

Move In

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[0 : 00] Well, hey, good morning. My name is Ray Sweep from First Christian Church in Greensburg, Indiana. And as always, if you'd like to learn a little more about us, you can go to FCCgreensburg.com or check out our FCC Greensburg Facebook page.

But hey, today we're excited to get into the Word of God. But you know what? Most of all, we want to let the Word of God get into us and truly transform these hearts to beat for Jesus.

And I'll tell you, today we're in the third week of our series called Move. We are walking through our three-year strategic plan here at FCC. And the title of the message today is Move In.

Now, a hog and a hen were sharing the same barnyard when they heard about a church's program to feed the hungry. Both were interested in helping, so they started thinking it over when suddenly the hen said, hey, I've got it. We can provide bacon and eggs to feed the hungry.

Well, the hog pondered that for a second and said, well, I only see one problem with your bacon and eggs solution. For you, it only requires a contribution.

[1 : 07] But for me, it means total commitment. Let me put it another way. There was a young man who came to Christ and he was so excited to grow in his Christian life.

He took a sheet of paper. He wrote all the things that he would do for God, jotted down all he'd give up, all the places he'd go to serve Jesus, even the ministries he wanted to start.

He was so pumped. But when he took that paper to church and laid it on the altar in prayer, he still felt empty with no peace about it. That's when he walked into his pastor's office explaining the whole situation and just how shocked he felt to feel so burdened and empty, even though he thought he was doing the right thing.

Well, that's when this man of God who had walked with Jesus for decades looks at him and he says, let's try something different. Take a blank sheet of paper, sign your name at the bottom, and then put that on the altar.

And church, that is exactly what the Lord's waiting for from us. So the moral of these stories, give up the bacon, sign your John Hancock, because when you come to Jesus, he gets all of you.

[2 : 20] And as we repent, as we turn away from that old lifestyle, as we get baptized into him, we start the most amazing journey of pursuing this fancy theological word called sanctification.

And to put this in a dumbed-down version for someone like me, sanctification is the ultimate goal of being made holy like Jesus, only by his grace.

But this word discipleship, and that's where we're going to focus today, discipleship is the vehicle that we ride in to get there. It's the process, the daily growth through spiritual disciplines so I can know Jesus more and I can grow in his image.

This is every part of me. It's my mouth, it's my mind, it's my motives, all of me pursuing daily to be more like Jesus by the Holy Spirit's power.

So welcome back here to week number three of this important series called Move. We as a body of believers want to move forward for the glory of God wherever the Holy Spirit leads us while we love and shepherd this family well.

[3 : 32] If you weren't with us the first couple of messages, please go back. You can watch, you can listen through our website, through the Church Center app, through YouTube, all different kinds of avenues.

But we cannot be content with just being a church that goes through the motions, pulls off a well-coordinated service on Sunday, and makes you feel warm and toasty. God's word paints such a different picture of what a healthy church looks like as he gives us our marching orders.

And listen, Satan comes to steal, kill, and destroy. And I don't know about you, but all six of our full-time staff here at the church have been under some major spiritual warfare since this series

started.

The enemy's not happy that we are following the Lord's leading as we're focusing on three big topics here. Number one is discipleship. How can we as a church do a great job of coming alongside you to help you with the process of growth, no matter what stage you're in?

Number two is next generation. How can we pour into that next generation in a way that raises them up to be used for the kingdom? And then number three is evangelism.

[4 : 45] Who is the Lord leading you to share the hope of Christ with? And how can we as a church help equip you for that challenge? And as you've heard, today is all about discipleship.

A well-respected scholar named Dallas Willard once said this, when Jesus walked among humankind, there was a certain simplicity to being a disciple.

Primarily, it meant to go with him in an attitude of study, obedience, and imitation. So if you got your Bibles or your Bible app handy, why don't we go ahead and head towards Colossians chapter 2?

Colossians chapter 2. It's going to feel like it's towards the very end of your Bible. Okay? Colossians chapter 2. We'll start in verse 2. And as you're getting there, we also have an opportunity, if you'd like to take notes digitally, you can always go to the Church Center app.

You can download that through First Christian Church Greensburg. And you can go to sermons, today's sermon, and then hit take notes there. And you can take those. But here's the Apostle Paul.

[5 : 54] And he's inspired by the Holy Spirit to write these words to the churches in Colossae and Laodicea. And ultimately, the church throughout the world and every generation.

That's us. Okay? And here's what the word says as we hear Paul's heart here. He says, My goal is they, the church, may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments. For though I am absent from you in body, I am present with you in spirit and delighted to see how disciplined you are and how firm your faith in Christ is.

Now, here's where I want to focus. Verses 6 and 7, Colossians 2. So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as your Lord. Now let me stop there for a second.

Do you remember when you gave your life to Jesus? Do you remember the absolute relief, the peace that washed over you as you knew that you were now washed clean by the blood of Jesus Christ?

[7 : 07] You were now white as snow because of grace. Do you remember how excited you were in that? Now watch what he says next, okay? Just with that same excitement, he says continue to live your lives in him.

Continue the discipleship process. He says rooted and build up in him. Strengthened in the faith as you were taught and overflowing with thankfulness.

And I don't know if you noticed, but there were three powerful verbs there that will guide our outline this morning. Because when it comes to discipleship, when it comes to your daily growth in Jesus, it takes intentionality.

So fill this in. This is the heart of everything that we'll talk about today. Here's what we want from every single one of us. Move in closer to Christ.

We're going to move in. Whether this Jesus stuff is all new to you and you're just beginning those first steps with him, let's take the next step and let's move in closer.

[8 : 10] Maybe you've been walking with Jesus 20 or 30 years now and possibly have gotten a little stale. How do we move in closer and light that fire for growth? Or maybe, listen, maybe you're in the final chapters of your life.

How do you finish well moving in closer to Christ? Because what a glorious day that will be when his face I shall see. But here's the thing.

I can't make you and you can't make me have the motivation to move in closer to Christ. We have to be all in. And it starts by being, here's your next word, rooted.

We saw that in that passage, rooted. You know, somebody once asked an elder at a church a question. They said, can I be a Christian without joining a church?

And that wise elder responded this way. He said, yes, it's possible. It's something like being a student who doesn't go to school, a soldier who will not join an army, a citizen who does not pay taxes or vote, a salesman with no customers, a boat captain without a crew, an author without

readers, a tuba player without an orchestra, a parent without a family, a football player without a team, a politician who's a hermit, or a bee without a hive.

[9 : 24] I love the sarcasm. So no, God's word has set up plan A for how you need to grow in Christ. And there's no plan B. The local church is the vehicle for discipleship.

It is the vehicle by which we grow together, like Pastor Tyler said last week, in faith. And one of the biggest plagues in the American church today is that we have a lot of well-meaning Christians whose only time with Jesus is an hour-long service on Sunday.

And they're missing out on the joy, on the peace of daily walking with Christ through the word and through prayer, weekly getting connected to the body of Christ and all the different opportunities to have a godly community around you, a support system, to have growth in the word with other believers, to seek Jesus together as the bride.

And those who make this a priority, because we always make the most important things in our hearts the priority, those people know the joy and the strength that comes from being connected, not only to Christ, which is vital, but also to the family of God.

Such an important community that we all need if we're gonna do more than just survive, if you really want to thrive. So what does it mean to be rooted?

[10 : 47] That word in Colossians 2.7 refers to salvation in Christ. When you sincerely repented of your sins, confessing Jesus as Lord and God of your life, when you were immersed in baptism, you were planted in the grace of God and he is your source of everything.

In him, you have everything you need to produce and walk in the fruits of the spirit. But I also love the continual picture it gives using the words rooted and build up in him.

So having been rooted in your salvation in Christ alone, by faith alone, now let's grow. Let's put those faith roots down deeper and wider so that when the storms of life start beating against you, when Satan comes to destroy, what can you do?

You can stand firm in the power, in the grace, in the love of Christ. And what breaks my heart is that there are so many people who love, who we love, who were baptized in 1988 or whatever far off year and their roots are still shallow, sadly, because they've never continued to put their faith roots down deeper and wider in Christ.

But all that can change today as we make that commitment to move into his presence every morning through the word of God, through getting on our knees in prayer, every week moving in by having that accountability partner where iron sharpens iron, as scripture says.

[12 : 15] We're keeping each other on the straight and narrow. Every week having that Bible study with my peeps where I'm moving in closer to Christ. I'm connected to my church family.

I'm serving Jesus with my time, my talent, my treasure, Jesus first. And Paul also reinforces this idea in Philippians 2, 12 and 13 when he says this.

He says, therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed, not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence. Now here's what I want you to see. Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling.

And then it says, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose. So by faith in the Holy Spirit's power, not my own, I have a responsibility to grow, to continue, like it says, continue to work out our salvation with fear and trembling.

To basically manifest that salvation to a lost world through my obedience to Christ and his word and even my commitment to this process of discipleship.

[13 : 21] And don't get tripped up on those words that tell you to work out your salvation with fear and trembling. It's not some kind of anxiety because there's a mean God looking to pull your salvation away from you.

No, this is simply, we grow with this deep reverence, this deep awe of our sovereign and perfect and holy God who has redeemed us and set us free.

We are giving him the respect and the honor and the reverence that he is due. And we also do this with a serious, humble commitment to his will.

Rooted. That's the goal. Rooted. And we've put together what we're calling the D team, the discipleship team that will be putting a more complete system in place to give us even more tools and resources so we can get rooted in Christ.

And we as a church, we're going to get even more bold teaching on sensitive topics that the Bible is very clear on. Because when we do life God's way, we get godly fruit.

[14:23] When we do it my way or we do it the world's ways, it leads to defeat, to chaos, ultimately death. Church, let's get rooted. And then second, Paul uses the word strengthened.

Strengthened. So, it starts by putting those roots down deep and don't stop doing it. It's a lifelong journey one day at a time. But then we start to see what that strengthening looks like.

It's kind of like when you go on a diet. You ever done this where you go on a diet and then you start seeing some results and that motivates you to keep drinking water, very little sugar, smaller portions, exercise, put that Reese's egg down, right?

And the same is true spiritually. When you're rooted in Christ and you're going deeper and you're going wider, your life starts to change. And that reminds me of a story from the late 1800s in London.

Charles Bradlaugh was the leading atheist voice always looking to just blast Christians, making fun of everything we believe. Also in London at that time was a well-known pastor named Hugh Price Hughes.

[15:32] Kind of a cool name. And Mr. Bradlaugh, the atheist, challenged Mr. Hughes, the Christian minister, to a debate and because it made the papers, everything was about the newspapers in those days, London was intrigued.

They wanted to see how this was going to go. Well, he immediately accepted the challenge but he said, I have one stipulation. Hugh said, I propose we each bring some concrete evidence of our beliefs in the form of men and women who have been redeemed from lives of sin and shame by the influence of our teaching.

He said, I'll bring a hundred such men and women and I challenge you, Mr. Atheist, to do the same. But, if you cannot bring a hundred to match mine, I'll be satisfied if you bring fifty who will stand and testify that they have been lifted from lives of shame by your atheistic teachings.

But if you cannot bring fifty, then bring twenty who will stand and say, as my a hundred will, that they have great joy in life of self-respect because of your atheistic teachings.

But listen, if you cannot bring twenty, I'll be satisfied with ten. Nay, Mr. Bradlaugh, he said, I challenge you to bring one. Just one man or one woman who will make such a testimony regarding the uplifting of your atheistic teachings.

[16:50] Again, London was stirred. What would Mr. Bradlaugh do? Well, with great discomfort and chagrin, he publicly withdrew his challenge for the debate.

Listen, there are always going to be skeptics of truth because some people do not want to submit to God. So they'll make every excuse, they'll attack it, they'll do all that, but no one can argue with a life that has been radically transformed, that has been radically changed, that's been pulled from the mud and the mire of a life without Jesus and set on the solid rock.

Only Jesus can do that when we get rooted in him. And here's what that looks like practically. In Christ, you start overcoming those vices, those things that have kept you enslaved for years.

And I love how in 1 Corinthians 10, 13, it says this, no temptation, no temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind.

That means, listen, we're all dealing with the same temptations in life. Satan loves to tell you you're the only one dealing with it, but you know what? He's wrong. We're all dealing with very similar stuff. And it says, and God is faithful.

[18:02] He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. By the way, that's in his power, not in yours. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

Guys, as we daily come into the presence of the divine, it changes everything. And the shiny things of this world start to dull and the things of God start to excite me. And as you start that strengthening process where I no longer desire to spew profanity or perverted jokes, I don't need eight beers every night because my roots are connected directly to Jesus and he satisfies.

I don't have to gratify insecurity by complaining or putting everybody else down because I want what's best for them as they grow in Christ. And we can give a million examples of this, but 2 Corinthians 5.17 is true.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come. The old is gone and the new is here. So praise God for that.

And listen, our D team is working on different initiatives to help us through this process of strengthening in our faith. Over the next three years, you'll see improvement on taking someone from maybe a first-time guest in our church to a regular in our church to a believer or a member

depending on their situation and even to a servant-hearted member where they are truly connected in every way and serving.

[19 : 26] And we want to create a culture where when you say you're a member of FCC, that actually means something. It doesn't just mean that in 1971 you got baptized. It means you're still connected and you're actually a partner in this ministry and we're going to hold you to that, that I'm a partner in what Jesus is doing in and through FCC.

And as we grow, as we expand our discipleship, we want to meet you in each stage of your life. We want to help you honor Christ in every way. And one area we've talked about specifically is in marriage and premarital situations where we are doing relationships Jesus' way and not the world's way.

Because listen, I see it all the time in the church. So many Christians have no idea what it looks like to do a relationship God's way or they just don't care one or the other and they just do it the way the world does it and they get the world's results.

But listen, we want to do our relationships God's way and get his results. So rooted, strengthened, and then last, overflowing. Now, this last verb, overflowing, is the only one so far in what you call the active voice.

And what that means is that it's a response to the others that have already been mentioned. So believers who are firmly rooted, who are being built up in Christ, who are being strengthened in their faith, they will now overflow with thankfulness because of those things.

[20 : 53] It's that simple. And I love the picture of our faith cup being so full that it starts overflowing onto others. And we see this image throughout both the Old and the New Testaments.

From David's acknowledgement in Psalm 23, 5, after many ups and downs, he not only says the Lord is his shepherd, but he says his cup overflows because of God's faithfulness.

Even Luke 6, 38, where it talks about overflowing in stewardship. It says, give and it will be given back to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and what? Running over will be poured into your lap.

For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. And those who've taken God at his word in this area, we know that overflow. We also see Romans 15, 13 that says, may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust him so that what?

You may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. And I want to take you to one more passage in Galatians and intentionally read this from the New Living Translation, which is a little bit of an easier to understand translation.

[22 : 05] It just makes it very simple. But what we see here is a contrast between the fruit of a life lived in the flesh, that's my way, that's following the world's ways, versus a life led by God, led by the Holy Spirit.

So if we look at Galatians 5, let's start in verse 19 from the New Living, it says, when you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear.

So here's the fruit that you get. Sexual immorality is a result of that. Impurity, lustful pleasures, idolatry, that means making other things more important than God.

Sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division. People who live in the flesh are always getting into it with others.

Okay? It says envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. So that's what it looks like to do life my way. That's what I get in return. And then he says, let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living this sort of life will not inherit the kingdom of God.

[23 : 12] So unless we repent of all that and we start following Jesus and experiencing godly fruit, we're not going to get where we want to go. Okay? Verse 22. But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives.

Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. There is no law against these things.

So here's the hard reality. We all overflow with something. The question is, what's coming oozing out of me? And not just what we all get to see on a Sunday morning when we wear a mask and put on a great front.

But listen, it's even easy for me to hide behind a preacher mask if I want to do that. I've done it before. I'm guilty too. But what do people, here's the real mark.

What do people closest to us have splashing on them? What does my wife see? What do my kids see? What do the people closest to me see?

[24 : 14] Is it the impurity? Is it the anger? Is it the dissension? The drunkenness? The lust? The selfishness? If so, then God changed this heart so that I can be rooted in Christ, strengthened by His grace, and then I can overflow with a life of thankfulness.

And what does that life look like? One that impacts others for the kingdom. A life of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. That's the fruit that I want springing up out of my heart that's been changed by a life of grace because of Jesus.

And yet, we're all still a work in progress. So, a few things that the D team will be working on is helping you identify your spiritual gifts so you can serve where God's designed you to serve.

You can overflow with His grace. We also have a major need of qualified Bible teachers. So, we'll start offering some classes on how to prepare and teach in different settings. And if you remember from a couple weeks ago, one of our values is that generosity is our standard.

And we'll start amping up on opportunities to grow in generosity so the Lord can use every single part of us even more. So, here's what you've heard today.

[25 : 25] While this church has always believed in discipleship, has always practiced it, we're going to get even more intentional. We're going to challenge you to move in closer to Christ because here's the goal.

Here's our metric. We want every person at FCC to have the tools to take their next steps to be more like Jesus. So, to go back to the barnyard, are you content just giving an egg here or there or will you surrender the bacon?

Now, to go to our second picture we gave, to go back to the story of the teenage boy signing his name at the bottom of the blank page, will you do that today? Will you make this commitment to discipleship no matter how young or how old you are?

Will you sign the bottom of the paper? And you can go ahead and go to your cabinet and grab a blank piece of paper and put on there, God, I am devoted to discipleship and growing in you and serving you with all my heart.

I want to be rooted, strengthened, overflowing. Sign that puppy and say, I'm all in in this process of discipleship. I want to move in closer to Christ.

[26 : 32] Amen? All right. Won't you pray with me? Heavenly Father, thank you so much just for the opportunity to talk about this vital subject today of discipleship.

Simply, the process of growing in our walk with Christ, growing and moving in closer to Christ so that we can walk in the fruits of the Spirit so that we can be rooted no matter what comes against us, we can stand strong so that we can be strengthened and overcome those temptations so that we can overflow with thankfulness and have the fruits of the Spirit, have true godly results coming out of our lives.

That's exactly what each of us want. So Jesus, help us. Help us to do that. Help us to get committed to your word, to prayer, to do in life with the body of Christ.

All these things that in the Bible are so vital and when we look at the early church, they would not have compromised on any of these things. They wouldn't have made excuses or said what's the least I can do.

They wanted to do life together in community truly making an impact for Jesus. So help us to do that we pray. Thank you Jesus. May we sign the bottom of the page and say we're all in.

[27 : 52] Here's the bacon. We love you Jesus. We pray all this in your precious and your holy name. And God's people said amen and amen. Hey real quick, my name once again is Ray Sweet from First Christian Church, Greensburg, Indiana.

You can always check us out fccgreensburg.com But hey, real quick, if you have more questions about faith, you want to talk about giving your life to Jesus, you maybe got questions about FCC Greensburg.

We would love to come alongside you and help you in that process. So you can call the church office at 812-663-8488. My name's Ray but honestly anybody who answers the phone can help you with that.

So feel free to do that or you can email me at ray at fccgreensburg.com Hey, we're so appreciative that you tuned in today and we just want to invite you that sometimes when you have an audio ministry like this, you don't always know who's listening and how you're maybe impacting

someone's life and how they're growing in their faith.

So listen, if you could shoot us an email at ray at fccgreensburg.com Just let us know how God's using these teachings in your heart. We would love to hear from you and get connected with you.

[29 : 08] We truly appreciate that. So hey, have a great week and God bless you.