

Carbondale Connect Part 3

We are continuing our series this morning. Two weeks ago we talked about the spiritual dna of our church. I felt it was important we remember what has been poured into us, the values that have shaped and defined us. I mentioned six aspects of our spiritual dna. There is a **Pioneering** spirit, we are **Pentecostal, Missional**, we are **Discipling, Evangelistic**, and we are **Shepherding**, that is we are looking out for each other, caring for the flock. Last Sunday we talked about the church as the body of Christ. With that spiritual dna in us, we connect with the other members of the body to become the church, the body of Christ he intends us to be. This morning I'm asking this question: What for? For what we were designed? If we are the body of Christ, with this particular spiritual dna, put together and connected together at this time, in this part of the world, then what's the reason? It's not just to be a body, but to function as His body. What's the point?

We are called to be the church in order to glorify God. John says in Revelation 5 that Jesus is worthy because he was slain and with his blood he purchased us for God, people from every tribe and language and people and nation and he has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God! We are here to serve him and to bring honor and glory to God. Collectively we are to act and live and serve and function in ways that bring glory to him and advance his kingdom in the earth. That's the point of us being connected as the church, the body of Christ.

Paul says **“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.” 1 Corinthians 6:19-20** Our physical body is the temple of the Holy Spirit so we are to honor God with the choices we make in our flesh. Healthy. Holy. Disciplined. Surrendered to Him. We are to be holy as he is holy.

If that's the case with our individual, physical body, don't you believe that is the case with the church, the body of Christ? We are not our own, (remember Paul says we are members one of another, connected to each other, interdependent) we were bought at a price, therefore honor God with our body collectively, as the body of Christ. We are to collectively live holy lives, disciplined and dedicated to the Lord -- surrendered to him and together fulfilling our purpose. We are connected to the members of the body, serving each other as together we serve the great purpose of the Lord. If you know Jesus but feel like you don't have a purpose in this

life, you need to get connected to the church, to the body of Christ. Together we find purpose as we live and function to bring honor and glory to God!

Jesus prayed “thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” That’s what we want for the church, to carry out his will here just as in heaven. Unopposed. Fully surrendered to his will.

You know what else is going on in heaven, and it is a part of our dna that I didn’t mention in that message two weeks ago. **Worship!** This too is part of our spiritual dna. There is a heavenly liturgy going on right now in heaven, where worship, singing, prayer and praise and rejoicing is going on, where continually the angels and elders and saints of God are worshiping and honoring Jesus, the Lamb of God. We are to be a part of that, as the body of Christ, in carrying out a liturgy of worship and adoration here, now, collectively, on earth as it is in heaven. We are to gather and worship and adore and magnify Jesus. When we come together we are to worship and exalt his name. From our beginning there has been music and Spirit filled worship. It’s always been part of our spiritual dna, to sing, to play instruments, to worship God together! It’s part of our reason and purpose. It’s about bringing honor and glory to God.

We are called to make known the manifold wisdom, plan and purpose of God.

That’s why he has connected us together as the body of Christ. Paul writes, “**His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known...**”

Ephesians 3:10. There is a particular reason all of us are here, at this particular moment in time, in this city and this community, with this spiritual dna in us, with these tools and resources available to us. That reason and purpose is to make known the wisdom and redemptive plan and purpose and grace and goodness and character of God to everyone we can reach! We said last week, we are the only hope for this world. We are the church, salt and light in a decaying and ever darkening world. We are to be a prophetic voice speaking truth to a world and a culture that hates the truth, that denies the truth. We are to be a prophetic voice that speaks truth to power, that proclaims the word of God regardless of the cost. It is getting darker and the church is the only source of light. Jesus said, “**As long as it is day we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.**” **John 9:4-5** We have to work while we can because it is growing darker every day. We have been given this opportunity, this responsibility to be the church, to do the work of the one who sent us. Jesus is still the light of the world but he is shining through us, his body, the church.

What are we supposed to be doing? We are supposed to be obeying his call, his commission, his commands. It does us no good to say we are the body of Christ and then we just lie real still. Don't move, don't go, don't reach out, don't make waves, don't ruffle feathers, don't pray, don't stand up, don't speak out, don't worship, don't point people to Jesus, don't connect with anyone else, don't talk to anyone, just take up space, just have a nice building and put together a nice service, try to entertain people and make people feel a little better about their hopeless, desperate circumstances. Be a body, but a lifeless body. Is that what we're called to? God help us, no! We are the body of Christ. The church he is building marches on hell and liberates captives. That's who we are. At least who we are supposed to be. We are declaring salvation is available, a new life is possible through faith in Jesus Christ. It's the most important message in the world. It's the best news in the world. That's what the church, the body of Christ is all about. But how do we flesh that out? I've asked Sarah to join me to talk about this.

How do you see this happening? How do we take this spiritual dna and this body with all its members and make a difference? How do we flesh this out? Are we fleshing this out?

We speak often about this being a multi-generational church. How do we flesh this out in that context? What are the unique challenges and opportunities?

What makes us unique?

What or where is our greatest need?

What would you say to someone that hears this message but doesn't know where to serve? How do they get started?

What would you say to the volunteers that serve so faithfully?

We have a calling as a church. God has blessed us, equipped us. Let's be courageous, let's seek the will of God, let's get connected, let's surrender to his plan and his purpose. Don't be discouraged. Don't give up. Let's keep working while it is day.

“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of all believers.” Galatians 6:9-10

“God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them.” Hebrews 6:10

We are receiving new members into the church today. As we read the names if you will come forward and face the congregation. We are glad you are a part of us now. I want to read something I've been reading to new members for the past 34 years.

“We are committed to you. You'll never knowingly suffer at our hands. We will never say or do anything, knowingly, to hurt you. We will always, in every circumstance seek to help you and support you. If you're down and we can lift you up, we'll do that. Anything we have that you need, we'll share with you and if need be we'll give it to you. No matter what we find out about you and no matter what happens in the future, either good or bad, our commitment to you will never change. And there's nothing you can do about it. You don't have to respond. We just love you, and that's what it means.

(Adapted from *Love, Acceptance and Forgiveness* by Jerry Cook)

I want us to pray and then you'll have opportunity to greet these new members and welcome them. You will also have opportunity to connect with various department heads and volunteers in the lobby. Ask the Lord where you should serve. Where can you share your gifts and your time and talent? Then sign up and get plugged in, get connected, get involved and let's be the church he called us to be. The church in action, bringing hope to the world and help to fellow believers. If you can't connect in that way, make a point to connect with others and to pray for others. We need prayer warriors. Let's all do our part!