Made for Mission – Part Two

# We Are Unified

# (John 17:20-23)

Welcome to Christ’s Community Church. I’m so glad you’re here because this morning we’re continuing with part two of our message series “Made for Mission.”

Now, last week we said that every person has been called by God on a mission, and so none of you are here by accident, but each of you are God’s masterpiece created for this purpose. Of course, you and I have options, we can choose to accept this mission or we can completely ignore this mission. In fact, some of you may flirt with it, you may accidentally live out part of your purpose, but then life gets busy and you fall back into the daily grind of everyday life.

My goal in this series is that you would recognize your calling and that together we would commit to pursuing the mission that God has for us. You see, God’s will is that you would use your life and the gifts that he’s given you to live for him, to live for the mission he created you for. You see, as the church we’re the called-out ones, and so, the mission is not just for a few of us, but for everyone who calls upon the name of Jesus. And he was a man on a mission, he came to seek and save the lost, purposefully laying down his life for the sake of others and he did it with great intentionality because he knew that his life was bigger than himself.

Now, last week we looked at the early church, the first believers, and we saw that they recognized that they were made for mission and the Bible describes their radical response in Acts chapter 2. Luke who wrote this, tells us in verse 44 that…

“All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved” (Acts 2:44-47).

And so, this was a small church, much like ours, but they had a very large impact and I believe the reason why was that they were unified. They were together and the Bible says they were of one accord, they believed that the Word of God was very important and so they studied it together. They believed that relationships with other believers were of great worth and so they did life together, sharing everything, demonstrating the love of Jesus. And because they were so unified, so focused and intent on doing what Jesus had called them to do, you couldn’t stop them, they were invincible.

But their determination, their persistence, their drive and motivation to carry out the mission of Jesus didn’t deter our spiritual enemy one bit. You see, that ancient serpent called the devil, who’s also known as Satan, or the Prince of the air doesn’t want us to be united, he doesn’t want us to be one, but he wants us divided. He doesn’t want the church to have one vision, but two, and so he causes division in the body of Christ. Not only that, he incites the world to criticize us, threaten us, and persecute us, but no matter what he does we only become more passionate, more unified, because God’s Spirit within us desires for us to be one.

In fact, I believe the Bible reveals that Jesus favorite number was one. Now some of you may be skeptical and you may be thinking, “No, it’s number three, or maybe seven, twelve, or forty; but let me assure you that Jesus favorite number is one. It’s actually very obvious when you examine the Scriptures. In fact, let me just ask you a few questions. In the Creation account, how many ribs did God use to make woman?

He took one of the man's ribs, right (Genesis 2:21)?

Then God said, “A man will …be united to his wife, and they’ll become what? One flesh, right? (Genesis 2:24).

Moses cried out to the people of God. He said, “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is… one” (Deuteronomy 6:4).

In the beginning of the New Testament, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews?” (Matthew 2:2).

Jesus proclaimed to the people, “One greater than the temple is here” (Matthew 12:6).

Jesus said that he was concerned about “the one that wandered off” (Matthew 18:12).

A man asked Jesus, “What good thing must I do to get eternal life?” Jesus replied, "Why do you ask me what is good? There’s only one who is good” (Matthew 19:17).

Jesus told his disciples, “You have only one Master…one Father and…one Teacher, who is the Christ” (Matthew 23:9-10).

And so, Jesus talked all the time about the number one.

He said, "The one who comes from above is above all” (John 3:31).

“The one whom God has sent speaks the words of God” (John 3:34).

As a matter of fact, he talks about his relationship to the Father saying, “I and the Father are what? One, right? (John 10:30).

And so, today I want to talk to you about our oneness, our Christian unity, because if we’re unified, we’re unstoppable in what we can do for the glory of God on earth. But if we’re divided we’re weak and ineffective in the way that God would want to use us.

In fact, Jesus prayed a prayer that addresses this theme of Christian unity, this oneness that he desires for us. And so, if you have your Bibles, turn to John chapter 17, and we’re going to look at verses 20 through 23. If you don’t have a Bible don’t worry because we’ll put the Scriptures up on the screen anyway, but let me give you a little bit of context as you’re finding your place. This was a section of Scripture recorded after Jesus celebrated the Passover with his disciples. This was his last opportunity to teach his disciples before his arrest in the garden that evening. And reading from John chapter 17, Jesus and his disciples were praying together in the upper room, he’d been praying for them and now he says in verse twenty,

"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you’ve sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you’ve loved me” (John 17:20-23).

And so, Jesus prayed that those who believe in him would be what? One. He prayed, that all of them may be one, so that they may be brought to complete unity. His desire, his prayer was that we as the church, the family of God, would be unified so that number one, the world would know that God sent Jesus.

## 1. So the World Would Know God Sent Jesus

Jesus prayer is that you and I would represent him, being in relationship with one another, just as he and the Father are in a perfect relationship. And so, as they love each other, we should love each other. As they enjoy each other, we should enjoy each other. As they respect each other, we should respect each other. And so, Jesus prays that we would know and experience that kind of relationship, that complete unity, so that the world would know that God the Father had sent him and loved them.

In this passage, Jesus makes this oneness, this unity of relationship very clear as he prays this prayer. His purpose for oneness being that the world would know him and that’s why he said in John chapter 20,

“As the Father has sent me, I am sending you” (John 20:21).

And so, as the church we’re on a rescue mission just like Jesus came to pursue people who were alienated from God, to save them and transform them from people in rebellion against God, to people who worship God through him.

We find that Jesus goes out of his way to make this point, over and over and over in the gospel of John, Jesus says it’s the,

“Father who sent me” (John 8:16).

And so, God sent Jesus, the Son of God, to enter into human history as a missionary. He takes on human form, he walks on earth, breathing our air, speaking our language, living in our cultural context, and he experiences it all except for one significant thing. He did it all and yet was without sin.

You see, only the sinless Son of God can redeem a lost world. Only Jesus can save sinners, transforming them into saints who worship him in spirit and in truth. And so, Jesus pursues relationships with people who are far from God, all for the purpose the Bible says, of seeking and saving that which was lost (Luke 19:10).

It’s this mission, the Father’s mission, that Jesus tells us to make our own. Now, you and I may have different roles to play, but there’s only one mission at Christ’s Community Church because Jesus stated it very clearly in Matthew chapter 28, he said,

“Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19-20).

And so, we have our directive, our mission, and it’s the same mission of every Christian church, and that is to make disciples, followers of Jesus, because that’s what he told us to do. And so, if we’re going to live out the unity that Jesus wants us to have, then all of us without exception are on a mission to make him known in the world. But are you making him, are you inviting people to come and see?

Let’s take a look at this video for a minute: An Invitation

I’d like to encourage you to invite others and not miss out because Jesus invites you to join in so that the world would know that God sent him. And then number two, we’re unified in our faith, embracing our unity as the family of God, so that the world would see God’s love through us.

## 2. So That the World Would See God’s Love

You see, it’s as we live out our lives, unified as the family of God, that the world sees a demonstration of the love of Jesus in his family. In fact, Jesus even calls us his brothers and sisters, because he’s accepted us into his family, he’s made us one, and that’s why the Bible says to “accept one another…

Just as Christ accepted you” (Romans 15:7).

And so, as we’ve been accepted, in the church, we’re literally doing life together, receiving one another, accepting one another as brothers and sisters, because Christ has accepted us. We invite others, welcoming them, because we recognize that Jesus accepted us when we were still sinners. He loved us, died for us, and accepted us, before we had everything together, before we were made perfect, and before we’d even responded to his love.

This is what’s so amazing about God’s love and it’s the same way that we respond to other believers. It’s this kind of love that we demonstrate to other followers of Jesus, recognizing that they may look different, they may have a different focus, a different emphasis, a different style of worship, but we recognize the we’re on mission together. We recognize that it’s not about what we’re doing at Christ’s Community Church, but it’s all about the kingdom of God, it’s all about Jesus.

And so, Jesus prays that we’d accept one another as he’s accepted us, that we’d be on mission together, and instead of the church being known for what we’re against; that by the grace of God we’d be known for what we’re for. That we’d be known by all the people experiencing the grace and love of Jesus through the church, because that’s what Jesus said. In fact, he couldn’t have said it any clearer than he did in John chapter 13. He said,

“Love one another. As I’ve loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you’re my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:34-35).

Now, notice what Jesus didn’t say, he didn’t say that all men will know you’re my disciples by your denomination, your doctrine, your music style, or the translation of Bible that you use. No, what did he say? He said, “All men will know that you’re my disciples by the way you love one another.” This is the only description of how the world will know that we follow Jesus in the whole Bible. Jesus said, “If you love one another.” And that’s why Jesus prays,

“May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me” (John 17:23).

And so, we need to recognize the importance of loving people who don’t know Jesus, because we’ve been called on a mission to glorify God, loving him and loving others as we’re reaching out to people who don’t know him. In fact, that’s our mission statement, we’re reaching out to people, right? Not because we’re building a denomination or even building a building but because we’re building the people of God. We’re reaching, connecting, and equipping people to become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ, and so, it’s all about Jesus.

He’s called us on a mission and we believe as we humble ourselves and pray and seek our God, that he hears our prayers and answers. And so, number three, we want to be unified in our prayers so that we can do more together.

## 3. So We Can Do More Together

This is so important, because we want to do everything that we can to demonstrate unity in our lives. You see, God invested everything in the church, because he believed that the church is the hope of the world. And so, we believe that we can do more together than we can apart and that’s the attitude that made the first century church thrive.

Just consider for a moment those first believers in Jerusalem breaking out of the upper room. They didn’t have a church building, a website, or even a YouTube channel, but what they did have was persecution, what they did happen was brothers and sisters being killed for saying that they believed Jesus rose from the dead. And yet, this little group of passionate followers of Jesus spread the gospel all over the world.

In fact, much like us, they lived in a community that didn’t believe in what they believed in, but they saw the way they loved each other. They saw their unity, concern, and support for one another; and it’s so beautiful the way that Luke describes it in Acts chapter 4, he said that,

“All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus and much grace was upon them all” (Acts 4:32-34).

They were unified, they were one in heart and mind, and the unity of these first believers was a crazy, next level kind of love. There was a commitment to one another unlike anything I’ve ever seen. No one claimed that any of their possessions were their own, but they shared everything they had.

In fact, in the next verse, these people loved one another so much that they actually took their possessions and sold them, giving the money to the church leaders to disperse however they saw fit. And so, every need in the church, every need in the community of believers, was met because they saw themselves as a family. They were unified, demonstrating the love of God, loving one another and the world noticed.

You see, the world may not believe this whole Jesus thing, you know the resurrection of the dead, but they can’t deny the love we have for one another. They can’t ignore how loving we are, how we treat one another, how we forgive one another, and how we take care of our own. You see, the people in Jerusalem were amazed by the unity, the love, the care, and the generosity of the church.

As we close, I believe that the world is sick and tired of hearing about the love of Jesus, but they want to see it lived out in our lives again. They want to see the love of Jesus as we love one another in the church and break out into the community. I believe that you and I can change the world as we stand together believing that God has called us to be one, with billions of believers from every city, every village, every tribe, and every nation of the world. You see, Jesus is building his church today and as we live out our calling, intentionally and resolutely following Jesus on his mission, as we’re making disciples, we’re unified because our unity flows from our identity in Christ.

Pastor John Talcott

Christ's Community Church

303 West Lincoln Avenue

Emmitsburg, MD 21727

August 11, 2019

[www.cccaog.org](http://www.cccaog.org)

*Graphics, notes, and commentary from LifeChurch, Ministry Pass, PC Study Bible, Preaching Library, and Sermon Central. Scripture from the New International Version unless otherwise noted.*