

Move Out

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Preacher: Ray Sweet

[0 : 00] 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 you can go to the FCCgreensburg Facebook page.

But hey, today we are excited to jump into the Word of God, but more so let the Word of God just jump into these hearts and transform us from the inside out.

We are in the fifth and final week of our series called Move. We've been walking through our three-year strategic plan that God has led us to, and the title of the message today is Move Out.

Well, one day a man was walking down a Chicago street when he felt the Lord prompt him to engage in a conversation with a guy, and he just straight up asked him in typical D.L.

Moody boldness, he said, are you a Christian? And that's when the man raised his fist at Edgar and said, you mind your own business. And that's when most of us would probably just walk away, but not Moody.

[1 : 06] He boldly said back, well, this is my business to share the sweet message of God's grace. And that's when the story took a surprising turn, and the guy said, well, then you must be D.L. Moody.

Now, can you imagine that? Chicago would have been smaller in those days, but still had the reputation in a city of probably three to five hundred thousand people that they knew sharing Jesus was this guy's business.

So let me ask you and me both. What if the twelve thousand five hundred people in Greensburg or even the twenty six thousand people in Decatur County believed that sharing Jesus was the business of those who belong to FCC?

Not complaining about how our culture's gone to hell in a handbasket. Well, duh. Not giving in to excuses for why I can't. Not even sharing why my church is better than your church.

But telling of the greatest message of all time. Jesus loved you so much that he died to take your place, to offer you forgiveness from sin, life everlasting, and hope on this earth.

[2 : 15] And that tomb remains empty because he is risen and will return for his church. Amen? Hey, I'm glad that you're listening today because this message matters as we close out this series called Move.

We've been working through our Holy Spirit-led three-year plan that the elders, the staff, and some other key leaders have developed through prayer, through counsel, through discussion, and then more prayer.

And my favorite part is that it comes from the Word of God and it matches his sovereign, holy, grace-filled, and righteous heart. And just like the sermon bumper video, there's a theme throughout this series realizing we weren't meant to stand by idly.

Instead, we're to swarm the enemy in the name of Jesus. We are meant to storm the gates of hell impacting our world. We are meant to overcome the sin that tries to enslave, letting the power of Christ rip off every shackle as we walk in freedom.

We are meant to move forward in the power and the love of Christ with his Word guiding us as we impact our generations for Jesus.

[3 : 29] And what a perfect way to end out this series. We've talked about how we can move in closer to Christ through discipleship. That means growing by putting yourself in the right places with the right people focused on the right Jesus, the biblical Jesus.

We've also realized how vital it is to move with our next gen, raising them up to truly follow Christ. And some of their methods may be different from ours, just like ours were from the generations before us because the world is ever-changing.

What matters is that Jesus is proclaimed and God's Word is preached. And today, let's move out. Move out because the church was never meant to stay within these four walls.

The church is you. The church is me sharing the hope of Christ wherever we go with whoever the Lord leads us to because of grace. It is our business, just like Moody said.

And these are the marching orders that we're going to talk about today. So if you got your Bibles, got your Bible app, however you get to the Word of God, go to Matthew chapter 28, verses 19 and 20.

[4 : 45] Matthew 28. It's the first book of the New Testament, but still a little over three quarters the way through your Bible. And I love the last words in this entire gospel, all about Jesus being the promised Messiah the world longed for.

The famous last words after he had risen from the grave, appeared to over 500 people, and now was meeting with the 11 remaining apostles in Galilee. Here's what he says.

Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Listen, don't let anyone try to minimize the importance of baptism. And then it says, so that was the salvation part. Here's the discipleship part, verse 20. And teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you, and surely I am with you always to the very end of the age.

So you're not the one doing it in your own power, in your own strength. He is the one right there guiding all of it. So these marching orders are called the Great Commission. Not the Great Suggestion.

[5 : 54] Not even the Great Commission just for the extra smart and talented. This is for all of us in the church who have been redeemed by Christ. As we've talked about the last couple of weeks, we've put together three teams led by either a staff member or an elder.

We got the discipleship team, the D team, the NextGen team, and then the evangelism, the E team. And throughout these messages, we're sharing the initiatives we'll be actively working on over the next three years.

But you know, when it comes to me sharing my faith and my story with those who don't know Jesus, it starts here. So listen to this, and if you got your Church Center app, you can go to that and you can go ahead and take notes even digitally.

A redeemed heart equals compassion for the lost. A redeemed heart equals compassion for the lost. And as D.T.

Niles famously said, evangelism is simply one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread. And when you are washed white by the blood of Jesus, when those sins have been cast as far as the east is to the west, as deep as the ocean where you can't retrieve them, when the Holy Spirit has taken up residence in your heart and you are sealed for eternity, when you are actively walking in a relationship with Jesus, you will be changed.

[7 : 23] Fruit of that transformation as you walk with Jesus will always flow with compassion for the lost. Why? Because I was blind and now I see.

I was lost and now I'm found. And if that compassion has been replaced with selfishness or maybe religious routine, listen, we got to fall on our knees because all of us can fall into that.

We got to fall on our knees and ask Jesus to change, to soften these hearts so that we care about what He cares about. That's those who are lost. Those destined for eternity apart from Jesus in hell. Listen, I know that's not fun to think about. I know we got a culture that likes to explain all this away, but it's a biblical reality. And when you take your last breath or Jesus comes back first, you will go to one of two places, heaven or hell.

And it all depends not on your good deeds, but what did you do with Jesus? Did you open and receive that gift of grace that He freely offers, giving your life by faith?

[8 : 26] And here's the cool part. Our God uses broken vessels like you, like me, who've been redeemed to lead others to the cross where they discover hope in Jesus' name.

You know, there are a lot of examples of this in God's word that we could walk through. But let me just share one. A woman at the well that Jesus broke all the rules to introduce her to the living water.

Number one, rabbis stayed out of Samaria because they hated Samaritans, but Jesus loved them. Number two, a rabbi wouldn't talk to a woman alone in that culture anyways, but Jesus cared about her soul more than just man-made rules.

And number three, a rabbi surely wouldn't have been around a woman who'd been married five times and now live with a guy who wasn't her husband. A woman known all over town for her promiscuity.

And yet, he meets her right there in that sin, just like he does with us, offering to be the living water that fills her soul. She accepts and immediately walks back to town telling everyone about this man who told her everything she had ever done.

[9 : 31] And yet, there was something different about her now. And they didn't know what to think, seeing hope in the face that had been worn down for years. So they came out to hear Jesus for themselves, and they drank of the living water, believing in Christ too.

And when Jesus' disciples had returned, I'm going to back up just a little bit. They returned to the well, and they saw him talking first to the woman. They encouraged him to eat something. And his words here are really important in John 4, 34 and 35.

He says, my food is to do the will of him who sent me, that's the Father, and to finish his work. Don't you have a saying? It's still four months until harvest. But listen to what Jesus says.

He says, I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields. They are ripe for harvest. You know, one of my favorite stories to tell is about a 10-year-old boy whose parents didn't go to church.

He decided to visit a church close to where he lived, and he loved the Sunday school. We're going back a few generations here. Well, after attending for about a year, his family moved to a different area of the city that was probably about a 20-minute walk to church.

[10 : 41] And yet, he still made the journey by himself every Sunday. One time, someone asked him why he walked so far, even in bad weather, when there were other great churches with Sunday schools that he walked by to get there.

They were closer to home. And here's what he said. He said, those churches are good for others, but not for me, because they know how to love a fellow over there. Now, if we go back to the Great Commission, you see Matthew 28, 19, start off with the word, therefore.

And all that means is that something was just said that now is leading me to say another statement. So when Jesus says, therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, it's because he can say that because he just said, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me, because he's God, because he's righteous, he's holy, he's set apart from me and you and his perfection.

He has the authority to give us our marching orders to show us what a redeemed life, that it's a compassionate life that cares about the lost.

See, when you know Jesus, you'll want others to know that same hope. But if that doesn't really matter, then we need to do a heart check and we need to repent. And a couple initiatives that we're working on very practically here on Sundays and even Wednesdays is to ensure that guests feel welcomed and loved.

[12 : 06] That's so important. We want to create a culture where people are able to let down their guard to be changed by Jesus because they've walked into a loving environment. We also feel led to start an annual event where we possibly rent out a couple buildings at the fairgrounds and we have a worship service followed by a great church meal.

If you remember, we did that back in August of 2020. We called it Welcome Home. And it was a blast with God using it to bring people to himself. And we already have it booked, guys.

September 2027, a time where we each get very intentional, inviting family and friends to hear the life-changing story of Jesus and even fill them with some good old church food because there's nothing better.

We want Decatur County and beyond to know how much FCC loves them. But more importantly, we want them to know that Jesus loves them. Amen? So a redeemed heart equals compassion for the lost.

Let's add to that. Compassion for the lost equals boldness to share. In the 1840s, a guy named John Getty, not John Gotti, but John Getty, left his comfortable pastor role in a Canadian church, taking his wife and two small kids to the South Sea Islands, not too far from, say, Papua New Guinea or the continent of Australia.

[13 : 28] And after a voyage of 20,000 miles, I can't imagine that on a boat, they arrived on this island full of cannibals. In fact, just months before they arrived, 20 crew members on a British ship had been killed and eaten.

So as you can imagine, this was not the safest environment to take your young family. And yet the God who called him had it all under control. It was tough at first as they learned the language that had no written form, so they had to create that.

And slowly, a few from the island started to trickle into the church to accept Christ. And over the next few decades, they stayed faithful one day at a time, slowly going, and they translated the whole Bible into their language.

They ended up planting 25 churches on the island. And Getty labored faithfully with little help and no communication from back home. But God, that was enough.

But God was faithful. And in the pulpit of the church that he pastored for so many years stands a plaque in honor that says when he landed in 1848, there were no Christians here.

[14:37] When he left in 1872, there were no lost souls. Church, that's boldness. I've gotten up to preach before knowing not everyone agreed with some of my decisions. I've gotten a few dirty looks mixed with snarky comments over the last 20 years.

I've been ignored by people and I've had some false things said about me. But I've never gotten up to preach wondering if they'd kill and barbecue me after the service. And yet, when we have compassion for the lost, the Holy Spirit will empower us with boldness that we need to share.

In the book of Acts that's all about the early church, the key verse in that whole book is Acts 1.8 where Jesus, right before he ascends back up into heaven, he says these words, But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you.

And you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem. So you have to think about that's where they lived. And in all Judea, spreading out. And Samaria, even the group of people you don't quite care for. And to the ends of the earth. So he starts where they live and he spreads across the globe. But his point is that you and I must realize we can't have the boldness and effectiveness in our own strength.

[15:49] It's only through the Holy Spirit's power that is living in us when we are walking in submission to Christ. But that doesn't stop the flesh from coming, right?

It doesn't halt the human nature from saying things like, Ah, I could never get up there and preach God's word. I could never share my testimony, my story with my co-worker.

I could never walk over to the lady at the gas station and share about the hope I have in Christ. I could never lead that ministry. And it's easy to keep the excuses coming.

And you're right. You can't do it just like I can. But he can through us. And I like the warning that Jesus gives his followers in Luke 12, starting in verse 11.

He says, When you are brought before synagogues, before rulers, and before authorities, do not worry how you will defend yourselves or what you will say. For the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say.

[16:49] So in the meantime, I prepare my heart by immersing it in God's word so that it can be there, ready to be called back up. I grow in my faith, walk, seeing Jesus, be faithful every step.

I'm building my confidence by his power and grace. And I seek to keep my heart tender, realizing that every word I speak, every action I make, has the potential to be used by God to affect someone's life, both positively and negatively.

But what a blessing that the Holy Spirit guides those conversations. Because it's not about me, and I shouldn't make it about me. It's all about Jesus changing lives.

And I want to share a story from our church family that I've gotten permission to share that's happened in the last five years or so. But we had a lady in our church whose kids were involved in some different community activities, like most kids are.

And she got connected through that with another mom who's also in the medical field. And one day they were talking, and the one who didn't go to church was struggling in her marriage.

[17:56] In fact, they were separated at the time, and she was just distraught. So she was just trying to encourage her that God wanted to be a part of their relationship, their family.

So she listened, and she tried to just be there for her, encourage her, speak truth into her. But she also invited her to church, sharing how important it is to have a faith family where you have that foundation, where you have that support system.

Well, because she was so desperate, she ended up coming, and immediately God began to move in her heart. She realized her need for Jesus, and she came all in getting baptized into Christ, surrendering her life to Him, repenting of her sin.

She also reconciled with her husband, and they began coming to the church as a family, growing closer to Jesus. They invited extended family to come, and they too felt at home when they came. And they are all so committed now to Jesus and growing closer to Him. I can't imagine them not being a part of the family. And it all started because a fellow mom from our church heard a cry for help, and she went the extra mile to listen and share the hope that we have in Jesus' name.

[19 : 08] Compassion for the lost equals boldness to share. And I want to make a statement that we believe wholeheartedly at FCC. We believe in relational evangelism.

But before you jump to any conclusions, let me be clear so I don't get misquoted here. If the Holy Spirit tells you to walk up to a stranger or a crowd and share the hope of Jesus, then by all means, do what God tells you to do.

If you feel led to stand up on the square when a non-biblical demonstration is happening and engage in talks where you lovingly share Christ, do it.

You and I both need to share Jesus whenever, wherever we're prompted because the Lord wants to use us. Okay? So make sure you do that. But here's what I've discovered as well about the current world we live in.

Most, not all, but most, have no desire to hear truth from someone they have no relationship with. The most effective evangelism in our culture, and this could be proven through stats over and over, but the most effective evangelism in our culture here in Decatur County in 2026 comes through relationships like the story I just shared with you.

[20 : 20] Coworkers, family members, friends, kids' activities, community events, the list goes on. When you live out your faith in Jesus, no matter where you are, what you're doing, and you're consistent, people take notice.

When your life is legit, people can see it. And through the relational equity you've built, loving and caring about them, God will open doors for you to share.

So keep praying. Keep following the Holy Spirit's leading. And here's a couple initiatives that we're working on. We want to offer classes and maybe even a sermon series on how to share your faith. Practical ways to share the hope that you have in Christ. We're also going to do what we did last week in the message and share more stories of what Jesus is doing in the lives of families in our church. You're going to see videos and people sharing.

These are practical ways we can energize and equip each other for the work of ministry. Now, let's finish this out here, okay? Let's add one more to this. Boldness to share equals being the church.

[21 : 26] One thing the Lord has been really placing on my heart lately is this idea of accountability as a church. Scripture says we will give an account for everything and leaders will be held to a higher standard.

And then you read the letters to the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3. And man, that should cause us just to pause and think. Because the last thing I want is to stand before Jesus and hear that I was forsaking my first love.

Here I just didn't get it, even though his word shows me clearly the truth of what he called his church to be in this world. And then you have Matthew chapter 7, verses 21 through 23, where Jesus says this.

And I'm telling you, these can be very intimidating words, but they're important because Jesus says it to us. He says, Now, when you hear that phrase, Lord, Lord, all that means is that it's someone who, you know, they're kind of on the inside.

They're the ones in church. They're the ones singing the songs. They speak the Christianese, okay? So, not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who's in heaven.

[22 : 36] Then verse 22 says, Now, who knows if it's true or not, but they're going to say it.

Then Jesus says, So, listen, I'm not trying to scare you. I'm not trying to make you look over your shoulder constantly to see if God's trying to pull your salvation away from you.

I promise I'm not trying to do that. But I'm simply trying to open our eyes to the reality that there is such a thing as a counterfeit faith that will not hold up in the end.

And I'd rather tell you this now than let any of us get to the end and be surprised. And this happens a lot in the American church that has modeled a lot of stuff in our own ways.

But this passage shares what true life-giving faith in Jesus looks like. And these are Jesus' words here. Number one, in verse 23, it all comes down to a personal relationship with Christ.

[23 : 38] Did you know Jesus intimately or did you just do a lot of religious works, attend some services, grab onto a leadership role, learn to speak Christianese and put some money in the plate thinking that you were saved by doing all that while your heart was still unchanged?

Listen, those are good things. But those things have to be the result of your salvation, not what leads to your salvation. They don't bring it. And then number two, verse 21, did you do the will of the Father bearing the fruit of your salvation?

Let me put it another way. If you know Jesus personally, you'll be changed and godly things will flow from you. And if we apply this as a church while holding it up to God's word, especially to the book of Acts, what the church of Jesus Christ should look like is what we're going to see.

When we apply this, we ask the question, are we going to take our call as a church sharing the hope of Jesus with a lost world? Are we going to take that seriously? Because as William Temple put it, the church is the only organization that exists for the benefit of those who are not its members.

And while there are definitely blessings to be a part of a life-giving body of believers, absolutely, this quote shines a light on our attitudes in the church that need to be all about planting and watering seeds of the gospel, seeing Jesus transform hearts.

[25 : 01] We are the church. And a few initiatives that we are working on start with building relationships with different community leaders, seeing how we can serve our neighbors.

We also will leverage technology so the community knows we're here and we care. And last, we want to create a culture of what we have often called crowd surfing, where we're very intentional when we gather.

We're ministering, we're praying for one another. And this is something our elders and staff already do because we care about you. And we want to ask you to do the same. When you walk in these doors, you need to have the mindset that you're a missionary.

And there are all kinds of hurts among us. There are people going through stuff. There are people who are broken. There could be someone who's thinking, I'm just going to end this. And yet, this is their last chance to see if there's a God who really cares.

And we can be an example to them. We need each other. And I know it's easy to fly in for a service, get your kids to class, and then head home as quick as possible to beat the parking lot rush.

[26 : 04] I get it. But can I challenge you to do something differently? To slow down. To introduce yourself to someone each week. A new family every week.

Introduce yourself. Get to know people. Spend a few extra minutes talking after the service.

Because evangelism even happens inside our four walls. FCC, no matter where we go, let's be the church.

And I'll leave you with this metric, this goal that we aim for over the next three years. Here it is.

Here's what we want. Every believer at FCC builds a friendship with at least one unsaved person sharing the good news within three years.

So let me ask you, who's the one face that God keeps bringing to your mind? Let's commit that to prayer and let's shine for Jesus as we move out into the community and we start to impact lives.

Pray with me. Father, we are so very grateful for just your amazing love. For how you have redeemed those of us who have called on your name.

[27 : 14] Those of us who have repented of our sins, confessed you as Lord, been baptized into you just like your word teaches. And Lord, we just, because we are redeemed in you, because we've been washed white by the blood of Christ, we want to be your hands and feet in this world.

We want to shine for you. And God, you've given us our unique personalities and our quirks and the way we do things. And you put people in our path that will connect with that.

So Father, we ask right now, use us. Put us where you want us to be so that we can share the hope of Jesus. And Father, help us to build those relationships so we have that equity so that we can deposit Jesus into the lives of people.

Thank you, Jesus. And may our one, whoever our one is, may you just do an awesome work in them. And we pray all this in Jesus' holy name.

Amen. Hey, once again, my name is Ray Sweet from First Christian Church, Greensburg, Indiana.

And we would love to connect with you. You can always email me at ray at FCCGreensburg.com.

[28 : 24] Let me know if you listen to these messages and God is using them in your life. Let us know. We love to hear that just to know how we can do a better job ministering. But if you have any

questions about your faith, if you want to talk about giving your life to Jesus, maybe you have questions about the church, here's a couple ways to reach out.

Like I said, ray at FCCGreensburg.com. Or you can call me at 812-663-8488. You can ask for me, Ray, or you can ask for anybody else on staff could help you with this.

So please feel free to reach out. And listen, we hope you have a fantastic week. And keep shining for Jesus.