

Graduate Sunday 2015

CONNECT! 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

So, as you graduate and get ready to go out into the world, all kinds of people are giving you advice:

- Your parents are giving you advice
- Your teachers are giving you advice
- Wayne Purdy is giving you advice
- When you go to baccalaureate tonight – they're gonna give you advice

So here's what I'm going to do – I'm gonna give you more advice! But my advice is so simple you can't forget it, and so profound it can change your life. *And* I can sum it up in one word.

Are you ready?

Parents, are you ready?

Congregation, are you ready?

Advice that will change your life, in one word. Here it is:

CONNECT.

A phrase that you hear a lot nowadays is "Spiritual, but not religious." People say, "It's not that I don't believe in God. I pray, I read the Bible. I just don't go to church.

"I can worship God on my own. I feel closer to God at the beach, on the lake, or in the woods than I do at church."

And you know what? I get that. I understand that. I feel close to God in those places too.

BUT THAT'S NOT CHRISTIANITY!

The Apostle Paul says, "*You are the body of Christ and each one of you is a part of it*" – which means there is no such thing as solo Christianity.

A little while ago, *Newsweek* had a cover story that said, "Forget the church, Follow Jesus." The problem with that is, if you follow Jesus, you can't forget the church. Because the church is the body of Christ. *And if you belong to Jesus, you belong to his body.*

And that means a couple of things. First, *you need the body.*

One morning I woke up and my right arm was gone! I looked all over for it – under the covers, under my pillow ... Finally I saw it on the floor crawling away, pulling itself with its fingers. And I shouted out, “What are you doing?”

And my hand actually talked to me. It said, “I don’t want to be a part of your body any more. I’ve got to find my own path! I can get closer to God on my own!”

And I said, “But you can’t survive on your own! You can’t get blood from the heart! You can’t get oxygen from the lungs! You can’t get nourishment from the stomach! On your own you’re going to shrivel up and die!”

But you know that arm just insisted on going its own way.

And later that afternoon I went out in my front yard, and I noticed a horrible smell, and I looked down. And there was that arm lying there dead.

Now you all are smart enough to know that that story is ridiculous. But it’s no less ridiculous than the idea that you can survive as a Christian on your own.

**You need the body – so, CONNECT!*

And here’s the second thing: *The body needs you!*

A minute ago I joked about what if my right arm just decided to detach itself and crawl away. But what I’m about to say is not a joke. We’ve all seen people, and some are in this room right now, who are missing a part of their bodies, or who have a part of the body that does not function the way it’s supposed to. Maybe you know somebody who’s lost an arm or a leg. Maybe you know somebody who can’t see, or can’t hear. Most of these people can still function -- but not like they could if every part was in place. And that’s how it is with the Body of Christ.

It’ll function – but not as well as it could if every part was in place. Paul says, “Now you are the Body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.” Without you, the body is incomplete.

** The body needs you – so, CONNECT.*

Now here’s the thing: When you get out in the world, it’s going to be up to you to **CONNECT to the body of Christ.**

How many of you grew up in this church?

How many of you have family in this church?

How many have family, parents, or grandparents who brought you to this church?

In a few short months most of you are going to have to do something you've never done before, and that's find a church. You're going to have to take it upon yourself to find a segment of the body of Christ where you can CONNECT. *As your pastor, I'm begging you to put that at the top of your list.*

Start looking – your first Sunday on campus -- start visiting churches – might be big, might be small, might be Methodist, might be Baptist – find the one that works for you.

Try out different campus ministries: Inter-Varsity, Cru, Wesley Foundation – Again, find the group that's right for you, but PLEASE – *Connect!*

Because there is no such thing as solo Christianity

- *You need the body*
- *And the body needs you*