

Energized for Mission - Thicker Than Blood
Hebrews 10:23-25; Acts 2:41-47; John 13:34-35

Many say that “_____ is thicker than _____.” The bonds of family are considered stronger than anything. That’s mostly true, but not always true. Today we see that something is “thicker” than blood. There is a bond stronger and more powerful than biology. It’s what connects us together and with Christians around the world.

After Peter’s _____ cut them to the heart, after he told them what to do, after 3,000 receive the invitation to believe, be baptized, receive forgiveness and the Holy Spirit, a new _____ forms. God says this community is one where, “...*the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.*” Maybe we should look more closely if we want the Lord to add to our number those who are being saved.

This community was...

...devoted to knowing and understanding the _____.
...devoted to sharing their _____ with each other.
...devoted to remembering and receiving _____ regularly.
...devoted to fellowship with and _____ on God.
..._____ by who God is and what he has done.
...radically _____. Not self-centered but radically _____-centered.
...immensely _____ and joyful.
...admired by and _____ to outsiders.

The Open Arms Family has some really strong bonds within it. But the reality of our culture and the trappings of our great wealth and prosperity make it far too easy to look more American than to look like Acts 2:

We are far too _____-_____.
We are far too _____.
We are far too committed _____.
We are far too _____.
We are far too _____.
We are far too ignorant of our desperate need for _____ and the radical _____ he demands.
We are far too oblivious to our need for _____, in faith and in _____.
We are far too naive about the attacks of the _____.

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Consider the radically generous way Jesus _____ us: he left heaven, lived among sinners, shared daily life with disciples, was kind and generous in a way that attracted many, he followed God’s commands and taught others to do the same, he demonstrated perfect _____ in God, even to the cross and grave, he continues to give himself to us for strength and support. He also gives us fellow Christians, the Body of Christ.

As you consider the love of Jesus for you, how is the Holy Spirit calling you to love your brothers and sisters?

How is the Holy Spirit leading you to be their support and receive their support?

How is the Holy Spirit asking us all to foster a holy jealousy that captivates outsiders?

What are you going to DO about it?