



April 14 & 15, 2018
Pastor Mark Toone
Chapel Hill Presbyterian Church

Beyond These Walls Momentum
Sending Leaders
Acts 4:1-13

Welcome to worship! If you are visiting today, you have walked into the middle of a party! A year ago the members of this congregation made a heroic commitment to eliminate all our debt...\$5.4 million...and free up \$600,000 annually for ministry. We are celebrating because in nine months, we have received over \$2 million! Amazing. We have paid off one of three mortgages and next week, for the grand finale of our party will burn that sucker! Real fire! Right here in our chapel/sanctuary, just like Pentecost!

If you **are** visiting us, you couldn't have picked a better time to catch a glimpse of our heart as a church.

We are calling this "Beyond These Walls" because we believe God has called us to give ourselves as never before! How can we who have been SO blessed be an even greater blessing to our city and peninsula? We dream of that day two years from now when we pay off the last dollar and are freed up to invest in ministries that move us beyond these beautiful walls and out...courageously...into the world.

Remember, we have three key Beyond These Walls strategies:

Make Disciples, Send Leaders and Love Our Neighbors. Last week, we dreamed of how we can love our neighbors. We dream of investing significantly in partnerships like the Rescue Mission, FISH Foodbank and WIC (Women, Infants and Children which meets on our campus). But Pastor Ellis also reminded us that every act of mercy performed by the early Church in the Book of Acts was performed IN THE NAME OF JESUS! If all we do is heal or clothe or house people...and never present to them the gift of God's salvation through Jesus... then we haven't really loved our neighbors at all!

Which is why the other "Love Our Neighbors" initiative is ALPHA. Through Alpha, not-yet-believers have the chance to ask any question they want and to hear the good news that God loves them and that Jesus died for them. Reaching out to those who have never darkened the doors of our church with the gospel of God's love...you can't get much more "Beyond These Walls" than that. **Love Our Neighbors!**

Our second Beyond These Walls strategy is to raise up, mentor and send leaders. Over 30 years, Chapel Hill has sent 15 ordained pastors and 21 missionaries into the world! The chair of our presbytery's candidates' committee calls Chapel Hill a "leadership factory." SOMEBODY...some church... needs to care about training the generation of leaders. **Well...we do!** You've already heard from several of our newest crop.

Now, I want you to hear from another: Michael Bouterse. Michael is a Whitworth graduate who did his theological studies in Oxford University. Michael serves as the Director of Thrive, a ministry to young

adults that is, indeed, thriving! Although he is a member of Fox Island Alliance Church, we consider him an adopted son...and I know you will be blessed by his word to us this morning. Will you welcome him?

MICHAEL B

Good morning, CHPC! It's an honor to bring God's Word to you. I am a leader raised up by this church. True, I'm somewhat of a mutt in my church background, but *this* church has played a tremendous role in my call to ministry, my college years, you name it. It's an honor to speak to a church that I love, and that has loved me.

Last week, our passage dealt with how Peter and John healed a crippled man in Jesus' name. But this week one of the things our passage deals with is the question of *leadership*.

How do you produce a leader?

That question is dire, because we live in a world that is starving for leadership. A number of years back a survey asked Canadian young people, "What do you long for most in life?" Their answer? "*Somebody I can believe.*"¹ Or just witness not just that country but ours! As our country rips itself apart in frothing partisan politics, the question many deep down are asking is, "Is there a leader who can unite us?"

If a leader is someone with a *spine*, someone who points others in the right direction even when everyone else is persuaded you're wrong, then that's precisely what Peter and John have become in this passage. These men, who scarce months before had played the coward and denied their Lord, here not only endure arrest for preaching in the name of Jesus but courageously *continue* to preach that name despite the hostility of the most powerful Jewish rulers alive at that time. How does that kind of leadership get produced?

As the Jewish authorities saw the bold leadership of Peter and John, they couldn't help but notice that

"they had been with Jesus" (**v. 13**). It was a fitting observation, because at the heart of Jesus' ministry was a brilliant genius for raising up leaders. Moving very quickly through the text, I want to *show* you three things that Jesus did to raise up leaders like Peter and John. And I want to *encourage* you with how I see CHPC following suit. But first, let's pray.

I'd like to suggest that there were three things that were true of Peter and John as Jesus molded them into superior leaders.

When Jesus first found them, Peter and John were

—1. MEDIOCRE—

Notice **v. 13** again. There the Jewish leaders are astonished to realize that Peter and John were

¹Ravi Zacharias, "Ravi Zacharias' Address at the United Nations International Prayer Breakfast," *Christian Embassy*, September 10, 2002, accessed April 10, 2018, <http://www.ce-un.org/resources/speeches/2002-ravi-zacharias.pdf>.

And yet this was the raw leadership material that Jesus chose. Talk about crazy! Jesus had one shot to pick twelve men to whom would fall the responsibility of spreading the most important message that could fall on human ears, and he chose *not* the best, *not* the brightest, *not* the Oxford-educated, but a bunch of country-bumpkin, rough-and-tumble fishermen.

In fact, one of the terms used to describe Peter and John in this verse is the Greek word

idiōtēs—I bet you can guess what it means! In other words, Jesus chose those whom no one would have given a prayer to. He chose all those whom the world had written off.

It's been said that only God could create a masterpiece with the materials he had to work with—and that's true of every Christian, including me. You have to realize that I am not a likely person to be raised up as a Chapel Hill leader. *I remember what I was* when God found me—a shy, sensitive, nerdy high school kid who listened to classical music, a kid with a deep longing to see God move in my life, but a kid who was persuaded he would never be cool or relevant enough for that to ever happen.

Camp misadventure

I love to tell the story of the one and only time I went to camp, when I was in sixth grade. One night my camp counselor—a rabid hockey fan—gathered us around the campfire to give each of us the name of a famous hockey player. “You’re Player So-and-So, captain of Team Such-and-Such,” he told one kid, “because, like him, you’re a *leader*.” To another he said, “You’re Player Such-and-Such, captain of Team So-and-So, because I see in you a leader, too.” But when he came to me: “Michael, you’re So-and-So Johnson, because like him, you’re the only person I know who’s brave enough to wear his shirt tucked into his pants.” I was crushed when I heard that! I thought, “...but I want to be a leader, too!”

A bit of self-doubt can be healthy. But I *really* doubted that God could ever use me. Yet it was in that very season when Chapel Hill and I found each other. Mark and many others began to pour into me, even though I didn’t go to this church! And as a result of that kind of care and nurture, I began to realize that perhaps God really could use a weak and unlikely person like me. (All without losing my love for classical music, by the way!) Jesus knew how to raise up those whom everyone else wrote off—just as Chapel Hill did for me.

—2. MENTORED—

And that leads me to my second point. Jesus not only chose the weak and mediocre; he took them in and mentored them. That, after all, is the key thing the Jewish leaders noticed about Peter and John:

For the disciples, being mentored by Jesus was the context in which they grew from a bunch of bumbling bumpkins into the legendary leaders they eventually became. Being mentored by Jesus meant receiving *relationship*, as Jesus spent nearly all his public ministry with his disciples at his side. It meant being *trained*, as within that relationship, Jesus taught his disciples how to live, love, and read Scripture as he did. The linchpin to Jesus’ ability to produce leaders was his masterful mentoring.

Mentorship is messy! It takes an investment of love, time, and energy. And in Jesus’ case that investment cost him everything. Think about it: the only reason Peter and John could be “with Jesus” was because Jesus chose to be with them—because he willingly laid aside the infinite riches of his heavenly glory to dwell poor and penniless among them. The only reason Peter and John could have relationship with Jesus was because they’d been reconciled to him through his sacrifice on the cross.

And most importantly of all, the only reason Peter and John ever amounted to anything as leaders was because by his death and resurrection, Jesus made it possible for his followers to be

Let me be clear: if Jesus, the best leadership coach in the world, forbade his disciples from doing ministry until the Holy Spirit came upon them in power, then it doesn't matter if Chapel Hill is the best leadership factory the world has ever seen. If the leaders sent out from this church are not called of God, are not molded and crafted by Jesus, and are not anointed with the Holy Spirit for his service, they are completely and utterly useless. God—not seminary, not church—is the only one who can raise up effective leaders.

Jesus mentored leaders through sacrificially investing in them. And that, I hope you know, is the culture of Chapel Hill.

Car rally

Let me give you one example of this in my own life. Any of you remember *this*?

This was a cross-town, multi-youth group scavenger hunt that I helped organize in my senior year of high school. That experience of leading a youth outreach was huge for me, and it inspired me to pursue a call to ministry. And do you know which pastor and which church sparked that idea and invested time and resources to make it possible? This pastor, this church. Such was one of the many ways Chapel Hill invested in me, and it changed me.

—3. MOBILIZED—

Finally, the last thing Jesus did to produce leaders was to mobilize them. That's exactly what you see in this passage. Jesus could have done all the ministry himself. And yet instead he made room for new leaders, passing the baton of ministry on to them and sending them out to do it.

In fact, such is the whole reason the events of this chapter take place.

In **Luke 22:53**, we find out that during Jesus' time in Jerusalem he taught regularly at the temple;

and in **Acts 3:2**, we're told the crippled man whom Peter and John healed used to beg there every day. That means this man—whose healing by Peter and John sparked the incredible witnessing opportunity we saw in this chapter—had seen Jesus before, but Jesus evidently *chose not to heal him*. Why? I suspect it was because he knew that by entrusting the healing of this man to his disciples, a greater harvest would result.

Jesus mobilized leaders by making room for them to lead despite their inexperience. And once again, such is the culture of this church. Case in point, Mark is letting me preach! But more broadly, think of Ellis, Gunnar, Madison, and other young leaders. All reflect the willingness of this church to create a space where the next generation can be nurtured and unleashed into their full potential—or sometimes, as in my case, released to a work God has called them to beyond these walls.

Chapel Hill, I hope it's clear how much you have loved young leaders like me. I love you back. Thank you for being a church that saw past my *mediocre* "raw material", that *mentored* me so lavishly, and that has *mobilized* me into God's great and glorious harvest field. To him be the glory for what he has done in my life, and for what he is doing in this church.

Let's pray.

Mark Toone

Isn't it a blessing to see how God is using your church to raise up such quality young leaders? I wonder if you realize how rare this is? Dr. Jeff Jeremiah, the leader of our denomination, offered these thoughts:

"The further we move into the 21st century the more we realize that the local church will be the place where the educating and training of the next generation of leaders in the American church occurs. Chapel Hill is a key leader among our 600 churches stepping up to this opportunity."

Our mission as a church is "working together to present everyone mature in Christ." In a sense, a commitment to be a training and sending church is evidence of maturity... because it is painful and selfless. It is painful to be a sending church because it means saying a lot of goodbyes. And it is selfless because OTHERS are going to benefit from the fruit of our labors. But isn't that a description of maturity...of spiritual parenthood? It is certainly going "Beyond These Walls."

And it wouldn't be possible without your sacrifice. 700 families have made commitments to BTW, both great and small. As I shared, we have already received over \$ 2 million towards that commitment. **Thank you!** That deserves to be acknowledged and celebrated! One of the ways we will celebrate is with a few strokes of the pen. In your bulletin you will find this "Momentum" card. (By the way, this is only for those who consider Chapel Hill your church home. Our guests just get to eaves drop on a little family business!)

It is important to remember that although we've run a great first lap, this is a three-lap race! We need to keep up our momentum; need to keep fanning the embers of this fire. This card is one way to do that. You'll find three options:

If you made a commitment last year, you may simply want to

Reaffirm that commitment by saying, **"You can count on us to finish what we said we will do. We're STILL in!"** OR...you might want to

Revise your pledge. Some of you have already paid your entire pledge ...and said that you'd like to do more. Terrific! If you prayerfully want to extend your commitment, we will certainly be happy to make that change! Or thirdly, there are some who have made gifts to BTW who weren't here a year ago. In fact, we've had over \$100,000 of unpledged gifts come in! Maybe you'd like to formalize your commitment by making a

New pledge and add your name to that list of 700 Chapel Hill champions.

Reaffirm, Revise or New. If you'd take these cards home, talk and pray about it with your family, check the appropriate box, and return with it next weekend, we will wrap up our celebration by offering them to the Lord during worship, as well as burning that note!

I love the fact that I get to shepherd a church with a heart for those beyond our walls! So many churches hunker down. They hide behind their walls, talk only to each other and hold on for dear life. It takes guts...Holy Spirit empowered guts...to keep our hearts and our mission turned outward. But it is exactly what the early church did. It is exactly what Jesus did. And by God's grace, it is exactly what we will do. PRAY

Benediction with all mentees.

Here's the benediction script. You need to practice the making of the sign of the cross! Don't be haphazard about it! Do it confidently and deliberately, as if you've been doing it forever! The right hand has the last two fingers slightly folded in and the heel of the hand facing outward. Make a clear starting and ending point for each leg of the cross. Like I said, we will practice!

(MT- Invite them to receive benediction as all mentees move into place, MB in middle.)

Michael- The Lord Bless you and keep you.

Madison-The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you.

Ryan- The Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you his peace.

Gunnar- In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

All-Amen!