**The Four Things Needed To Love People:**

**Connect with People (Ephesians 2:14-22)**

***Terence Chatmon***

For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. (Ephesians 2:14-22)

# Introduction

Last week we learned that to love people you must value them and this is done with the love of Jesus.

We need to connect with people. It’s not only about connecting with people of our generation; we need to connect with the next generation as well. In Judges 2:10, after the death of Joshua, in just one generation, the nation fell away from God, because they were disconnected from the truth. In this day and age, we have a new instrument to share God’s truth to the world, and that is through the internet.

How do we connect with one another and with God? How would it be like to do life according to the Scriptures? This connection that we’re talking about is a connection through a divine grace. It’s greater than a human connection. It’s a divine connection.

# http://images.clipartpanda.com/people-clipart-People-clipart-my-office.jpgTo love people, we must be connected with people. We need to be connected with them on three possible levels.

## Physical level

## Intellectual level

## Spiritual level

# Physical Level

An example of a connection through the physical level is the connection through the internet. To connect to the internet, there are some requirements that are needed, in terms of a username and a password. You may have the tool, the intention, the purpose and the desire to connect. However, if we are not provided with the username and password, we will be stuck figuring out how to use the tool that we have, because we are still disconnected. Some of us cannot connect because we are not engaged, we are not logged in.

For many of us, even though we may see each other on a daily basis, we are not connected, we are not plugged in, and we are not doing life on life together.

Malaysians connect while dining together. Food is what brings people together. And yet, there are also people who do not connect at all while dining, whereby they are preoccupied with their phones and gadgets.

A deep physical connection is portrayed through this poem.

Every moment we spent together

Has touched our lives, our souls forever

The things that we shared and learned

Is permanent growth that we've earned.

The person that I have grown into today

Did not get there by chance, no way

I am who I am partly because of you

And you are YOU because of me, too

The changes I see and what I have learned about me

Are a response to how we affected our lives and what we discover in each other’s eyes.

It is uncertain if we have to part or one day live together

Either way, we have touched our lives forever!

No matter what the future will show

No matter what we are told.

We are connected on such a deep level

That no one can remove that, not even the devil.

Our feelings might be different years from now

But you are part of me forever somehow

A part of me will always be you

And a part of you will always be me.

No matter what happens, that much is certain

Our souls are one until life closes the curtain.

I will love your forever

For worse or for better

You are tattooed in my heart

And nothing can tear our souls apart.

I will never forget you

For my love is honest and true

By Stanley Oguh

This poem portrays a deep affection of love that we desire in all our close relationships. This love is a commitment to one another.

There is a commitment ordained by God, a deeper love that is more than just a physical attraction.

# Intellectual Level

Besides connecting with people on a physical level, we also have a desire to connect with people intellectually, mentally, and strategically. We like to work through things and share ideas.

John Maxwell said, “People who communicate well, find common ground.”

Everyone communicates, but few connect. Many people have a lot of connections on social media, but in reality, they know very few of these people.

Traits of great communications – They find common ground, they connect, they show forgiveness in relationships, they do not condemn, and they edify and nurture one another. The relationship is more important than being right.

Many times we insist on being right rather than trying to understand the other person better.

Jesus Christ has shown us the way to connect with people. Jesus connected physically, intellectually and spiritually with people. Jesus went through all the towns and villages, proclaiming the Good News. He healed diseases and sicknesses. He had compassion on the crowds. Jesus went where the people were. He did not wait for the people to find Him.

Do not wait for people to come. Go out to the people. Many people are in the highways and byways, in their homes, waiting to be told the Good News of Jesus Christ. We can help these people investigate and understand what the Good News is all about. We do not have the power of conversion, but we have the honour and privilege of sharing with them about Jesus Christ. His Word will not return void. It is powerful, it is a sword that will cut through the hearts of men.

so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it. (Isaiah 55:11)

# Spiritual Level

A spiritual connection is a deeper connection. We connect with God and one another through His Son Jesus Christ and through His divine grace.

## Invest in life on life discipleship

For many of us, life on life discipleship begins at home, where we are loved and cared for by our parents and siblings. For many of us as well, we may not have such a luxury, but we do not have to be disheartened, because life on life discipleship can start with us. This process of life on life discipleship can be initiated by us and can happen anywhere - where we work, play, live and where we worship.

Terence Chatmon is involved in the marketplace ministry - The Fellowship of Companies for Christ International (FCCI). It is the largest marketplace ministry in the world, with influence over 139 countries. “We are working with Christian executives and CEOs. We do life together. That means that we meet on a weekly basis. We share God’s Word with one another and equip one another, holding one another accountable in love, we do mission work together, we pray for one another, and we walk with each other. We talk about business issues and challenges in life that can stagnate us, and we are praying for one another to cut through the clutter. It makes a difference not only in these men and women’s lives, but it is impacting nations.”

In their sphere of influence, business is mission. It is all aspects of life. They want to connect pastors and churches to the marketplace. The mission and mentality is, instead of waiting for the business leaders to come to us, why don’t we go and pray for the business leaders where they are? Go and pray for the staff where they are. Take the church to the marketplace, instead of waiting for the marketplace to come to you.

For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility. (Ephesians 2:14)

## Connection through Christ

The only way this connection can happen is through the blood of Christ. God is the only way. We need to practice according to the Word of God, and the way we understand the Word of God is through the Son, Jesus Christ. He bore our sin and He came for the lost, and that includes you and me. He paid the ultimate price at Calvary. Not just for one time, but for eternity. He has said, “It is finished.” (John 19:30) The veil has been torn, and now we have direct access to the Father. We do not have a religion, we have a relationship with the Almighty Father through the Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus closed the gap between us and God, and He closed the gap between the Jews and the Gentiles. God has connected us by divine grace through His Son Jesus Christ.

Through the internet, we no longer have to be foreigners and strangers. We can now speak the same language all around the globe. We can now do it much more strategically and intentionally.

The company Coca Cola finds ways to distribute Coca Cola all around the world, in places that do not even have roads or signs. Coca Cola has 80% market share in America, and the analyst likes to challenge them on the room for growth. Is there room for growth? The chairman of Coca Cola used to say, “Until we have every fountain in the world pouring with Coca Cola, we still have the opportunity.”

We need to think likewise and get the Gospel out. Until everyone in the world has heard the Gospel, we still have the opportunity to share it.

And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. (Ephesians 2:22)

We are built together for a greater purpose, with Christ as the cornerstone. He has given us the Holy Spirit that indwells us. It is the Holy Spirit working in us and through us for His glory. The first connectivity must be with the Father. For those who have been connected spiritually, we can now pray together, study God’s Word together, grow in our faith together, and we can now do life on life together on a greater level with an eternal purpose and outcome. Go ahead and make the sacrifice now, so you can be connected with God for a lifetime and beyond.

We lost it all at the Garden of Eden; however, Jesus Christ has done it all, and we get it all. We get all of His magnificent glory, not just a little bit of it. We get it all because He has done it all. We cannot work our way there, we cannot earn this favour, for there is only one way to the Father, and that is through the blood of the Son.

Are you connected today?

Are you familiar with the Master Connector? The ultimate Master Connector is Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God.

He is greater than anything you can ever encounter, and He is the everlasting God. He is the Wonderful King, and He is faithful and true.

No costly act of love just happens. You have to have an appetite to love, to fuel this love and take it to the world. We can come together and do something greater together than we can do separately. What can we do together that is greater than what we can do alone? That is the power of connectivity that we have here today. How strong is the love that we have for one another? Has the love of Christ made a difference in your lives and relationships, in your marriage? How are you developing strong relationships?

In Perimeter Church, where Terence is from, they develop strong relationships through life on life discipleship. They sit in a group of a few people and talk about real life challenges. They get authentic and transparent. Until you do life on life together with God’s truth, transformation may be slower than it should be. Going deeper in your faith with one another, is how we transform this place.

The Bible made it clear that the Gospel is the foundation for spiritual growth. With any structure, the foundation is not only the starting point, it is also the primary support of the structure itself. It all starts with relationships. If the church is not founded on the cross, it will fall. It will not stand. Its foundation will be too weak. It cannot sustain the weathers that this society will bring upon it.

Pastor Tim Keller remarked that “The Gospel is the Good News, and through Christ, the power of God’s Kingdom has entered history, to renew the whole world.” When we believe and rely on Jesus’ work and ministry, rather than ours, for our relationship with God; that Kingdom power comes upon us, and begins to work in us and through us, for the transformation of this world.

# Conclusion

And so, to love people, is to connect with them. To connect not just on a physical level, or an intellectual level, but on a spiritual level. We all need something greater than ourselves. We just find it in different places. We can find it in the blood of Jesus Christ.

Connect with at least three people, within the next thirty days, and just do life together. Listen well, pray for them, encourage them, invite them to open up and be real. But first, you have to be authentic. And when the moment comes, help them to investigate the truth of the Gospel. The Gospel will transform. Do not worry about what you say or do not say. The Gospel is powerful. It is transformational.

*Sermon summary contributed by Anthea Tan*

*Prayer points contributed by May Ng*

There is no better exercise for strengthening the heart than reaching down and lifting each other up.

 ~Anonymous



SERMON: The four things needed to love people:

**Connect with People**

**Pray:**

* We as God’s children will learn to connect to people at the physical, intellectual and spiritual levels.
* We will learn to connect instead of communicating at a superficial level.
* We will value relationship with one another rather than being right.
* We will learn to connect people with God’s Words and relationships.
* We are able to be agents of transformation by going deeper in our faith with one another.

***Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.  From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. (Ephesians 4:15, 16)***

**MINISTRIES & EVENTS: 3-Day Fast & Prayer**

**The Church’s 3-day fast and prayer is scheduled to take place 12 – 14 July 2016**

**Pray:**

* God will raise intercessors who has a burden to intercede for others and for the nations.
* Holy Spirit to stir the hearts of people to make the effort to wake up early and attend the prayer meetings.
* All people to stand in agreement on the prayers to be prayed.
* Wisdom and discernment for the speakers to share the Word.
* Relentless effort for the prayer warriors to pray unceasingly.
* Peace, love, joy and alertness to surround everyone.

***so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. (Matthew 6:18)***

MALAYSIA MY NATION: Animals in Malaysia

Caring for God’s creations

**Pray:**

* God to convict the hearts of men that all animals are God’s creation
* Men to respect all animals and to treat them with love and care
* Men to respect animals / pets that belong to other people
* Men to be responsible and accountable in handling animals / pets that belong to them
* Through the treatment of Christians towards animals, people are able to see Christ and thus, souls are won for Christ

***The righteous care for the needs of their animals, but the kindest acts of the wicked are cruel. (Proverbs 12:10)***

* **A TRANSFORMED WORLD: Tragedies in Orlando**

*Within a week, the worst shooting in US history took place in a nightclub in Orlando, and a 2-year old boy was found dead after being snatched away by an alligator in a Disney resort in Orlando*

**Pray:**

* God’s love and comfort to surround grieving family members.
* Breakthrough in investigations surrounding the shooter as well as the rogue alligator.
* Wisdom for resort management and authorities to handle and demarcate only safe areas for the usage of resort guests.
* God’s peace and love to permeate all levels of society instead of anger and hatred.
* Holy Spirit to stir the hearts of all affected that Jesus is the way, the truth and the life though these tragedies.

***"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)***