Topic: Sharing Everything (Easter 1, Lectionary B)

Scripture: Psalm 133, Acts 4:32-35, John 20:19-31

Hymns: 586 Jesus Stand Among Us, vu29 Hark the Glad Sound, vu169 Good Christians All

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Let’s take a moment to pray…

Mighty God, we thank you for your Holy Scriptures. We would be lost without them, they are a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our pathway – and when we stray from them, we stray from You. O God, this is your revelation of who You are, of your directives to your church and your people. We do well to study Your word, and to dig in deep, and truly take in what you are teaching us. Help us today, O God. We want to hear the Holy Spirit. We are trusting, we are praying in the Spirit, and we ask in Jesus name, that your Holy Spirit would illumine these pages – that it fill the words of the preacher and the listener alike, and that we may know that today we have met with the living God. For we pray these things in Jesus name, amen.

(SLIDE) The importance of sharing is something we all try to stress to our children growing up. At home in the infant stages, we try to teach our babies to share their toys and time which will help them in their everyday life.

Toddlers and pre-schoolers in day care programs are told day-in and day-out to share, share, share. They share activities at tables like painting. They share toys during free play. They share feelings and words with each other to foster conversation, understanding, and dialogue.

As we get older, sharing is no less important. We all share space in our house with each other… and the struggle here is definitely real. (EM) (SLIDE) You ever tried eating a meal with a moody teenager or a spouse who is mad at you for some reason!?

We share resources, buying food for the people in our homes or driving folks who are too young or unable to drive to their life’s appointments. We share our time by putting off things we want to do for the sake of another. (SLIDE) The government lays claim to our income in order to share it with others as well…

Taxes bring in necessary funds for things like our health care or Employment Benefits for those struggling to find viable work. In our workplaces we share the tasks we do, often depending on others to do their job so we can do ours.

God bless Darryl and Kris here who have to wait for me to get the sermon material all lined up before the music all gets chosen. The Scripture Readers wait for Diane to get the readings. A farmer might be waiting on a mechanic, the mechanic might be waiting on a part for delivery.

As we age, we might once again share a home with our children (SLIDE), or share accommodations with others in a seniors residence. No longer working, our income that we shared over the course of our younger years is shared with us in return to compensate and give us an income.

In short… being able to share is a lifelong skill we need in order to get by. (SLIDE) John Donne famously wrote —READ SLIDE—. We are pretty well forced to live in community because of our shared humanity, and to successfully live in community we must share at times and we have to be kind about it sometimes, too.

This concept of sharing, although perhaps stressed more today than in previous times, is not new. Even as far back as the Apostles’ in Scripture… sharing was a given and community was important. Our reading from Acts today exposes just how far that community and that concept of sharing goes.

It reads that they were all of one heart and soul, and so no possessions belonged to one person but all were shared commonly and in this way not a single person lacked in anything. Any income, any gain, was shared with the whole so all benefited.

That’s definitely a different picture from our society today… even in our churches. The Apostles learned to live this way because of their unwavering faith in God. They knew God would provide for them by sharing with them what He had, and in sharing everything they demonstrated that all they needed WAS their faith in God.

But what is the foundation of that sharing from God? What did God share to bolster the faith in the Apostles so that they could share everything without blinking an eye? We get our answer to this in the story of Thomas… yes, that Thomas, the one who “doubted” the resurrection of Jesus.

Thomas, one of the Disciples, was not present when Jesus came around the first time. When he gets together with the rest of the crew, and (SLIDE) they begin to talk about Jesus’ resurrection, Thomas sternly declares he could not possibly believe unless he saw the nail marks for himself… or touched the side where Jesus was pierced.

Thomas and the rest of the crew spend eight days in this deadlock where one of their own sits on the fringes of their group… on the outside of the community. The others are learning, growing in faith but Thomas is stubborn - he won’t budge without solid proof. On the eighth day, they gather together again and Jesus appears to them gathered.

Jesus shares with Thomas exactly what he needs in order to believe… Thomas sees the nail marks, he touches the pierced side of Jesus. Jesus caps off this event with these words… “**Thomas, because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed**”.

In similar fashion, later down the line the people need the Holy Spirit. So many don’t know this fact, but Jesus knew it… God knew it… even some of the Disciples knew it. In fact, Jesus mentions specifically he must go in order that the helper, the Holy Spirit, would dwell among the people.

God has spent His time sharing with all of us, with all of His creation. He shared His majesty with us by creating the exact and perfect planet for us to live on. Not too far from the sun so it would be a frozen wasteland, yet not too close to the sun for it to scorch any life away.

He created it with lush fauna and flora… with water to drink, air to breathe. Then, God shared life with us by breathing into the clay the breath of life. Adam and Eve were born. God shared with us His intellect and His personality through each event dotted in Genesis. He shared His Law with us in the Torah. He shared His plan for salvation through the prophets when prophecies of Jesus began circulating. He shared His Son with us when Jesus was born.

He shares His Spirit with us. And this is what the Disciples really took root in… because it was so much more than simple resources. Wealth and material things are all so temporary. Do we need them, mostly yes. But in the grand scheme of things, wood burns - metal rusts - and clothing decays.

What the Apostles realized is that God shares so much more than simple material things, God shares with us eternal life… forgiveness of sins… a rich and full life of faith… and so the Apostles knew they could share any and all material possessions with everyone in community because those spiritual needs were what God shares as well…

And these spiritual needs were so much greater than the material ones - they were so much more important. We know… WE KNOW that people who are contented spiritually seem to always get by; they seem to always be happy even when things go awry; they get along better with others; they are healthier and happier people in general.

So many studies have been done on the mental health of the rich and famous and a vast majority of them would trade it all for the kind of happiness a Christian believer holds dear. The Apostles’ spirit was in the right place, and so it didn’t matter what they had or didn’t have.

And that fact still rings true even today. When our spirit is right with God… the material things matter a whole lot less. God works for the providence of all His people. He always has. And so, brothers and sisters, I commend to you that God has shared with us all we need.

He has shared His Word, His Son, His Holy Spirit… he shares with us this earth, He shares with us His abundance… and He shares with us His grace and His love. In all of this, the happiness you have sought all your life is found… this is what the Apostles’ knew so well and why they shared all they received.

For in God, they had all they needed. Amen.