

Connection Sunday... We will be closing our service early so you all get an opportunity to see the varied ministries we have, meet the leaders and hopefully choose to participate in one of them...it is important to participate in the community of God...For we were designed to add value to this world...and by that I mean to add value to the part of the world you inhabit!

- **This is the condition Jesus was sent to remedy... the condition he found the world ...us in..he had a mission...**

LK 19: 10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

- **Now someone who is lost is ... is in a sense homeless for they cannot find their way home... They do not know where home is...they cannot find where he/she belongs...**

His mission was motivated by love and compassion..

John 3:16 For God **so loved the** world that he **gave**

his one and only **Son**, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life

- **Love always does something...it serves the beloved what the beloved needs...**

John 10:10I have come that **they** may have life, and have it to the **full**...

You see salvation is not only about being saved from sin...

It is about being saved to something to resume the task for which we were originally created.

- Full has the idea of experiencing life the way it was made to be lived...and that includes production! a full life is a life embraces Life it is a life that produces,...not just consumes, nor one that squanders life by escaping from it...
- He came to give us life...**So** when Jesus Christ enters a life, this is how that new life takes place... five things happen....some immediately some progressively

One...God brings us into relationship with Christ... Resulting in a brand new creation...a new identity!

No matter our beginning, we are people of destiny in Jesus so what you're doing now counts! What counts first is your position...

Once in relationship with Christ we now are adopted into his family... We belong to the Church! The called out ones...the family of the found! You become a child of God! born of God into his family! The best gift ever!!

John 1:12 Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—

- **First of all.....One who receives Christ is given the right to become a child of God..**
- **once a child is always a child before God... As His children we are known and loved individually and as one of His children we are loved equally, there are no favorites. we are all one in Christ Jesus.**
- **...If we do not rest in our relationship to God the Father as beloved children, we will live auditioning for the position continually grading ourselves on our performance, rather than obeying and serving Him simply as faithful children**
- **And Through Jesus You now have the rights of a child of God**
- **it is not feelings it is a legal kingdom right!**

My core identity is a child of God by Right...the right is by God saying so! Saying I have now been born into his family!

We now have a family and community to participate in... His Church...which takes us to number three

Three....God brings us into relationship with his family on earth and in heaven...a Community *Which brings us to the church... the assembled or called out ones... We are a part of His Body.**

The fact that Jesus has invited you to be in his family and on His ministry team should do wonders for your self- confidence and create high expectations...you have not been created for a meager existence... AS Paul writes clarifying this in Corinthians...

1 Corinthians 12: ¹² Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³ For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. ¹⁴ Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

- **Each one is a part and performs a function for the body... living in this body as fam** The creativity in you, your talents are skills are given you so that you will be the flesh and bones touch of Jesus to that community
- **You are a one of a kind worker of God...**
- **His work!... The Apostle Paul says...**

EPH 2: 10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

- **Listen God has prepared good works for us to do...we have to prepare ourselves to do them! That is a process...part of that process is in the actual doing ...**
- **Our lives change and grow in proportion to our connection with other people...**
- **Little connection...little change**
- **Much connection much change...**

We all start out disconnected...disconnected from God from ourselves from each other and from our environment. We go from disconnected to connected to becoming a connector!

- **Your satisfaction will come from your place in adding value to others by serving them Value!!**

Anybody can be more successful in this life...Because anybody can give...

- **Questions to ask yourself...**
- **How can I find a way to serve more people?**
- **How can I exceed people's expectations?**
- **What can I do to add value to people?**

Then take your current limitation and put it on your agenda as a job to do, as a thing to figure out, get help and make happen.

- **Say then my job is to go build that. Or, I'm not like that, they say my job is to go become more of that, I can become that person who could accomplish those things.**

Gal 5:22 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,* ²³ *gentleness and self-control....* **Spirit produces this in us...Produced to add value**

- Until we all attain the whole measure of the fullness...or produce the full measure of what Christ has for each of us to produce...in life
- **the purpose is that the body of Christ will be built up...which means (expanded and strengthened).**
- **Equipping also has the idea of “to put right.” It was used for setting broken bones, and for mending nets. These ministries work together to produce strong, mended, fit Christians.**
- **until we reach the whole measure of Christ ... which is part of the full life.**
- **We are most blessed, and satisfied when we serve him by serving his cause...making what matters to him most matter to us most...and in that we find ourselves...**

so what to do?

1. **Serve with what you possess... Let God deal with the things you have not, nor have control over...we must learn to depend on his power....not on what we bring Him**
2. **God will make what you have be enough!they all ate and were satisfied!**
3. **You will receive back greater than what you gave!...wisdom , faith, joy power, understanding, more opportunities and fulfillment**

There are two sides to each one of our lives...

- The person God has called you *to be*...
- What has God called you *to do*....add value to people
- Questions to ask yourself...
- What can I do to add value to people? and you add value to yourself...you will value yourself more

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- **we have to prepare ourselves to do them! That is a process**

Isa 32:**⁸ **But the noble make noble plans, and by noble deeds they stand.

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***John 1:12** Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the **right** to become **children of God**—*

- **First of all..... a child of God..is always a child before God... As His children we are known and loved individually and as one of all His children we are loved equally, there are no favorites. There is no distinction; we are all one in Christ Jesus.**
- **...If we do not rest in our relationship to God the Father as beloved children, we will live auditioning for the position continually grading ourselves on our performance, rather than obeying and serving Him simply as faithful children**
- **And Through Jesus You now have the rights of a child of God**
- **it is not feelings it is a legal kingdom right!**

My core identity is a child of God by Right...but I also have family responsibilities

- **You are a one of a kind work of God...designed to do work special work in the kingdom!**
- **His work!... The Apostle Paul says...**

EPH 2: 10** **For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

- **Listen God has prepared good works for us to do...we have to prepare ourselves to do them! That is a process**
- **Our lives change and grow in proportion to our connection with other people...**
- **Little connection...little change**
- **Much connection much change...**

The fact that Jesus has invited you to be in his family and on His ministry team should do wonders for your self- confidence and create high expectations...you have not been created for a meager existence...

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2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

- **Relationship with Jesus is the beginning of the creation of a new race...This new race is different because God not only lives with us...the new creation is that he wants to live in us!!**
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- *Life should progressively look different for all of us who are in Christ...He changes us and reshapes us and redirects us!...we realize our lives have been planned by God with a purpose in our generation...and it will fit us!!
- **We gain understanding in who we are in Jesus... and that we are his Poema...masterpieces of God ...created to do good worthwhile things on this planet...**
- **Jesus releases us from the guilt and power of sin and to begins the restoration to our full humanity.**
- **When God made Humanity he gave them their job description...and that has not changed...**

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I believe each of us is both....we are each called to blaze new trails ...and we are called to settle in them! **but not everyone seizes the opportunity!**

- **Whether you are blazing a new trail for yourself or settling into a new life...you are on an adventure! both require a determined spirit...both require a willingness to go where others won't each require a tenacity to overcome obstacles and a fearlessness to chart a new course and maintain it!**

Isaiah 43:19 See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.

*John 10:10....I have come that they **may** have **life**, and have it to the **full**.*

- **Even though God is doing new things ...he still gives us the option to come along with him or not! Honor come in the doing of the new!**
- **May have a full life! they may have life but not to the full!**
- **Listen God gave us all spiritual gifts, talents, skills and a capacity for more! but he does not force us to use them.**
- **Yet if you want to be respected or honored and commended at last by the Lord himself and by all his people, then the wise thing is to volunteer to occupy the life you have been given to the Full**

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No matter our beginning, we are people of destiny in Jesus so what you're doing now counts! What counts first is your position...

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- **First of all..... a child of God..is always a child before God... As His children we are known and loved individually and as one of all His children we are loved equally, there are no favorites. There is no distinction; we are all one in Christ Jesus.**
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- **it is not feelings it is a legal kingdom right!**
- **My core identity is a child of God by Right...As John tells us..**

*Galatians 3:26 So in Christ Jesus you are all **children of God** through faith*

- And as a child of God not only do we have rights we also have responsibility

All those hours spent in doing your jobs...have purpose and meaning in the plan of God

- your employment right now is part of the high calling for which you were originally created.
- **You are God's image bearers!**
- The creativity in you, your talents are skills are given you so that you will be the flesh and bones touch of Jesus to that community

The fact that Jesus has invited you to be in his family and on His ministry team should do wonders for your self- confidence and create high expectations...you have not been created for a meager existence...

Psa 139: 13 For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. ¹⁴ I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful...

- You are a one of a kind work of God...
- His work!... The Apostle Paul says...

EPH 2: 10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

- Listen God has prepared good works for us to do...we have to prepare ourselves to do them! That is a process...part of that process is in the actual doing ...
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of participating/serving in Community....we all start out disconnected...disconnected

from God from ourselves from each other and from our environment. We go from disconnected to connected to becoming a connector!

John 3:16 For God **so loved the world** that he **gave** (did something) his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life

- **To truly connect requires building bridges.. He built the bridge to humanity by becoming one of us.**
- **and he had a mission...**

*LK 19: 10 For the Son of Man **came** to seek and to save the lost.*”

- **Now someone who is lost is ... is in a sense homeless for they cannot find their way home... They do not know where home is...they cannot find where he/she belongs...**
- **His mission was motivated by love and compassion**

Matthew 9:36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

- **This is the condition Jesus was sent to remedy... the condition he found the world ...us in..**
- **and you know what happens..every promise of God in the Bible becomes your promise**

2 Cor 2:20 For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God. ²¹ Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, ²² set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

We are Found! Creator and creation connected... H.S. the Spirit of God takes up residence with us...

Which take us to the second change in our life...

Two... Once in relationship with Christ we now are adopted into his family... We belong to the Church! The called out ones...the family of the found! You become a child of God! born of God into his family! The best gift ever!!

John 1:12 Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—¹³ children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

- Verse 12 has been rightly seen as one of the greatest verses in all of the New Testament for it tells us how to be saved.
- A Simple Step—Receiving ...The way of salvation begins with a simple step: “To all who received him.”
- The word “receive” means to welcome a visitor into your home. It’s what happens when someone knocks at your door and you open the door and invite them to come in.

To “receive” Christ means to welcome him as an honored guest and to have him make you his home. “He gave the right to become children of God.” The word “right” means “honor” or “privilege.”

And on earth we now have a family and community to participate in... His Church...which takes us to number three

Three....God brings us into relationship with his family on earth and in heaven...a Community ***Which brings us to the church... the assembled or called out ones... We are a part of His Body.

Paul writes clarifying this in Corinthians...where there was obvious problems of pride...

1 Corinthians 12: ¹² Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³ For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. ¹⁴ Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

- Each one is a part and performs a function for the body... living in this body as fam The creativity in you, your talents are skills are given you so that you will be the flesh and bones touch of Jesus to that community

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Isa 32:8 But the noble make noble plans, and by noble deeds they stand.

- remember your job and satisfaction will come from your place in fill the earth with Value!!

Anybody can be more successful in this life...Because anybody can give...

- Questions to ask yourself...
- How can I find a way to serve more people?
- How can I exceed people's expectations?
- What can I do to add value to people?

Then take your current limitation and put it on your agenda as a job to do, as a thing to figure out, get help and make happen.

- Say then my job is to go build that. Or, I'm not like that, they say my job is to go become more of that, **I can become that person who could accomplish those things.**

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1. The problem is Relationships take time. Your relationship with God and with the church is no different. Time and commitment
2. To reap the benefit of the community you have to do the work of being in community and that means showing up and pitching in.
3. But here's the really great news: when you put the time in, a healthy church community is an incredible blessing.

But we are not left on our own in this...we have the Word and the Spirit And equipping to serve God in these things by the acts of serving others...

Eph 4:11 So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹² *to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up*

- So in the community of God...Christ himself gave leaders to equip people for this service... and they are to perform service Why? so the body will grow up and become strong..!
- Each of us has gifts to give others ...to be used in the body, to help the body...including ourselves to grow up and become strong...
- this is to be done UNTIL...

¹³ *until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the *fullness* of Christ.*

- Unity Maturity, and Whole measure ...means character!
- Character must be produced
- Until we all reach unity...until we all Know or comprehend Jesus **maturely**.. Do you realize you are stunted in your maturity without service? Why? because the fruit of the Spirit cannot be produced without serving others...
- you are not more mature than the fruit that is displayed in your relationships..you *have to get in the mix...*

Gal 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ *gentleness and self-control.... Spirit produces this in us...Produced to add value*

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There are two sides to each one of our lives...

- The person God has called you *to be*...
- What has God called you *to do*....

First: You cannot lead people where you have not gone yourself!

So you must invest in yourself, this is the to be part!

To be all that God has called you to be requires investing in yourself,

How to invest in yourself:

1. **Read daily...not only devotional but leadership materials..even one page a day!**
2. **Listen daily...in your car!**
3. **Thinking moments..set aside time weekly to think about leadership and your personal growth**
4. **Visit great places...i.e. a pastor of a church of 200 visiting a church that has 600..**
5. **Talk to greater leaders...who in your life is three or four laps ahead of you ask to meet with them regularly**
6. **Be committed to lifelong coaching or mentoring... a leader must always be ahead of their team...or they will cease to lead at some point...the student will become the master!**
7. **Create a plan and stick with it!**

The greatest obstacle to personal growth isn't ignorance or lack of intelligence. it is a lack of a plan to get you there

Keys to creating a personal growth plan:

- Identify what you need
- Place it in your calendar and live by it!

Remember this ...if you are meeting a coach or mentor, the agenda travels up! in other words bring questions!

Develop a minimum "Personal Growth Plan"

Questions you could ask yourself:

- **How much time will I dedicate to reading each day/week?** _____
- **How much time will I listen to teachings on leadership each day/week?**

- **Will I have a coach in my life** _____
- **Will I attend conferences or trainings ...if so how many a year** _____

Second.. What has God called you to do....

You must own your Present Responsibilities NOW!

Jesus call us as people to be His servants and disciples...And Jesus has entrusted us with gold/talents ...and we are responsible to use and develop them.. which is what leadership is all about...

Context: Jesus is giving examples of how Kingdom leadership works...He entrust his wealth, (Kingdom wealth) to his servant (leaders) to invest and grow the wealth...

Matthew 25:14 “Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. ¹⁵ To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey.

- **Jesus gives gifts to his leaders according to present ability...or skill..**
- **And... He expects their skill level to increase...**

¹⁶ The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. ¹⁷ So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more. ¹⁸ But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money.

- **They are given time for their work to be shown for what it is...**

¹⁹ “After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. ²⁰ The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more.’

²¹ “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’ ²² “The man with two bags of gold also came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with two bags of gold; see, I have gained two more.’

²³ “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been **faithful with a few things**; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’

- **Though their capacities were not equal..they each produced double..... the master was pleased...**
- **Except one...**

²⁴ “Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed.

²⁵ So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.’

- **He looked at the gift as a trick of the master...to hurt him...**
- **His fear of how he perceived the master...led him to decide to bury what he had been given..... to do nothing with it!**

²⁶ “His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed?’ ²⁷ Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.

- **His master called him on his reasoning...it was a lie...for if he truly believed that...he would have acted in a way to at least earn interest..**
- **The truth was he was wicked...wrong...a bad leader**
- **and was lazy...He would not put in the work to make something prosper..**
- **The master expected him to produce...it was a given ...**
- **His failure was to believe he would not be held accountable for doing nothing with what was entrusted to him, and that his blaming the master would be an acceptable excuse for doing nothing.**

²⁸ “So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. ²⁹ For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them.

- **This actually was a test...**
- **There is a leadership saying that is most important..**
 - **You first have to get the right people on the bus and the wrong people off the bus.**
 - **Then get the right people in the right seats...**
 - **Then get the bus going... this is what Jesus did...**

³⁰ And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

- **The master got the right people on the bus...the first group of servants**

- The master Got the wrong person off the bus...the lazy servant
- Got the right person in the right seat...Gave the 10 bagger the additional bag
- put the crier and the complainer with the other criers and complainers... no room for them on the bus!

What can we learn here about this leader's fall:

1) **A position of leadership is more fragile than we might believe.** As noble as our intentions might be as we assume a position of leadership or responsibility, we are always one errant, unthinking action or careless word from getting outside the boundaries of good judgment or even the moral absolutes that must frame all decisions.

2. **Complacency** Three servants given responsibility...two grew one was complacent...
 "There are many repercussions when a leader ceases to grow also. One is that the followers do not grow also and you will ultimately lose them... You cannot lead people farther than you have gone yourself. Also vision is no longer there. Instead fights begin. When people are no longer developing, they start to quarrel and complain."

3) **Arrogance** or misguided confidence...he confidently believed his own were the best solution to the issue at hand...they were not!

4) **He missed the warning signals**...He knew his master would expect increase...He was warned and did nothing about it.

5) **He rationalized his behavior**...He rationalized or convincingly lied to himself about his behavior and also believed he could minimize any feedback from his master.

6) **Derailed his leadership position**...he was not faithful with a few things...bag of gold...what he had was taken from him...

Conclusion a Successful leader takes ownership of their Responsibilities!

What you are DOING now counts!