

17th Sunday after Pentecost

24th September 2023

Worship after Serving – 12:30 p.m.

Come to Jesus

Gathering to set the feast tables

Gathering Song & Welcome:

Christ is Mine Forevermore

Table Prayer

"First Course" of the Meal

Grow in His Grace

Scriptures: Acts 4:32-5:11

Faith Chat:

Guided Devotion & Bible Study:

DYSFUNCTIONAL: DYSFUNCTIONAL COMMUNITIES

"Second Course" of the Meal

Offering (*collected during the meal*)

Prayers & The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth
as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin
against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver
us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, & the
glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

Go in His Power

Blessing

† _____, *child of God,*

*May Christ in you give hope to this town
and glory to the Father. Amen*

(New-ish) Song:

What Love, my God

Announcements

Dessert & Clean up!

Show His Love

Acts 4:32-5:11

4:32 All the believers were united in heart & mind. They felt that what they owned was not their own, so they shared everything they had. 33 The apostles testified powerfully to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, & God's great blessing was upon them all. 34 There were no needy people among them, because those who owned land or houses would sell them 35 & bring the money to the apostles to give to those in need.

36 For instance, there was Joseph, the one the apostles nicknamed Barnabas (which means "Son of Encouragement"). He was from the tribe of Levi & came from the island of Cyprus. 37 He sold a field he owned & brought the money to the apostles.

5:1 But there was a certain man named Ananias who, with his wife, Sapphira, sold some property. 2 He brought part of the money to the apostles, claiming it was the full amount. With his wife's consent, he kept the rest.

3 Then Peter said, "Ananias, why have you let Satan fill your heart? You lied to the Holy Spirit, & you kept some of the money for yourself. 4 The property was yours to sell or not sell, as you wished. And after selling it, the money was also yours to give away. How could you do a thing like this? You weren't lying to us but to God!"

5 As soon as Ananias heard these words, he fell to the floor & died. Everyone who heard about it was terrified.

6 Then some young men got up, wrapped him in a sheet, & took him out & buried him.

7 About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. 8 Peter asked her, "Was this the price you & your husband received for your land?" "Yes," she replied, "that was the price."

9 Peter said, "How could the two of you even think of conspiring to test the Spirit of the Lord like this? The young men who buried your husband are just outside the door, & they will carry you out, too."

10 Instantly, she fell to the floor & died. When the young men came in & saw that she was dead, they carried her out & buried her beside her husband. 11 Great fear gripped the entire church & everyone else who heard what had happened.

**17th Sunday after Pentecost – 24th Sept 2023 -
Worship after Serving @ Fun Run – 12:30 p.m.**

DysFUNCTIONAL: DYSFUNCTIONAL COMMUNITIES

SONG & WELCOME

Wow! What a morning! Grab a seat & we'll get to the food in just a minute...Over the course of the meal together we'll be wrapping up our worship series on living Functional lives in Christ.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, in his classic book, 'Life Together' wrote..."Every human wish & dream injected into the Christian Community is a hindrance to genuine community & must be banished if genuine community is to survive."

Mostly we want to clean up or fix our communities...church or otherwise. Get potholes filled & dangerous places made safe. Sing the right songs & get out in under an hour. We want to make right the wrongs our ancestors did... sometimes w/ the best intentions so that life today is fashioned into some sparkling clean perfect place for us to live. How's that working out?

All around us, in or outside the church, we see more discord/division than in most of our living memories. Today we read: *The apostles testified powerfully to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, & God's great blessing was upon them all.*

Just like Love is only love w/ Christ at its heart... Functional living in our communities only occurs when the church lives into the fullness we are promised in Jesus; walk the path of abundant **LIFE/IMPACT** in Jesus' Name. *Being Functional is you maturing in likeness to Jesus Christ such that you make a difference whenever you show up wherever you are.*

Let's use the **TABLE PRAYER** on the Growing Praise together...(offering will pass during meal) **EVERYBODY EAT!**

BIBLE READING

FAITH CHAT

What aspect of life in the early church seems most attractive to you?

Why?

FIVE INITIAL OBSERVATIONS FROM ACTS 4

- 1. Radical unity in the family of Christ***
- 2. Radical proclamation of Jesus Christ***
- 3. Radical generosity because of Christ***
- 4. Radical freedom in Christ***
- 5. Radical honesty for the sake of Christ***

When we talk about the church, we often use the word "community." What does that word mean to you?

How have you experienced that kind of community in the church? Has the church community generally been a helpful/supportive place or a frustrating, challenging, & disappointing place? What was the difference if both?

What is the best experience you have had being part of a community? Why do you think that is?

This series of events take place right after Peter & John have healed a man in the Temple area, been arrested for preaching about Jesus, been threatened but released, gone back to the church community to tell what has happened, there's a mighty prayer meeting where the building shakes by the power of the Spirit.

Someone who has their Bible...**ACTS 4:29-31**...What do you make of their prayer for "boldness"? How is that prayer answered & what does that look like?

How do we normally think about "boldness"? But here; go back to those 5 initial observation...boldness also is the very thing that's going to cause struggles...

Always remember...it's not what happens AT the prayer meeting that matters, it's what happens AFTERwards.

What do you think it felt like to be part of that early band of disciples? What was their relationship to one another & to the surrounding culture?

Verse 34 says, "*There were no needy people among them.*" What kind of picture do you see there? Can you imagine that today? What would it look like? Where does that come from? **BUT...**

Ananias & Sapphira...What do you see as the overriding issue? How is that significant? Intimacy w/ God implies there are no pretexts/pretences b/c God or among God's people. How can there be community w/o honesty & vulnerability & risk? How can there be community w/o accountability? What else is at stake in their pretence of generosity & deception?

Pr 15:11 - Death & Destruction hold no secrets from the Lord. How much more does he know the human heart!

Fakery is a cancer. Lying to God & neighbour is poison to the system. COVID deaths uniquely had >= 4 comorbidities

Jn 8:44 - For you are the children of your father the devil, & you love to do the evil things he does. He was a murderer from the beginning. He has always hated the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, it is consistent with his character; for he is a liar & the father of lies.

Jn 10:10 - The thief comes only to steal, kill, & destroy; I have come that they may have life, & have it to the full.

Someone who has their Bible...**ACTS 5:11-14**. Do you note anything striking here? How does the church grow when people are afraid of it? **5 initial observations...**

Any other observations...?

Serious sins often have subtle beginnings.

Counterfeit spirituality hides alongside genuine.

Grace is never to be a pretext for sin.

**Generosity, like all ministry, is for the sake of
obedience & conformity to Christ.**

**The manifestation of sin is likely more important
than its motivation.**

**Going through the motions is never the same as
genuine faithful obedience.**

What would you suggest as the "Take home lesson" of
this part of the church's life & witness together? How
will you enact that in your own life?

Someone's going to pray for us...