

Sermon Outline - Sun, Jun 20, 2021- Integrating around the Table

Overview: This our final week in the exploration of the Pentecost season. We have been working with the acronym PRIDE (**P**racticed; **R**edistributed Resources; **I**ntegrated Communities; **D**ined Together; **E**xpanded the Circle). We are reflecting on the notion of expanding the circle this afternoon.

Story Exegesis –

- When Jesus walked the Earth he really didn't put much into place other than the group of his apostles and disciples.
- He sometimes returned to the same communities but he doesn't leave behind any structures or standing groups to keep meeting after he is gone.
- In the Pentecost moment, folks are trying to figure out what it means to invite others to follow Jesus and how they hold those folks together in the moment and beyond.
- This is the founding of the institutional church but in Pentecost moment they're focused on the message and the practice as they become the group known as "The Way."

Key Points –

- **They were focused on bringing good news and tangible support**– They weren't trying to be a clique they recognized that the message of Jesus was really good news for a lot of folks and they committed themselves to sharing the news (not just through preaching but also through fellowship and direct works of liberation.)
- **They were building a movement not a mega church** – This group was about continually sharing the news with new people and less with formalizing them into structures that will stand with time (worth noting they think Jesus is coming back soon.)
- **They created structures that could expand with the new body members** – They were constantly creating opportunities for people to connect with each other and to go deeper as they wanted. They assumed that some would respond to the message and they were ready to receive them as it made sense.

While many of us have some concerns about evangelism because of the way we have experienced it in the past, but at the same time we have to be careful of having too much aversion to welcoming new folks. If the news we have is good and the world we're building is worth sharing, we can't be afraid to welcome folks in or being afraid about what new folks will bring to our community.

Questions –

1. Are you looking for a savior or a liberator? How does that affect the news that you are looking for and the miracles that you are watching out for?
2. What does it mean to be a movement vs. a mega church? Which are you wanting to be a part of? How would we form ourselves and how would you engage in each space?
3. How can we be a constantly welcoming congregation? Looking back on your own experience at New Roots or other communities, what has worked to make you feel welcome and integrated into a group?