

A LIFE GIVING CONNECTION

John 15:1-8

I. BETTER OR WORSE?

- A. The “good old days.”
 - 1. Life expectancy for males was about 38 years.
 - 2. The work week was 72 hours.
 - 3. Epidemics were expected.
- B. For the first time in history:
 - 1. Children can do the harm that only governments and generals could do in the past.
 - 2. Children do not need authority figures to access information.
 - 3. Children are now the authority figures, and adults have to come to them for help.

II. THREE CHALLENGING CHANGES

- A. A nation of nomads.
 - 1. We have a feeling of rootlessness and isolation.
 - 2. Only one of every four people today live in their home towns.
 - 3. Three waves of civilization: agricultural, industrial & information.
- B. Lack of a moral center.
 - 1. There is the absence of universally accepted standards.
 - 2. We suffer from approval addiction. We live in bondage of what others think of us.
 - 3. “Often I am like a small boat on the ocean, completely at the mercy of the waves.” (Henri Nouwen)
- C. Lack of commitment.
 - 1. We change meaningful relationships as casually as we change communities or jobs.
 - 2. The divorce rate in this country is twice what it was in 1960.

III. THREE SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS

- A. Establish a base camp.
 - 1. *“I am the vine, you are the branches ... apart from me you can do nothing” (John 10:5).*
 - 2. We need to grow “portable roots.”
 - 3. We need a place to call home.
- B. Inside out living.
 - 1. We must give our children clear moral standards.
 - 2. We must break the approval addiction.
- C. Honor commitments.
 - 1. When does marriage begin?
 - 2. We must make a pledge to the permanence of relationships.

Prayer Concerns: Burney Biesel, Kay Fowlkes, Gordon Freeman, Charlotte Hart, Mac Kerr, Joe McDowell, Anne Miller, Ann Ramsey, Mildred Sentell, Joe Tidwell, Jr., Rodger Beasley, Ray Billings, Kenneth Blackburn, Gerald Borden, Sarah Clark, Richard Cole, Cledus Creel, Jimmy Eubanks, Angela Fisher, Nancy Godsey, Rob Hammond, Fern Haslop, Dorothy Huffstutter, Kristi Jackson, Jeff Joyner, Mary Lou Lepping, Van Lynch, Catherine Mattheus, Macy Morgan, Taylor Murray, Judy Owen, Theresa Patrick, David Petrie, Steve Raines, Patrick Ramage, Joe Rueff ...

PASTORAL PRAYER

O God, whose goodness loved us into life, we praise you for the gracious gift of families. We give our thanks that there is a place for us, a place where faults are forgiven and difficulties overcome, where we can love one another despite what we are, and where we don't have to pretend to be what we are not. What a wonderful gift you have given us, and we are grateful for it.

Some of us find the nurture of a family among our friends, and we thank you for those who open the doors of their lives to let us in. Give us all the ability to see all your children as our brothers and sisters, and hear our prayers ...

For parents who are concerned about the choices their children are making...*(pray silently)*

For children who are struggling with school and peer pressure and life choices ... *(pray silently)*

For the elderly who are finding it increasingly difficult to find the skills for everyday living ... *(pray silently)*

For those facing a crisis at work or at home ... *(silent prayer)*

For those who struggle with depression and lack of self-esteem ... *(pray silently)*

Gracious God, we pray for new life in our homes, new life in our dreams, new life in our faith; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray ...

THE LORD'S PRAYER: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

JOHN 15:1-8

“I am the vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch of mine that bears no fruit, he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already made clean by the word which I have spoken to you. 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. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If a man does not abide in me, he is cast forth as a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples.”

SERMON SCHEDULE

In the Sanctuary:

May 21	<i>Keep Them from the Evil One</i> Graduating Senior Sunday	John 17:6-19
May 28	<i>The Heart of the Matter</i> Memorial Day Weekend	John 15:9-17
June 4	<i>Communion and Communication</i> Pentecost Sunday	Acts 2:1-21
June 11	<i>Deal or No Deal</i> Trinity Sunday	John 3:1-17

On the Radio (1450 AM):

May 21	<i>The Drum-Major Instinct</i>	Mark 10:32-39
May 28	<i>Encounters</i>	Luke 10:25-37
June 4	<i>Spring Concert</i>	Chancel Choir
June 11	<i>Lux Aeterna</i>	Chancel Choir