



Making a Connection that Counts!

OPENING PRAYER:

Lord, Jesus, open our eyes and ears really wide to the potential harvest which you have called us to reap. Give us willing hearts, hands and feet so that we might serve communities and souls that are precious to you. Amen.

INTRODUCTION

Knowing our community – a quiz

LIVE AND LOVE IN EXILE

 Read Jeremiah 29:4-7

1. The Lord Almighty, the God of Israel was speaking to all those that were carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. What directives does he give them?
2. While the Babylonians actually took the people into exile, it was the Lord that did it. As Christians, how is our life like those exiles?
3. God does not want us to isolate ourselves or drone around like robots while here on earth. He wants us to live our lives and show love for our community, seeking its prosperity! How would you define “love”—is it primarily something that we do (action) or something we feel (emotion)?
4. How well does our congregation express emotion? Love?

Think about it!

It's easy for a congregation to become introverted – list ways that a congregation can get caught in a “help your own” mindset.

If we were to poll the community – what adjectives might people use to describe our congregation?

What can our congregation do to love our community and seek its prosperity?

CONNECT WITH YOUR LIFE

 Read 1 Peter 2:9-12

1. We've been talking about our congregation, let's bring it back to the individual. According to Peter, who are you?

2. Explain the transformation that God worked in you and how it affects your daily life.

3. What does Peter urge you to do as a royal priest of God?

4. A big part of "living such good lives" has to do with your vocations or your "callings." Luther referred to the callings we have (e.g. spouse, parent, employer, etc.) as the masks God wears to provide for his creation. List several callings that you have. How do/can those callings serve your neighbor?
 -
 -
 -
 -

Think about it!

Have you ever heard the phrase: "They're 'good members?'" They are really involved at church doing _____." "I wish there were more church members like them; they're at church all the time." What dangers are there in speaking like this?

The apostle Peter talked about "making a connection" with your lives. What kind of a connection to the community can you make through the vocations you've been blessed with?

CONNECT WITH YOUR FAITH

As we live our lives in our communities, developing relationships in our communities through the vocations that we've been blessed with, we are building bridges and making valuable connections. But we still need to cross that bridge and make the connection that really counts. We need to share the gospel! Jesus, the one who made the connection with us by dying and rising for us and making us royal priests in our baptism provides us with the perfect example of making a connection of faith.

Read John 4:5-26

1. How did Jesus break down a perceived social barrier?

What can we learn about humility here?

2. Jesus starts with a comfortable social interaction—he asks for some water to drink. What things are most striking about Jesus' words when it comes to connecting to the woman with his faith?

We have a hard time keeping the conversation spiritual many times. What are the reasons for that? Are any of them good reasons? Explain.

3. What message did Jesus bring to the Samaritan woman?

Think about it!

Wouldn't it be wonderful to know everything about someone we're talking to about Jesus? You don't have the advantage that Jesus had here, but there is a way to get to know the person you want to share Jesus with—Talk to them! Love them! Connect with them!

There are many different styles of doing evangelism—give a Biblical example for each style listed:

Confrontational –

Testimonial –

Interpersonal –

Invitational –

Intellectual –

Serving –

What is your style? How has God gifted you? Use it!

CONCLUSION:

Know your church. Know your community. Given what we studied today: How will you, personally, make connections to your community? What can you suggest to our evangelism leaders and help our church accomplish to make more connections to our community?