

**Sermon Outline - Sun, February 13, 2022 – The Economy of Locust & Honey**  
Isaiah 1:11-17; Matthew 3:1-4

**Overview –**

This month we are bridging our study of John the Baptist with a look at the tradition of Economic Justice within the African diaspora during Black History Month. Our theme is the Economy of Locust & Honey. Last week we talked about the fact that we are in a moment when we are trying to decide what kind of people we will be. If Jubilee is our goal, there is no getting there without a radical reordering of our values and how we spend our time, talent and treasure. We also acknowledged that Jubilee is not just about personal actions but also about the building of systems that are in line with God's economy.

**Exegesis**

- The scripture tells us that John at locust and honey most likely because he was part of one of two spiritual movements at that time the Essenes or the Qumran community.
- Both communities had a clear stance that rejected the Roman occupation, but also rejected structures within the Jewish religious establishment. They felt that God called them to live Jubilee and so they were on the margins creating systems of economic justice.
- They had systems where people who joined the community sold everything they had and put it into a communal pot that was used to take care of everyone's needs.

**The Key Points –**

1. **Welcoming people into family and growing your community of concern beyond your blood.** Both communities encouraged people to move beyond blood bonds to be part of an extended family. A marriage between the ideas of extended tribe that we brought from Africa with an adaptation to make family because slavery didn't respect our blood or marital relationships, so we had to extend beyond blood. Shout out to Grandma Hammond and my mother for
2. **Creating systems that shared resources so that everyone had enough.** In the Qumran and Essenes communities there was a full sharing of resources communally. In Black communities it looked like credit unions, banks and insurance companies that extended protections to Black folks when others wouldn't. It also looked like the Settlement Houses which welcomed folks migrating from the South. In Boston's South End they had a number of brownstones where folks could come to find help with housing, jobs and even basic needs like food. These spaces were often run by women.
3. **Lift while you climb.** This principle is particularly out of the African-American tradition. Our ancestors often went through a lot of pain and suffering to make those spaces open to open spaces that had been previously cut off. The agreement was – if you get through the door make sure that you share the information with someone else and push the door open wider to make more room.

**Questions**

1. Where do you have opportunities to build extended family? Are there people in New Roots, in your neighborhood, at work or school with whom you feel a spiritual connection? Children that you feel led to support as they grow? How can you extend your family beyond your family as a way of expanding your circle of concern?
2. What systems allow you to share resources or request resources as you need them? If you can't think of any, where can you start in small ways to create those systems – maybe with the chosen family we have been talking about.....
3. Where have you broken into spaces that do not welcome enough people? Where can you be sharing information and offering support to allow others to also gain access to those spaces and opportunities?