



CONNECT

Connect Series

Part 1

August 7, 2022

The Gospel of Saint Mark 12:28-34, “²⁸ And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, “Which commandment is the most important of all?” ²⁹ Jesus answered, “The most important is, ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. ³⁰ And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ ³¹ The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” ³² And the scribe said to him, “You are right, Teacher. You have truly said that he is

one, and there is no other besides him.³³ And to love him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.”³⁴ And when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” And after that no one dared to ask him any more questions.” May the Lord add His Blessing to

the Reading and the Hearing of His Word. Amen. You may be seated...

Today we will be kicking off a new series entitled “Connect” during which we will be discussing from a Biblical perspective what the Scripture defines for us as far as being connected to Christ, His Church, and our surrounding Community. As I stated in our prior series here at The Assembly, a vital part of being Spirit Empowered is being Relationally Interconnected and it is this Relational Interconnection that demands of us to be connected to Christ and connected to One Another.

If you are born again, you will desire to be with those of like precious faith thus it is our Relationship with Christ through the Holy Spirit that in turn should drive us to earnestly desire to develop relationships with one another. We do not always have to agree with one another but we do not to see the value of walking with one another. Point #1...

1) A Church that Values Connection is one that Values Christ!

- a) Hear the Words of Christ today noted in the Gospel of Saint Mark 12:30, “³⁰ And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’
- b) Church family, our faith begins and ends with Christ at the helm of our lives! We have been grafted into the Vine and it is Christ that lays these expectations upon us as His Disciples.
- c) The Gospel of Saint John 15:1-5, “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. ² Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ³ Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴ Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. ⁵ I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.”
- d) With John 15 in mind, let us relook at the Words of Christ noted in Mark 12, our primary text for today, “³⁰ And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’

- e) Church, when we look at these two texts in tandem we can all come to this resolve. It is impossible to fulfill the expectations of Christ found in Mark 12 if we have not first been empowered by being in the Vine called Christ. Remember the closing words of John 15:5, “Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.”
- f) Apart from Christ’s empowerment by His Spirit we could never fulfill the expectations defined for us to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.
- g) Christian! You can do nothing in this life that has any eternal value apart from the Eternal God and His Christ! We can do nothing in and of ourselves! It is in Him that we live, and we move and we have our very being!
- h) May we rest in Christ’s grace today to empower us to love the way He has spoken lest we fall short of His expectations of us
- i) Remember, A Church that Values Connection is one that Values Christ and in valuing Christ, we must value His teachings as well!
- j) Point #2...

2) A Church that Values Connection is one that Values One Another!

- a) The Gospel of Saint John 13:34-35, “³⁴ A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.³⁵ By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”
- b) Church family, our valuing of our another should not be based upon who we are or what we bring to the table but rather our value as a whole should be found in the collectiveness of our faith regarding what Christ has done within us individually.
- c) Notice the very words of Christ! Love one another as I have loved you! But if we were to be honest, in our own strength, it is hard to love others the way that Christ loves us apart from a revelation of the Love of Christ. We must be taught to Love!
- d) 1 Thessalonians 4:9-10, “⁹ Now concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another,¹⁰ for that indeed is what you are doing to all the brothers throughout Macedonia. But we urge you, brothers, to do this more and more...”
- e) And it is the very teaching by God to love one another that must take place for us to truly accomplish the expectations of Christ for His Church as a whole and for His Disciples individually.

- f) Hence the very reason why Christ declared in John 13:35, ³⁵ By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”
- g) A Church that values one another is a Church that loves one another!
- h) A Church that loves one another is a Church that forgives one another!
- i) A Church that forgives one another is a Church that has the Power to Change the World!
- j) Remember, A Church that Values Connection is one that Values One Another and if we value one another, then we will be found guilty of loving one another!
- k) Point #3...

3) A Church that Values Connection is one that Values its Community!

- a) 1 Peter 4:8-11, ⁸ Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. ⁹ Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. ¹⁰ As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: ¹¹ whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in

order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

- b) The imperatives of this passage are abundantly clear when viewed through the lenses of selflessness: love one another, show hospitality, use your gifts for others, be good stewards, speak Words that empower and impact, serve one another, do all by the Strength of Christ and not your own.
- c) It would seem to reason that the First Century Church saw the value of the faith community as well as the surrounding communities as well; they compromised their message but they did demonstrate Christ to the world around them.
- d) Church family, I am all for foreign missions, doing mission trips, and supporting global initiatives but when we did we exchange our responsibility to live for Christ daily for simple financial support of others to do something that Christ has called us to do ourselves?
- e) There's a mission's field in your home, on the job, when you buy groceries. There's a mission's field when you go to the ball field, visit the doctor's office or order fast food. There are mission fields all around us!

f) Christ has called us to Represent Him every moment of every day and I challenge us all to realize that there is a dying world out there that needs to see a pure and powerful demonstration of the Love of Christ amongst His believers!

- Remember, A Church that Values Connection is one that Values Christ and in valuing Christ, we must value His teachings as well!
- Also, A Church that Values Connection is one that Values One Another and if we value one another, then we will be found guilty of loving one another!
- And finally, A Church that Values Connection is one that Values its Community and if we value our community, then we will leave an impact upon it that time cannot erase!