jewish leaders who had recently had Jesus put to death – so they arrested the two and threatened them to stop this preaching of Jesus or else. Peter response – we must listen to God who has told us to speak of what we have seen and heard. The leaders threatened them more but let them go - fearing the people. **they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. 24 And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said,**

What did they do immediately after this crisis moment? It is no small thing to be arrested by the High Priest and his guard. This could mean loss of community (kicked out of temple and life with all other Jews), which also means loss of any means to do any kind of business. This could mean physical punishment and even death – like it meant for Jesus. This is a scary, chaotic, crises moment. Arrested, threatened and fearing for their life – what did they do?

Bad youth ministry moments from a former youth minister (me). We did this thing we called “the hidden church” in the late80s. On a retreat, we would tell the kids we were going to do a whole retreat called the “hidden church”. We were in a country were

you could not openly be a Christian and the whole retreat – would be a exercise in what that would be like. Sometime during the retreat – military type men bust in and the whole thing gets chaotic and scary as they threaten and arrest leaders and take them away. I was only there once for this deal and it was going great till these few young guys freaked out and panicked. We had to call the whole deal. The intensity was to much. That was an exercise. This is Acts 4 is real. It is a scary, chaotic, crises moment. Arrested, threatened & fearing for their life – what did they do?

Watch what happens here. O Lord, may you do this in us – today!

23 .. they went to their friends (lit. their own) and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them.

1) “Together IN Christ” sends us - to our own.

- **What does it mean your own.** 1) *Not against you, for you. The wander in the building @ 7:30 am. Not my own.*
- **Who are your own?** *The people you go to who are for you. You may do a lot of life with or just be a part of family together in Christ. Not necessarily BFFs. Big family - not all are BSFs – but all are family and for you. Who is this?*
- **If “your own” are not those “together in Christ” – why not?**
If not ... they might be good at listening, helping, distracting, and just being present – but will they take you here ...
24 *And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, “Sovereign Lord, They didn’t offer a lot of advice, they didn’t distract. (We are great at that. “See the game last night.” They fell on their knees and prayed with them – taking them to the Lord.*

A second type of sending happens, when you and I live “together IN Christ”, we will send or take each other to the LORD.

2) “Together IN Christ” sends us to - our God in prayer.

Jason Zelmer – Ben his son in motorcycle accident. *Redemption Ranch – a young church full of young believers rallied together – served Heather & Jason – and then prayed. Yesterday at 10 – almost 50 joined to pray.*

Peter & John in all their fear and worry and chaos ran to their own who were living “together in Christ” – and the beauty of what happened next was life changing for this whole church who believed God was longing to move in them and thru them. If this is what we believe too – this is a great prayer to learn from because their prayer was informed by this calling.

• **God - help us believe you are over all things.**

24 *And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, “Sovereign Lord, Sovereign – lit – one who has absolute ownership and unrestrained power over another.*

Listen to how the gospel – God’s work in the life, death, and rz of Christ informed and led their prayer.

- * Over creation / 24 ... who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them,
- * Over history / 25 who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit, “ ‘Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples plot in vain? 26 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed’ —
- * Over evil / 27 for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, 28 to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.
- * Over your redemptive plan / 28 to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.
*They were saying: In this scary and paralyzing moment - Let us rest in your work in Christ that shows **you are over all things** – over creation, history, death, evil – and the life you have given us. It is all in our hands.*

*I think they prayed believing God is over all - but they were also saying – help our unbelief - help us believe more!
We pray this because it anchors our soul deep in God and what he has done, not how we feel or our circumstance.*

• **God – move in us in Your power.**

29 *And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, **Help us see 1) we are your servants, make us humble and obedient, 2) we lack courage** – we need the boldness of Jesus. **God move in us first! Humble us – empower us with courage.** (Which do you think most hinders you from going to engaging those you long to see come to Christ – humility, courage? Let’s pray for that! God gives!*

• **God – move through us in Your power. Sends us in your power**

30 *while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”*

- * **They asked to see that this world is broken and in desperate need of a healing Savior.** It is broken. It is not just randomly mean or hateful. It is broken and in need of a Savior – Jesus and his gospel of good news!
- * **They did not ask to be saved from this crises or to have the crises removed.** Rather they ask for boldness to

go into the real crises – the brokenness of the world to engage others with Jesus.

* **They recognized God alone (you) heals, awakens dead souls to life, and alone does eternal things.**

One of the last ways “together in Christ” sends us – is it sends us to a broken world that is in crises.

3) “Together IN Christ” sends us - to the world.

31 And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.

* God shook the place where they were gathered – **and sent them!! And sent them!**

What is more amazing to you here – the shaking or the sending???

What if God shook the room here today?

Will and I were in an earthquake in Japan three years almost to the day. Sitting in a traditional Japanese restaurant when the place where we were gathered shook. It was crazy – a little scary – and a lot like wow! God shook it but not because we prayed. What if God did that here?

Would that not be awesome – inspiring – and moving?

Do you think we would have a packed room next week? Why? *Would it change anyone though – really?*

Maybe – But what is more impressive about what God did is he filled them with His Spirit with the courage – and SENT them in his boldness. Together in Christ – He sent them into a world in crises and the Spirit of God was saving and changing lives and souls. Now – if that would happen – that should be even more awesome – inspiring – and moving wouldn't it?

I'm not saying we don't ask God to shake this room. Let's ask. But let's beg him to shake us. To move in us in a way that together in Christ – we would come to our own – to pray – and to be sent out into this world for Jesus.

I talked to Jason yesterday – tough and hard place for a dad to see his strong son – lying helpless. He said – the body is praying and I know that, and what is crazy is the last thing I want to do is talk to people about Jesus and yet they keep asking. I find out – this was part of their prayers – heal our son – glorify your Son Jesus. Wow!

If you and I are followers of Christ – together in Christ - is one of God's most beautiful and powerful gifts.

Together IN Christ – sends us.

CLOSE

Every great ongoing sustaining movement of God – began and lived on by prayer. I want to see God move in this body and through this body – in great power. But not just for a moment. I want it to be the ongoing life of this place. And, I don't just want it to affect the Summit. I want it to affect this community and churches in our community. Imagine an awakening across St Charles county – that saw thousands saved, churches awakened to care and love this community like never before – so as crisis in this broken world comes – the church is where God sends his people and those who are not his.

The coming revival must begin with a great revival of prayer. It is in the closet, with the door shut, that the sound of abundance of rain will first be heard. — Leonard Ravenhill

But the church is weary of this. Are we?

“The Cinderella of the church of today is the prayer meeting. This handmaid of the Lord is unloved

Will you join us in prayer – today, during the week, in your homes – all summer. Let's pray church.

A group of churches has started praying for God to move in them and through them in their community. To bring salvations and life change. I want us to join them. They are not just praying for their church but they are praying for churches all over St Charles – they even came to our parking lot last week and prayed for us. Does that move you? Does that shake you? Let's join them.

We are saved into one body. Not an option, we are together in Christ – but we can miss out on this gift never aware of who is packing our chute and never knowing the joy of packing another's chute.

This whole summer we want to pray for God to move – in us and through us. Will you join us.

Today we begin in this room with us – who are “together in Christ”.

We will model our prayer after the prayer here in Acts 4. Not the only way to pray – but a good reminder today for us in a season of change – where a leader (me) is leaving in a few months – that God is sovereign, God longs to move in us with courage – to send us with boldness to a world in need. Let's pray.

- 1) **God – You are over all things.**
- 2) **God – Move in us.**
- 3) **God – Move through us.**

Blessing

May the Lord grant you the eyes to see His favor is upon you – His body in Christ.
May you see that His love, His favor, and His acceptance is yours – His body in Christ.
May these abundant blessings drive us to our knees to cry out:
Sovereign Lord – move in us in Your Power and move through us in Your Power.
For Your Name and Your glory – amen.

Go in this blessing!