

John 17:20-23

I. We Are a *Sent* People

John 20:21: "Again he said, "Peace be with you! As the Father sent me, I am sending you."

1. **Our mission approach will be *incarnational*.** God the Son became one of us. To be "sent" in the same way means that we must be present and engaged in the real world.

We show up – are present – as God's sent people, as missionaries in the real world of the marketplace, and in our schools, and in our neighbourhoods. We are not huddled away. We are there. Present. Working alongside our neighbours. Showing hospitality. Giving others a taste of the kingdom.

Is that how you see yourself? Is "missionary" a core part of your identity? According to Jesus, he commissions us as his "sent ones." To be a follower of Jesus is to be a missionary.

2. **Our mission approach will be *communal*.**

II. How We Live as A Community Reveals the Truth of the Gospel.

²⁰ "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ²¹ 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 have sent me.

²² I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— ²³ I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me." – John 17:20-23

"We will not know God, change deeply, or win the world apart from community." – Timothy Keller, *The Gospel in Life*

1. We will not ***know God***...apart from community.

"I pray also for those who will believe in me ***through their message***." (John 17:20).

2. "We will not...***change deeply***...apart from community."

Through the messiness of life together, the challenge of conflict, the blessing of mutual encouragement – in and through life together, we learn how to love, and forgive, and be generous with our time and treasures.

⁴¹ So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach

unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.” – Ephesians 4:11-13

God doesn't raise spoiled children. He matures us. And he does it *through* community. He expects that together, we will experience this life of service and unity that becomes “Christ-like maturity.”

3. “We will not...**win the world** apart from community.”

When Christians say “God”, we believe the one God is Father, Son, and Spirit. The one God is a relationship. The Christian idea of the Trinity – that there is one God who is “three persons” – is beyond comprehension. No, the math doesn't work. But God is not a math problem to be solved.

There is one God, who from all eternity has been a perfect union of Father, Son, and Spirit. And through faith in Jesus, a person is enfolded into that relationship. That's what a Christian is. Someone enfolded into the very life of the Triune God. But we are not *alone* in that. We are made into a family within this relationship of the Triune God.

“...that they may be one **as we are one** – I in them and you in me – so that they may be brought to complete unity.” – John 17:21-22

“The Congregation as Hermeneutic of the Gospel.” – Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*

When people “look at” the claims we make about Jesus – that he is God the Son, who lived a perfect life, and died in our place, and rose again to bring us together in his kingdom life – like, people “look at” – When people “look at” the claims we as a Church make about Jesus, they evaluate the truth of those claims through what they see in how we treat one another.

Our commitment to love each other, particularly when it's not easy to, is evidence of God's Spirit in us. Is evidence that the good news of Jesus is at work.

“The most powerfully dynamic in mission remains the church in unity.” – Ross Hastings, *Missional God: Missional Church*

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” – John 13:34-35

How we live in relation to each other is the lens through which the world looks at our claims about the Gospel.

III. Community and Missional Living

Out of the overflow of God's love among us...

1. We Participate in Mission Together

“There are no friendships in diplomacy. Only shared interests.” At the end of the day, diplomacy is just making alliances to support your own interests.

Unity, as Jesus speaks of, is very different. We are not “individuals,” who are using each other for our own goals and ends. No. We are “persons in community,” fused together by Jesus and working with a shared heart and purpose.

We’ve had this commitment at Summit Drive for decades, where we say we’re “do church as a team.” Every new ministry initiative or mission endeavor that starts at Summit requires a team of people who are working together. No lone rangers. No lone wolves.

- a. ***This protects us from becoming inflated*** – from saying, “I did this.” Or “this is my ministry”
- b. ***This protects us from the blind-spots.***

2. We Prioritize Peace

At the centre of this letter to the Philippians, Paul offers this beautiful, poetic description of Jesus’ humility, his self-giving for others. He leads into by saying: “In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus.” – Philippians 2:5

He says, in essence, “this is the story that gives shape to how we interact with each other.” Paul can apply this logic to help the church heal from some sort of spat that going on among two leaders in the church. Listen to how Paul applies this in Philippians 4:2-3:

“²I plead with Euodia, and I plead with Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. ³Yes, and I ask you, my true companion, help these women since they have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel...” – Philippians 4:2-3

Working for peace can be a long and challenging process, that often requires outside help. Seeking peace can’t be ignored, but neither can it be over simplified.

3. We Build Community Through Hospitality

The table is a place that throughout scripture where God choses to ‘show up.’ The generosity of opening our lives to others is a key part of our mission in the world. It’s why we have so many “food events” here at Summit, whether young adults’ meals, 60+ luncheons, meals at Alpha, or Chilli lunch and pie auctions. The Table is a place of sharing our lives, of building community, and a place God chooses to ‘show up.’

Much of the way that people come to faith in Jesus happens through the relational dynamics of a table – a shared meal. Sharing the news of Jesus – a big part of the missionary endeavor God has given us – is the sort of thing that happens when we share a meal and share our lives. The link between hospitality, generosity, and mission is inseparable.

As a community, we are a people on mission with God. God who is generous. God who is relational. And this God loves to work through us. Together. And in God’s wisdom, we hear that **how we live as a community reveals the truth of the Gospel.**

Life Group Study

Open Up

We looked at this quote in the message: “We cannot know God, change deeply, or win the world apart from community.” – Timothy Keller.

In what ways, and to what extent have you experienced this?

Dig In

1. Read **John 17:20-23**.
 - a. Why do you think there Jesus prays this for us?
 - b. What relationship do you see between the unity of God’s people and the believability of Jesus’ identity as the one sent by the Father?
 - c. How does this encourage you with regards to our mission endeavors as a church community?
 - d. Are there ways that you need to seek peace with someone in the community? In what ways would you need to be supported to do that (see Phil 4:2-3 and Paul’s encouragement for a trusted co-worker to help these leading women work out an issue)?
2. If the unity and shared love of believers is a main way people come to believe the gospel, in your view, what role does simply inviting people to experience the “Jesus-community” play in our mission to the city?
3. Make a list of 3-5 people in your circle that you can begin to pray for, and, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, perhaps invite to a service or event.
4. As we finish our series on “Home”, what are some of the elements that you have been encouraged by in particular?

Pray

Take some time to thank God for our church community. Ask God for courage and help to pursue peace and invite neighbours to consider the news of God’s love expressed through Jesus. Lift up any particular prayer items that came out of the conversation, or that your group members are sharing.