



Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church, Asheville, NC
Sunday, April 30, 2023 – Youth Sunday
Scripture: Acts 2:42-47
"Potluck" by William Hamel

Acts 2:42-47

2:42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

2:43 Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles.

2:44 All who believed were together and had all things in common;

2:45 they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need.

2:46 **Day by day**, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts,

2:47 praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

Word of the Lord (Thanks be to God)

Two weeks ago I sat down with Amy Kim and Marcia to plan out this sermon. I knew a basic idea of what I wanted to talk about but I wasn't exactly sure as to what. We ended up going through the lectionary for this week and found this passage. The book of acts tells the story of the new church, before that's what it even was called. Honestly, when I read this passage it reminded me of my modern day life. Within my friend group, it's not some big grandiose thing to support each other. It's the little moments, it's the jokes we have between ourselves, it's the fact that we can all share a lunch table, it's the words of

encouragement. I have this friend who is nervous that he doesn't deserve his relationship, another friend and I keep telling him that he is enough. He has nothing to worry about. And sure, sometimes we are hard on each other but ultimately, we do care for one another. Day by Day it's not just the big picture moments that matter but also the fact that they spent much time together, broke bread at home, and ate it with glad and generous hearts. Community isn't just for the big picture but also the smaller moments.

I practice Taekwondo at Asheville Sun Soo and I'm trying to get a blackbelt soon, fingers crossed. To prepare for this I go to a class called 'review'. which has you get a lot of feedback from the head instructor, from each other, and from yourself. One time, I ended up being late to class due to traffic, and just couldn't get into the right headspace the entire session. I felt like I couldn't do anything right because he kept pointing things out that I was doing wrong. By the end of class I was practically in tears. Afterwards, several people went up to me to give me sympathy and advice. It really did help me feel better, even if I still did drive home in tears. Just like in the new church a community comes together to help someone who needs it. But it's more than just helping the people who are brought into adversity. It's also about striving for growth. Growth is hard. Sometimes you think you've figured it out, but then you realize you still have plenty of room to grow. I was a youth elder during the discernment process about the sanctuary renovations. Those were long and hard conversations. And we took this challenge and we let us make us stronger together.

I am also a part of a robotics team: Team 8727 Glitch 2.0. In robotics we are given a task to achieve every year in January, this year it was moving cones and cubes with some other

stuff involved as well. Anyhow, we all get together as a team to build a robot from nothing. This involves a CAD subteam, an electrical subteam, a mechanical subteam, a programming subteam, a business subteam, and an outreach subteam. Not to mention the volunteers and the fact that we meet four times a week including on Saturday. After about two months, TWO MONTHS, we go to competitions to compete with other teams. We ended up getting 17th in the state out of about 90 teams. None of this would have been possible if it weren't for us coming together as a community. All who believed were together and had all things in common. If the people of the church were just acting on their own they wouldn't be able to do half the things they could achieve together.

Grace Covenant is similar to the old new church described in the book of acts. Now I will freely admit to not having the best attendance record here over the past year. But in my experience not once have I heard people in Grace Covenant talk about it without mentioning how we support one another and help each other grow in our spiritual journey. And it's not just other members of this community, I have felt this support first hand. I have had several people at this church ask to write me a letter of recommendation. You talk to me not as some precious child but as someone who has something to add to the conversation. The staff, the members, the youth. Everyone has been so kind to me here. Praising God and having the goodwill of all the people.

Really what I'm trying to get at is that we are pack animals and we need help from our community to be most effective. The early church was founded on these principles. My martial arts practice has 5 main tenants: courtesy, integrity, perseverance, self-control, &

indomitable spirit. While none of these outright say community, but combined come together to form one. In Robotics we spend half the year preparing to be as effective of a team as possible. I also practice theater and this is literally the definition of an ensemble I am describing.

It's stone soup, everyone is coming together so that as a community we are stronger than we are alone. Of course, the hardest part is making that first step to get people to start sharing their resources, instead of being afraid they won't have enough. At GCPC our stone soup might be tend the little things, be willing to change in the small and the big things, care for each other, support one another, and never forget that we are stronger together. Once the stone is thrown into the soup, once the renovation is underway, once we do the hard thing together, everyone is happy to share what we have, as a community. And everyone has what we need.

Thanks be to God.