

**Intro:** Continue our series on Connectors this morning by looking at what I am going to call “Good Connectors”  
Last week Pastor Orin did a great job of challenging us to evaluate the way we interact with others and make sure we are not sending a message that we don’t want to send and being “Bad Connectors!”  
Today I want to follow up on that, and build on that and talk with you about what it means to be a “Good Connector”  
Remember: a connector is “*a person or thing that links, ties, bonds or joins two other persons or things*”

*4 Characteristics Of A Good Connector*

*Mark 2:1-12 Pg 708*

**1. Good Connectors Understand The Reality Of Putting People In Front Of Jesus. Vs 1-4**

- **KNOW:** Jesus can transform people (Does what no one else can do!) Luke 5:17 “*power of Lord present to heal*”  
That power is STILL at work today! (Sometimes physical, Sometimes emotional, ALWAYS Spiritual)
- **UNDERSTAND:** He is the BEST hope we have: Other things sometimes work, Jesus ALWAYS does a work of grace  
~Even when we don’t “*get what we want*” when someone encounters Jesus...everything changes!  
~There are no guarantees: There aren’t today...and there weren’t then. (Peter’s mother in law...left)
- **VALUE:** Getting people in the presence of Jesus...Putting them where HE is working!  
~Church: Where 2 or 3 are gathered: (Of course Jesus is in other places: He PROMISES to be in Church!)

These four men were Good Connectors...They were willing to do “Whatever it Takes” to get their friend to Jesus  
Don’t miss that. They could have been doing 1000 other things...

They COULD have come ALONE, Most of the people there that day did: But they came bringing their friend. (Andrew, Ph)

**2. Good Connectors Leverage Their Relationships To Bring People To Jesus. Vs 3**

- **WORK:** Some men came bringing a paralytic: Bringing: Lit = *to bear, to bring, to carry, to lift up and take away*
- **CONNECT:** Unlikely this was a random man...”Hey...Let’s take him to Jesus!”  
~There was almost certainly some kind of relationship: Friend, Relative, Acquaintance: Saw him regularly  
~Somewhere along the line Someone said: “*I have to get my friend to Jesus...I can’t help him...but Jesus can!*”  
~He leveraged the relationship with the paralytic, with 3 of his friends/relatives and agreed: WE have to do this!
- **DIFFERENT:** Think about the difference between the crowd...and the 4: When they showed up...they had someone!  
Most of the crowd...they were there for themselves...but these men had a higher purpose...

**Illus:** Think about it: Who was it that made a difference in your life Spiritually? Who brought you?

~With the students last Sun night, asked “Who made spiritual impact in your life” Leaders...w/o hesitation

~This man would NEVER have made it to Jesus w/o his friends bringing him: (*Still true today!*)

~You may have some friends that aren’t going to make the trip to Jesus...w/o you bringing them!

~Think about how YOU show up at church. Do you have the hand of someone that needs Jesus!

(Statistics: Vast majority of people come to faith through friends: Not Pastors! In Fact...Least Effective!)

**3. Good Connectors Take The Risks Of Reaching Out. Vs 4**

- **WHATEVER:** They had a “whatever it takes” attitude: They didn’t let anything deter them  
~Work: No Problem: Offence, No Problem, Sacrifice, No Problem: Them Before Your Need, No Problem  
~They were going to get their friend to Jesus: Whatever it took!  
~Ever say that to someone? You are going to go if I have to CARRY you!” They DID!
- **RISKED Offence:**  
~To the man: What if we take him...go to all that trouble...build up his hopes...and Jesus doesn’t heal him!  
~To people they inconvenienced: Pushing through crowd: Those below when roof started falling on head  
~To the homeowner! They just tore a hole in his roof! Imagine that... (Who fixed it after?)  
~To the Pharisees: Who can forgive sin? They were a part...Run risk of being associated with Jesus
- **FAITH:** They risked having faith that Jesus would work  
~Can you imagine what it would have been like if Jesus hadn’t healed him. I bet they did! While Walking/Digging  
~Imagine what the felt in vs 5 (Sins forgiven) What about walking! Vs 11-12 Get up, walk...and HE DID!  
~Don’t miss this: When Jesus saw THEIR FAITH! Vs 5 We know He had to believe...but they played a part!!!

**Illus:** Here is a question for you: “What does it take to “back you off?”

After many years of doing this...here is what I know. Those that SEEM most open...usually aren’t: Forever

Those that SEEM most closed...usually are!: Not always

Many of us, we give up way to easy! We don’t want to offend, We don’t want to sacrifice, We don’t want to invest  
Our relationship with Jesus is just that: OURS...and We have never risked to give it to someone, even those we love

Another Question for you: “Who are YOU believing for today?” Who are you so invested in that you are working and praying and sacrificing and believing...God, you can transform them...you can do for them what NO ONE ELSE CAN!

Final Question: When was the last time you brought someone with you to church?

**4. Good Connectors Enjoy The Reward Of Seeing Jesus Transform Someone.** Vs 6-12

The Spiritual and Practical Rewards from this event are amazing:

- From God: Well done!
- From HS: He worked through Jesus
- From Jesus: Saw their faith!
- From people: Everyone was amazed! And praised God: Brought Glory to God!
- From Man: What must it have felt like to be at market...see him there walking Not in his spot? How many times do you think he say thank you...
- From One Another: Think about what it must have been like...how many times did they tell the story! How many times did they get together and relive it!

Applic: Sometimes I'll be talking with someone about a mission trip, telling a story of God working, they say "Man, I wish I could see God work that way!" And I have started saying...You Can Just come with me on a trip! "Oh, I couldn't do that!"

Listen: You have to put yourself out there...you have to Risk, You have to have faith, You have to sacrifice! Until you are ready to risk...you will never see God work that way!

**CONCL:** Just his past week I saw God at work again!

Putting Cuba Container together: Got a connection on a ministry in Millersville ships containers

Joe went to visit...looked around and saw everything...On way out...in passing...OBW

"I have a couple of anesthesiology machines, if you know someone who needs them" Joe is telling me this...

Now, having been in a hospital in Cuba...and sedated there...I KNOW...they need some help with that! Not so good!

Now, that doesn't sound too significant..until you realize...two weeks earlier I had met with a couple new to Riva She told me...I'm not sure what I could do in church...I'm willing...but spent last 30 years on career...As...????

And Sat..before my Tuesday conversation learning about the two machines I got an email from her....

And I quote:

*What do you think about the idea of me visiting the hospital or medical clinic in Cuba when my husband goes with you? There are several colleagues who do medical missions in Haiti and Guatemala but they are big, organized operations usually sponsored by their hospitals. Depending upon the need, we could see if Johns Hopkins or George Washington University would partner with us?? I guess I'd need to evaluate their needs there first??? I'm quite sure there are other medical personnel within Riva's membership also?*

Good Connectors...Are Available to be used...Put people in front of Jesus, Leverage Relationships, RISK, See Reward!

Today I want to challenge you: Be a Good Connector: Make yourself available:

This Christmas I'm planning to help you...and I'm looking for those who are willing to Join the Fellowship Of The mat!

God...I want to be used by you to connect others to Jesus. Today I commit to doing whatever I need to do to be used by you. I am willing to sacrifice, risk and leverage my relationships to put people in front of you. Use me to do that this week.

This Christmas I ask you to open the doors for me to reach out...when you do I commit ahead of time to do whatever it takes! Amen