

Focus on Acts 4:32–35

WHAT is important to know?

— From “Exegetical Perspective,” Samuel E. Balentine

There is the stress of earning a living, now made acute by the addition to Jerusalem’s population of persons from “every nation under heaven,” including “both Jews and proselytes” (2:5, 10). Acts 4:32–35, along with 2:42–47 and 6:1–7, provides insight into how the church responded to this economic challenge by describing its practice of sharing possessions so that “there was not a needy person among them” (4:34). These three texts as “acts of the apostles” suggest the church’s mission “in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth” is rooted in and grows out of the fundamental imperative to care for one another.

WHERE is God in these words?

— From “Theological Perspective,” Alan G. Padgett

In the Nicene Creed we confess belief in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church. Luke lays out some similar theological values for the Christian community. There is little doubt that our author paints a rather idyllic scene, but there is some grounding in historical reality. Luke notes that the small community is unified: “one heart and soul.” This ideal of unity is not of the bureaucratic kind, but of purpose, mission, and values. The power of the Holy Spirit and the powerful witness of the resurrection of our Lord gave them a unity that was part of their mission and witness to the world (v. 33).

SO WHAT does this mean for our lives?

— From “Pastoral Perspective,”
Cynthia M. Campbell

In verse 33, Luke makes it clear that the source of this extraordinary behavior is the resurrection of Jesus: “With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all.” The resurrection is the demonstration of the power of God over all the powers of sin, death, and destruction in the world. It is also the power to transform the lives of those who believe. Does the resurrection of Jesus still have power to transform? In the contemporary post-Easter season, perhaps our efforts should be to help people see concrete glimpses into the power of God’s transforming presence in this world.

NOW WHAT is God’s word calling us to do?

— From “Homiletical Perspective,”
George Bryant Wirth

We are in a time of painful transitions and harmful divisions among congregations and denominations, within our country, and between the United States and other nations. As Christians who claim Jesus as Lord and Savior, we cannot allow our behavior to contradict his call and command to be “peacemakers” (Matt. 5:9) and to “love one another, just as I have loved you” (John 13:34). The clear and compelling message to share about unity in the midst of diversity is that the Lord calls us in humility to confess our sins, and to identify and reconcile ourselves not only with other Christians, but also with all of God’s human family on earth.