

Sermon: Sharing some Easter Love
2 Easter, Year B
Acts 4:32-35

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“And no one claimed private ownership of any possessions.”

Our reading from Acts says some pretty wild things about those first believers! Luke, the attributed author, describes this group of believers as people who were “of one heart and soul.” A result of their faith was to share everything! Luke tells us, “No one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common.” The apostles’ witness of Jesus’ resurrection was an energizing presence and “there was not a needy person among them.” They pooled their resources, laid them at the apostles’ feet and shared them with those in need. They were sharing some Easter love! ☺

This may strike many of us as daring and bold, maybe a little bit or a lot communistic, even! It may sound a bit dramatic. Were they off their rockers? What inspired this Lovefest? Right before this passage those happy early church people had prayed for – get this- they had prayed for boldness! And the Holy Spirit, a powerful, energizing force in Acts, showed up. The verse says, “When they prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness.”

So as you have probably heard me say before, “Be careful what you pray for!” In Acts it sure looks as though the Holy Spirit shook the ground and inspired the early church to give away all their stuff!!

Let’s think about our possessions. What do you think of when you think of your possessions? Money, perhaps your car, your clothes, your stuff. I guess some of us could even see our family and our friends as our possessions. Sometimes we speak of church even as “my” church. Where do possessions dwell within our own minds and hearts? Are they our gods? Do they sometimes vie for idol status? Do our love of possessions interfere with our love for God or our care for the earth or other people? What is it we hope to gain from having possessions? Will more stuff bring us joy or happiness?

Comedian George Carlin said, “Trying to be happy by accumulating possessions is like trying to satisfy hunger by taping sandwiches all over your body.”

This group of early Christians in the Acts passage seemed to understand that joy was not found in the accumulation of possessions! (No sandwiches taped to their bodies!) They experience much grace in the giving away because in the giving they found that others' needs were met. And so sharing of possessions became a way of lifting up, of resurrecting, the community, and a way of treasuring relationships.

Over the course of my week, I've heard several people tell me just how much it has meant to them when other people have reached out to them. Some of these folks include those who have just gone through some sort of medical trauma, some who are imprisoned, some who are elderly, some who are experiencing depression. One friend told me, having just had surgery, that being on the receiving end of all of the many kindnesses of others – their bringing dinner, calling, visiting, writing notes, etc., has made her want to be a better friend when she comes out of this. She said she had no idea of the importance of reaching out to people who can't get out or who are in need. She was reminded to treasure relationships. Maybe if you have been on that receiving end yourself you know what I'm talking about. The smallest gesture can make a huge impact! It can bring new life out of brokenness. Connecting with others can bring healing and wholeness. And while we won't always get it just right, I believe God honors our attempts.

Maybe you're not ready to give away all of your possessions – yet. (Although we DO have the church yard sale coming up and maybe you will be ready to give away some of them!) But maybe you can share your most treasured gifts of time, kindness, a listening ear, prayer, and maybe money to lift up those who are in need. This season of Easter is a time when we celebrate Easter joy, new life, and the resurrection that can occur when we reach out to those who are hurting. There are 50 days in Easter so we have 43 days left until Pentecost, the day Eastertide is officially over. So I'd like to invite you to participate in an Easter practice for the remaining days in Easter - kind of like a Lenten practice but this one focused on resurrection. I have a calendar to give each of you that the children will help me hand out. In each space, write down a person's name who might need your healing word or presence. And then on that day reach out to them in a way that works for you, perhaps through prayer, or a call, or bringing food or flowers from your yard. Be creative.

Here we are in church, the very place we pray together, the very place where we meet Jesus in one another. No doubt the Holy Spirit will empower us when we pray to give of our hearts, to give of our money, to give of our time. Like those members of the early church, each of us has something to share. I pray that as we give away our possessions, and boldly share our Easter love, we will be filled with true joy. Let the Holy Spirit shake the earth beneath us that we may be awakened to the power of God's love. Amen.

Sharing some Easter Love

Come Holy Spirit! Help me to notice those around me who are in need and help me pay attention to the nudges of my heart in the coming days. May I see your face in the faces of those who are hurt or lonely, those who are poor, lost and broken. Show me that I do have time to reach out to them in prayer or in other ways. Give me courage when I am afraid to go into the unknown because you are already there. Help me to share your Easter love boldly. In Christ's name, Amen.

Sunday, April 8	Monday, 4/9	Tuesday, 4/10	Wednesday, 4/11	Thursday, 4/12	Friday, 4/13	Saturday, 4/14
4/15	4/16	4/17	4/18	4/19	4/20	4/21
4/22	4/23	4/24	4/25	4/26	4/27	4/28
4/29	4/30	5/1	5/2	5/3	5/4	5/5
5/6	5/7	5/8	5/9	5/10	5/11	5/12
5/13	5/14	5/15	5/16	5/17	5/18	5/19

5/20 Pentecost!						
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Suggestions on the back page.

Suggestions for ways to use this daily Easter Love calendar

Ask God's help in thinking of people you can reach out to. Perhaps it will be family members or friends you haven't been in touch with lately.

Consider people who might be sad or lonely, someone who grieves the loss of a loved one or a job, or who is going through a separation or divorce.

Think of those who are suffering from an illness or other health concern.

Perhaps you are concerned about the homeless or the hungry. Maybe dropping off laundry detergent at the Valley Mission or bring several cans of food for our food boxes or helping at Trinity's Noon Day Lunch can make it on your calendar

Maybe your Easter love can be expressed through loving the earth by cleaning up the trash on the side of the road.

Don't forget to share some love with yourself. Perhaps one day can be devoted to how you can take care of yourself, how you can accept God's love and forgiveness.

You can give of your money, your time (a visit, a phone call, an email, a Facetime message, a note, a card or even a letter!), you can share some flowers from the yard, a dinner, a basket of muffins. You can stop by to just say hello, to offer a listening ear.

Notice your heart, where you see it pulled. Send a check to organizations that focus on hunger, or racial reconciliation, or refugees if that is of importance to you.

Go through your “stuff” at home and bring in things to share for the church yard sale!

If you need help with ideas, let me know!