

“Together” – Week 2

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2026 - MICHAEL BOWERS



Summary - "Together in Christ"

Week two of the our “Together” series picks up with the question the church began asking last Sunday: What does it look like to grow together as the body of Christ? Not hang out together. Not walk into the same building and check our kids in at the same kiosk. Not simply sit in the same room together for an hour a week. What does it look like to truly grow together in Christ. Acts 1:8 reminded us that every follower of Jesus has been given His power and His purpose, and Acts 2:42-47 showed us what that looked like in the first church – believers devoted to the apostles’ teaching, to fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer. This week the sermon names what actually holds a church like that together. It isn’t shared hobbies, hometowns, or taste in music. Paul tells the Romans that “we, though many, are one body in Christ.” Surrender to Jesus is the bond that unites us. From there, the sermon draws out three practices straight from the life of the early church: praying biblically alongside other believers, elevating Scripture so that God’s Word – not our preferences – gets the final say, and Christ-centered sharing, where we tell one another what God has done and is doing in our lives. Acts 4 shows all three in a single moment. The believers report what happened, they pray Scripture back to God, and the place where they are gathered is shaken. The invitation is simple and concrete: take one step this week. Find someone to pray with, put one truth into practice, and tell someone what God is doing in your life.

Scripture - Acts 2:42-47 & 4:23-26, 31; Romans 12:4-5 (ESV)

Acts 2:42-47 - 42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. 43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. 44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common. 45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Acts 4:23-26, 31 - 23 When they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. 24 And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, “Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, 25 who through the mouth of our father David, your servant,^[d] said by the Holy Spirit, “‘Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples plot in vain? 26 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed’— ... 31 And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.

Romans 12:4-5 - 4 For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, 5 so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

Daily Reflection Questions (Use T.R.U.T.H. below)

DAY 1 | MATTHEW 6:5-13 – PRAY LIKE THIS. Jesus says your Father “knows what you need before you ask him.” If that is true, what are you free to stop performing in prayer – and what one honest sentence (“Father, I’m afraid,” “Father, help me forgive”) do you need to pray this week?

DAY 2 | 2 TIMOTHY 3:14-17 – BREATHED OUT AND PROFITABLE. Teaching, reproof, correction, training: which of those do you welcome, and which do you quietly avoid? What would it look like to invite a small group member to speak honestly into one area of your life this month?

DAY 3 | ACTS 4:23-31 – REPORT, PRAY, AND STAND FIRM. Verse 23 says that when they were released, “they went to their friends and reported” what happened. Who are the friends you go to first after a hard day – and do they hear the spiritual side of your story, or only the facts?

DAY 4 | HEBREWS 10:19-25 – STIR UP ONE ANOTHER. Verse 24 says to “consider how to stir up one another to love and good works.” To consider means to think ahead. Pick one small group member or friend: what specifically could you say or do this week to encourage their next step?

DAY 5 | JAMES 5:13-16 – PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER. James says, “confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed.” Who is one believer you trust enough to be fully honest with? If no one comes to mind, what is a first step – a group, a Connect Conversation, coffee with a pastor?

DAY 6 | PSALM 66:16-20 – COME AND HEAR WHAT HE HAS DONE. “Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will tell what he has done for my soul.” If you had two minutes in your group this week, what would you tell? It does not have to be dramatic – just true.

Daily Real Time with God (T.R.U.T.H)

T TALK TO GOD IN PRAYER- Start by asking God to help you understand the text and prepare your heart.

R READ THE BIBLICAL TEXT- Read the initial text, then read it again to look for key words and context clarity.

U UNDERSTAND THE TEXT - Explore who wrote the book and their audience, examine verses around the text, or look up key words to better understand their meaning. Ask questions like: Is there a sin to avoid? A promise to claim? A command to obey? What does it teach about God?

T THINK ABOUT AND APPLY THE TEXT- How does this verse change the way you live? Is there an application or choice you need to make to live or think differently?

H HONOR GOD IN PRAYER- Pray through God's Honor/Adoration, God's Kingdom/Surrender, God's Provision/Gratitude, God's Forgiveness/Confession, and God's Power/Protection (see Matthew 6:5-15).

Tools for Further Study

- <https://www.blueletterbible.org/>
- <https://www.bibleref.com/>
- <https://www.gotquestions.org/>
- <https://answersingenesis.org/answers/>
- <https://gospelcoach.ai/>
- <https://carm.org/>

Key Thoughts

The Question: Grow Together, Not Just Gather Together

The series is built on one question: What does it look like to grow together as the body of Christ? Gathering in the same building is not the same as growing together. Before Jesus ascended, He gave His followers both power and purpose in Acts 1:8 – “you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

The book of Acts follows that map: Jerusalem (chapters 1-7), Judea and Samaria (8-11), Paul’s missionary journeys (12-28), and finally Rome, from which the gospel reaches the world. Acts 2:42-47 shows what that power looked like inside the church:

- Devoted to the apostles’ teaching
- Devoted to fellowship
- Committed to the breaking of bread – shared meals and the Lord’s Supper
- Committed to prayer
- Filled with awe at what God was doing
- Generous every day
- Worshiping together – and God moved in powerful ways

Bound Together in Christ, Not by Common Ground

The sermon described a real small group of seven men formed during a hard season of illness and recovery. They grew up in different towns, came to Christ at different ages, worked different jobs, and loved music from Southern Gospel to heavy metal to rap. On paper, they would never have ended up in the same room. What bound them together was not hobbies, hometowns, or playlists but an eternal relationship in Christ.

For as in one body we have many members... so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. – Romans 12:4-5

What unified the believers in Rome? Their surrender to Christ. What brought the believers in Jerusalem together? Their devotion to Christ. Their relationship to Jesus brought them together, their growth and giftedness in Christ equipped them, and the Holy Spirit empowered them. Being together in Christ multiplies our impact in our community.

Practice 1: Praying Biblically

Consistently connecting with God through prayer alongside other believers. The early church was devoted to prayer – fully committed. And they followed the model Jesus gave in Matthew 6.

- Pray with authenticity. Jesus confronts the desire to perform, not public prayer itself. You do not have to impress the room. You are talking to your Father.
- Let God’s priorities shape your prayers. His name, His kingdom, and His will come first – then bread, forgiveness, and protection.
- Pray as “us,” not just “me.” Jesus taught us to pray, “Our Father.” Even alone, we pray as part of a family.

Key Thoughts

Simple prayers are real prayers: “Father, I’m afraid.” “Father, I need wisdom.” “Father, help me forgive.” “Father, thank you for carrying us.”

There are no first-class Christians. Through Jesus, every believer has access to the Father.

Practice 2: Elevating Scripture

Consistently discussing and being transformed by God’s Word with other believers. The apostles’ teaching was not optional for the early church; it was essential. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says all Scripture is breathed out by God and useful for teaching, reproof, correction, and training.

When Scripture speaks clearly, our preferences must yield. – from Sunday’s message

- Receive the Word as God’s Word. Ask what the passage actually says – who wrote it, to whom, and why – before asking how it applies.
- Welcome correction. God teaches what is true, exposes what is wrong, directs us toward what is right, and trains us to keep walking.
- Let God reach beneath the surface. Hebrews 4:12-13 says His Word sees past the image we present – and Hebrews 4:16 invites us to the throne of grace for mercy.
- Help one another respond. Groups can finish a lesson and leave obedience unexplored.

Like the crowd at Pentecost who were cut to the heart, the question for every group is: “Because this is true, what should we do?” Before moving on, ask:

- What does this passage teach us about God?
- What does it reveal about us?
- What response does it call for?
- How can we help one another take that step?
- What is one step I can help you take this week?

This is why Wednesday groups, Celebrate Recovery, Sunday groups, and other nights matter so much: when we sit across from another believer and seek accountability, we grow together. So ask yourself: In what area of life is God’s Word changing you right now?

Practice 3: Christ-Centered Sharing

Consistently communicating to other believers what God has done and is doing in your life. In Acts 4, after Peter and John were released, they reported to their friends, turned to Scripture, and prayed together – and the place was shaken. All three practices appear in one moment.

Key Thoughts

We talk easily about schedules, kids, work, and favorite teams. But followers of Jesus also have a story of grace to tell:

- “I was convicted by that passage, and I asked someone to forgive me.”
- “I have been afraid, but God is teaching me to trust Him.”
- “Someone from our group showed up when I needed help.”
- “I had a chance to speak about Jesus. Would you pray for that person?”

Ephesians 5:19 adds worship to the picture: we sing to the Lord and we address one another. When you sing truth beside someone who is grieving or weary, your voice helps them remember what is true. In groups, make room for one question: Where have you seen God at work, and what is He teaching you? Then listen, give thanks, open Scripture, pray, and follow up during the week.

The Challenge: Take One Step Together

These three practices belong together. In prayer, we bring our lives before God. In Scripture, we receive His truth. In sharing, we tell one another what He is doing. That takes consistency – and grace for the weeks we are distracted or slow to obey. When that happens, we return to Jesus and take the next step.

Ask yourself:

- Who am I praying with?
- What Scripture am I putting into practice?
- With whom am I sharing what God is doing in my life?

Choose one concrete step this week. If you are in a group, come ready to participate and follow up with one person before you meet again. If you are not yet connected, a Connect Conversation or RF101 is a great next step. And if you have never trusted Jesus, start with Him. Salvation cannot be earned by attending a group, praying impressive prayers, or learning enough Bible facts. It is God’s gift, received through faith in Jesus Christ, who lived without sin, died for sinners, and rose again.

G.R.A.C.E Questions

ICE BREAKER: "What's one thing you've only kept doing because someone else did it with you? (A workout, a diet, a Bible reading plan." – go.)

G – GIVE YOUR LIFE TO CHRIST - Surrender, both initially and daily

- The sermon said the men in that small group would never have chosen each other based on hometowns, hobbies, or music. What do you usually build your closest friendships around – and what would change if being in Christ were the deeper bond?
- The sermon was clear that salvation cannot be earned by attending a group, praying impressive prayers, or learning enough Bible facts. Which of those three are you most tempted to lean on, and how does that show up at church or at home with your family?

R – REAL TIME WITH GOD - Bible reading, prayer, scripture memory, journaling

- If someone read your prayers from the last month, what would they say comes first – God's kingdom or your comfort? What is one kingdom prayer you could add this week, such as praying by name for a coworker or neighbor who does not know Jesus?
- The sermon offered simple, honest prayers: "Father, I'm afraid." "Father, I need wisdom." "Father, help me forgive." "Father, thank you for carrying us." Which one do you most need to pray right now – and would you be willing to pray it out loud with your group?

A – ACT IN OBEDIENCE - Following through on what God is teaching

- The sermon said, "When Scripture speaks clearly, our preferences must yield," and gave the example of overlooking someone in need. Where is a clear command in Scripture bumping into one of your preferences right now – maybe with a difficult family member or neighbor?
- Sometimes we leave a Bible discussion convicted and realize we need to apologize, change a habit, or trust God with something we have tried to control. Which of those three is waiting on you – and what is keeping you from taking that step before your next group?

C – COMMIT TO COMMUNITY - Accountability, discipleship, doing life together

- Of the three closing questions – Who am I praying with? What Scripture am I putting into practice? With whom am I sharing what God is doing? – which is hardest for you to answer with a real name? What would it take to have one by next week?
- The sermon asked us to follow up during the week: ask about the need someone shared and tell them how you prayed. Think of one small group member who shared something recently. When will you check in, and how – a text, a call, or a cup of coffee?

E – ENGAGE YOUR WORLD - Stewardship of your life, influence, and mission

- The believers in Acts 4 asked God for boldness, not safety. Who is one person – a coworker, neighbor, or relative – your group could pray for by name this week, asking God for an opportunity for you to talk with them about Jesus?
- The call for 50 volunteers by January 1 was described as a kingdom prayer, not a selfish one. What gift, skill, or few hours could you offer to help make disciples RF – and what is honestly holding you back from saying yes?

"Somebody will need prayer on Tuesday. Somebody will need encouragement on Thursday. Somebody will need a gentle reminder of God's truth before we gather again. Together in Christ."