

## Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.

October 29, 2023. "Connected: Relationships, being fully connected."

### I Intro.

We're fully in fall and heading towards the holidays. There's a lot going on behind the scenes, and we want you to be a part of this great community. We hope you are fed and ministered to by NCC, and that you can be an essential part of us moving forward. We have many ways you can plug into life at NCC. You can find all those through our website, app, and social media sites. Our app is the best way to livestream our services, but you can also livestream on FaceBook and YouTube. You can revisit past services, sign up for events and even give. We're encouraged by your presence when you gather with us. New and familiar faces join us every Sunday. If you join us online, we appreciate your presence. We are 100% committed to our virtual attenders. We are your church family, and if there is anything you need, prayer, or anything else, please let us know. This is our weekly devotional that gives you some specific things to work through from Sunday's message. Whether you were able to participate in this service or not, this devotion is free-standing. You can use it to help you dig deeper into your own spiritual walk. We hope you find this tool helpful on your spiritual journey.

### II Recap.

There's a lot of foundational information to this series, and we don't want to bury you under all of it. This series is solely about deep meaningful, mutual relationships that help us grow. We all have lots of people in our lives. But the primary question is; **Do those people in our lives challenge us, encourage us, are a source of wisdom and insight, and does our connection to them work to make us better people?** Connection is about having a diverse inner circle of others who are all moving in the same direction we are. Do we benefit from our relationship with each other?

The first week we talked about disconnecting from being disconnected. Sometimes we drift into not having meaningful, mutual, relationships, and we find ourselves isolated. The second week, we talked about why we were created, and how connections can help us be the best us. There is this divine inner longing for our lives to matter, to have impact. And that is best accomplished in community. Connected to others. Last week we talked about how prayer, through The Lord's Prayer, shows us what the elements of true connection are.

Today, we finish by talking about being FULLY connected to others.

### III Sunday.

We finally get to the end of this series on being connected. And like the other conversations about what it means to be connected, we're taking a different angle on it. This final Sunday is about being connected to others in relationship. This will not be a 'how to' about relationships. We all kind of know what it takes to make relationships work. Be a decent person (all that involves) and for the most part the relationship will work. This is about building a connection with others that involves a deep level of commitment and care for the other person. And what some of those elements are that make up that kind of relationship. So, let's dig around a bit

**What makes a relationship deep and meaningful?**

**What have you found in your important relationships that make them work?**

Our scripture is an odd story some of you will be familiar with. Read **Luke 5:17-26** and we'll dig into some of the truths we find in it that can help us connect with others in a deep and meaningful way.

**What jumped out to you from this story?**

**What specific elements from the story speak to you about relationships?**

**A. Simple truths about being fully connected from this story.**

**1. Being fully connected calls us to move. Connection is a physical act.** These friends had to actually fully invest their entire selves into saving their friend. Being fully connected calls for movement. Leave your personal place of safety and comfort, and move into a place of safety for everyone. You cannot connect from a safe distance. Real relationships will require you to move.

**2. Being fully connected calls us to be vulnerable. Connection is a risk.** You're breaking into someone's home...THROUGH THE ROOF!! Who does that? True connection with others is a risk. That means you can't control the outcome. **What does it mean to be vulnerable?**

***"Vulnerability is the birthplace of connection and the path to the feeling of worthiness. If it doesn't feel vulnerable, the sharing is probably not constructive."* -Brené Brown**

Being vulnerable means to let go of certainty that your risk is going to pay off the way you want it to, and investing in the connection. People really matter.

**3. Being fully connected calls us to give up something. Connection is going to cost us something.** This story is full of these friends sacrificing for the sake of their friend. Time, energy, safety, reputation, status, etc. **"Zimzum"- is the Hebrew term about creation when God lessened God's self to make room for us.** Connection, real connection, is going to cost us by asking us to give up some of our space for others. All sorts of spaces- physical, emotional, mental, feelings of security (walls we build around us so not to get hurt) absolutism, conformity, etc .It's like having kids. Getting a roommate, or being married. To fully connect with others, we all have to give up on what we believe are our rights, privileges, for the sake and welfare of the other.

**IV Challenge.**

We are here as the body of Christ. To honor and worship our God. And as God said; we do that by also honoring and respecting each other. Irrespective of our personal identities, choices, lifestyles, and more.

**1. Doing church, fully connecting is hard...REALLY hard...and MESSY.** We want our church to be different than the world, but people can be...well you know how people can be. We will get our feelings hurt, get mad, be disappointed, frustrated, and more. That's what happens in relationships. That's why EVERY letter in the New Testament is about how to do church, and how to get along. To work through our differences. We have to remember how difficult peopling can be...we are a 'people' also. But at the center of those important truths, the cornerstone of church, is that those truths are always held at the same time we honor and lift up the beautiful uniqueness of each other.

**2. True connection isn't just hanging out with people like you.** Connection, true connection, is identifying with, and joining alongside, with people who are different, but moving in the same direction as you. Not the same path, not looking the same. But we need otherness in our lives. To have people who see things differently. But each of us, in our own unique way, moving towards Christlikeness. In community...connected...FULLY.

**3. This can be scary...intimidating. You might have to get vulnerable.** You just might have to be real, honest, open here to connect. We've talked about the importance of being vulnerable. It's what opens and grows relationships and builds true connection.

**4. Relationships. Being fully connected. Is the most beautiful thing ever.** It's not the desire to find people you like. That's a club, or even a cult. Connection pushes us. Calls us to be vulnerable. Real. Curious. Honest. It's the desire to do for others...all others.

To carry people you wouldn't normally carry.

To care for those you wouldn't normally care for

To love those you wouldn't normally love.

To sacrifice for those you may not normally sacrifice for.

**To be...Jesus.**

THAT is connection. That is what we were designed for. That is what brings the most meaning to our lives, and satisfies the deepest desire and longing within us. That is why we must live connected lives. It makes all of what we do work. And our world a better place.

**And we are so glad you are part of our community. We are better because of you!!**