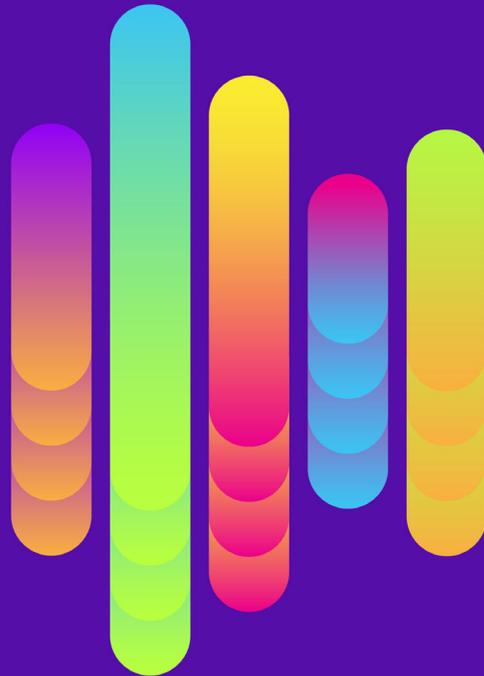


# REVIVAL

five shifts to host revival



Revival is on the way. We cannot plan a revival. Revival is something God does. But we can prepare and pray for it. God is calling us to prepare for revival and we believe we are going to host revival right here in the heart of downtown Colorado Springs. Get ready.

## REVIVAL • John 17:20–23 • Tim McConnell • May 24, 2020

Five shifts we want to make to host revival right here. Five movements. Five changes to the way we think about church, the way we do church, the way we pray for our church. All rooted in the prayer of Jesus in John 17, these are five things I think we can change right now to posture ourselves ready to host revival. And we have a very strange and unique window during the COVID crisis to step out of the status quo and out of our rut to look at this whole thing from the outside (or from inside our living rooms). First Pres isn't shut down. First Pres is growing and adapting. We are only getting better, church. These five shifts can posture us for a season of greater impact than we have ever known. Are you in? I believe we are going to see the Lord's hand, we are going to see and know the goodness of the Lord in all of this and we will see a harvest. Galatians 6 tells us, "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up" (Galatians 6:9).

So we talked about shift number one: from **Confusion to Clarity**. We work for clarity, uniting in one purpose. "Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent" (John 17:3). It's a **Return**. Return to the clear and primary mission of the church. The second is from **Building to People**. This is restoring. **Restore** the church to the picture of the church Jesus had in His prayer; not a building or a religious service provider with memberships, but a movement of people on mission for Jesus. The third shift is from **Past-Bound to Future-Captured**. The key word is **Renew**. The church is always being renewed, made fresh for the next generation. Constant renewal. Fourth we talked about moving from **Indebted to Investing**. My "R" word here is **Replenish**. The mission of the church is hindered when her people are stuck in debt. When we try to live beyond our means, we get tied down by debt. Replenish the church. Let us help you find the way forward out of debt and into investing intentionally in the work of the Lord. I love how Joe Sangl closed: you don't have to be wealthy to be generous; you just have to be generous to be generous. Investing, generous lives with our generous Jesus.

Today is shift number five, from **Served to Empowered**. This is a shift from staff-served worshippers to staff-empowered disciples. My word is **Rediscover**. Rediscover your part to play in ministry, your role, your gift to add to the mission of the church. We are not here to be served up ministry by the staff; we are here to be fed and encouraged and equipped by the staff

to be in ministry. This is a ministry multiplier. Let's say a church has a dozen full-time ministry staff. Hey, that's a dozen, if you will, units of ministry each week--with our staff, those are quality units. That's great. Twelve solid units of ministry. But what if that twelve empowered 2,000 or 3,000 people to find and activate their ministry gifts? That's a multiplier. That's exponential. That's **Revival** stuff. "So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up" (Ephesians 4:11-12). One good definition of church is a people God gave a job to do expecting them to do it. Rediscover that you are empowered for a purpose.

Did Jesus pray for that? You bet he did. Remember: "I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do" (John 17:4). Jesus sees Himself as sent on a mission by the Father, given a job to do and giving glory to God by finishing it, doing it. I promised we would talk about knowing ourselves as people sent with a purpose from God. Then remember verse 18, "As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world" (John 17:18). I swore we would talk about seeing ourselves as people sent with a purpose by God into the world. I swore it! Hand on the Bible! Now I keep my promise. Today is all about purpose. Your life is a *mission*. Your *life* is a mission. The days you have, the breaths, the steps you still have, your life was given to you for the glory of God to accomplish a mission. A purpose. A point. You are to, as our missions engagement team says, "Live sent."

"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message" (John 17:20). "For those who will believe in me through their message." I picture the disciples gathered around Jesus, like a campfire circle, basking in the glow and warmth of His prayers for them, and at this point, their eyes open and they look over their shoulder. And what's back there? Behind those twelve, there are billions and billions. Billions of believers on the face of the planet right now. Men and women and children, every stripe, every nation. You and me! Thank God they turned and shared. When Jesus saves you, He doesn't just save you for you; Jesus sees all those who will be saved through your salvation as you share His message. "Those who will believe in me through their message."

It's so easy to get comfortable in the warmth and the light of Jesus' prayer. We grow comfortable and secure basking in the glow of the light and life we feel as we

gather around the Lord. We get so comfortable, we fall asleep in it and forget that we are here on a mission. We are not here to be served something up by our religious service provider, served worshippers asleep around the fire ring. We are here to be coached, encouraged and sent, empowered disciples, turning around to share this message of Christ with a world that desperately needs to know. Those who will believe in me through their message! Who are they? Who do you think of? Write their names down. Pray for them today. Christ prayed that you would not sit comfortably served, but that you would rise boldly empowered.

There are more to join the circle. Jesus prays for them along with us, "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" (John 17:21). Oh, a pastor could harp on this for the rest of his career. What is the last time you issued an invitation to know Jesus? When did you last spend a moment praying for an opportunity to share Christ, praying for the next step in a spiritual conversation? Not just a blind share of a link to a sermon, but a careful, prayerful effort to live out what Jesus is praying in verse 20--that through your message, because of the words that spill out of your mouth, someone comes to believe. Someone comes to Jesus. Someone comes home to God for eternal life. "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 17:23). The world will know, they will know the love of God. Lit up with love to turn to others with love. Sent with a message to reach others with a message. Leading the darkened to the light of Jesus. Not just served; but empowered. That's the church ready to host revival.

A good definition of church is a people God has assigned a mission, empowered for a mission, and has expected to be about it. "I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do" (John 17:4). We share that same view, empowered on mission. What tools does Jesus pray into us for this mission? Look, "I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one" (John 17:22). What does that mean? It means the glow, the light of Jesus reflects off of you. A little of His glory shines through you. This is a little of that Matthew 5, "you are the light of the world" stuff. "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden" (Matthew 5:14). Or that Philippians 2, "you shine like stars" business. "So that you may become blameless and pure, 'children of God without fault in a warped and crooked genera-

tion.' Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky" (Philippians 2:15). We get a little uncomfortable with this. We would prefer, like Moses, to throw a veil over the glory of Jesus shining off our face. But we are meant to let it shine. It shines off our simple, ordinary skin. It shines through the cracks of our weakness. He has made His light to shine in our hearts to push back darkness in this world, "But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us" (2 Corinthians 4:7). Jesus empowers us with a share of His glory. Not just for us. Not served, but empowered for those who rise up behind to see the light.

Jesus empowers us with "sent-ness." "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 17:23). It's hard to keep track of the concentric circles as Jesus prays. "I am in you, Father. You are in me." Then Jesus prays that "they would be in me, I in you, you in me, you in them" for the disciples. But behind the disciples is the church universal, the church invisible, the church triumphant from all times and all places, and Jesus also prays for them to be in Him, in them, in the Father. One. The world learns in Jesus that God sent a mission of love. You loved them, and they know it, because you sent me. But catch this, the sending is part of the love. You sent me, says Jesus, and loved me. They know you loved me because you sent me, they know they are loved just as I am loved, and now part of that love is that you send them. Jesus said earlier in the prayer, "As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world" (John 17:18). The sending is part of the love even as the sending is to reveal the love. Have I lost you? I can't see you!

God has a purpose for your life. That purpose is good. At the very core of it is that, as you have been saved by Christ, you are sent to share that salvation with the world. The sending is a love, the sending and the giving of a purpose is a love. You have purpose. That is a gift. Purpose. You need purpose. You need a good one. Young people, you need a purpose worth fighting for to get you through the challenges you face. Working age people, you need a purpose that lifts your head out of the monotony and the sleep-inducing rhythms of work. Retired people, is your purpose something in the past? No! You had it defined wrong. Christ has a purpose for you rising to a new day this morning. Oh, it is so hard to see purpose in the day-to-day life we are living right now, isolated and shut off. But you need purpose. Define your purpose in Christ or it will be defined for

you by the world. This is critical. If you don't ground your purpose in Christ, you will get grounded in a false purpose defined for you. "I guess my purpose is to make this paycheck. I guess my only purpose is to pay this rent. I guess that's what I'm good for, walking this dog and carrying its little bag of ... you know." Do you know what I'm talking about? Define your purpose in Christ or it will wash over you from the outside. Christ is inside you, giving you purpose as a gift of love.

In 2007, Rick Warren published his famous book, "The Purpose Driven Life." He said, you need to seek God to define your purpose. "You didn't create yourself, so there is no way you can tell yourself what you were created for! ...If you want to know why you were placed on this planet, you must begin with God. You were born by His purpose and for His purpose." The book has sold tens of millions of copies. It is the second most translated book in the world. Purpose. We need it. And the opening line of the book? It will surprise you. A book that is to help you find your purpose, to define the meaning of your life. The opening line is this: "It's not about you." Opening line! Purpose is found in living out the mission Jesus gives. Not served; empowered. Sent. That the world may know and believe.

It is Memorial Day weekend. We remember those who gave their lives for a purpose, a mission larger than themselves. We are grateful. I wish they all knew Jesus. We are not here to be served, but to serve. We are not here to be served but empowered, on mission. Living sent, to share the light of Christ. To share the love of Christ in a world that is darkened and broken. Your choices, they don't just impact you, but all those behind. In 1830, Charles Finney was preaching in Rochester, New York, during a revival called the Second Great Awakening. As he preached, a man crept up behind him and tugged on his clothes. Finney stopped and turned. The man said, "If you call people forward for salvation, I will come." Finney came to the end of his message, and invited any who wished to make a public proclamation of faith in Jesus Christ to come forward. This man did. As it turns out, he was the Chief Justice of the New York State Supreme Court. Behind him came almost every lawyer in Rochester. In the next few months, tens of thousands came to faith across the region. One man risked it. Purpose. Not served, but empowered. That's revival.

## STUDY GUIDE

### REVIVAL • "Served to Empowered"

John 17:20-23

**UP:**

#### **UP: Connect with God through Spending Time in His Word**

Friends, humanity is being rocked right now by needing to physically distance ourselves from one another. For the Christian, we do this out of love for neighbor. Fight hard to distinguish these two realities: physically distancing and relationally separating.

Now is the time to become the greatest artist you have ever been. Create ways to stay relationally and spiritually tethered to your core circle. We need each other. We are gifts to one another! Make phone calls; text photographs; set up video gatherings. Together, we are the hands and feet of Christ to one another and this city!

Begin your study in prayer. Read and reflect on John 17:20-23.

- 1) As our passage opens this week, for whom does Jesus extend His prayer?
- 2) In verse 20, how will this new group of believers come to belief?
- 3) According to verse 23, what is the result of the unity of the body of Christ?

**OUT:**

#### **Connect With the World Around Us (Join God in His Mission)**

4) The key theme this week is rediscovering that we as children of God have an eternally significant purpose, which directly corresponds to the mission God has entrusted to us. We are being called away from a posture of "receiving church" and into a posture of being the church, which means in part to live a life of service for the glory of God and the good of our neighbors. How big of a shift is this for you?

5) Pastor Tim points us this week to Ephesians 4:11-12, "So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up" (Ephesians 4:11-12). How well supported do you feel by your First Pres family in being "equipped for works of service?" Please feel welcome to submit your feedback to our Pastor of Discipleship at [mthornton@firstprescos.org](mailto:mthornton@firstprescos.org).

6) How central are "works of service" to Christian life? What motivates us to do "works of service?"

**IN:**

#### **Connect with Each Other**

COVID-19: Spend time connecting with your core circle on how you are doing. Pray together.