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| **Easter Faith In the Life of Believers**  *Promise: believers are knit together as member of Christ’s Body* Pastor Timothy A. Duesenberg Acts 4:32-35; Psalm 148; 1 John 1:1—2:2; John 20:19-31 (Second Sunday of Easter), 4/7/24)  *Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul.* – Acts 4:32  **Lead In –** All our readings this morning reflect the corporate nature of our identity in the Risen Christ. This is especially important for us to hear as Americans where the importance of each individual has given rise to an excessive individualism. Many of us rightly reject socialism and collectivism, but there is a healthy corrective to too much individualism, and that is the importance of community. As disciples we confess that we believe “in the communion of saints.” The community is Christ’s Body, and each believer individually is joined as a member of His body. This necessarily knits us to other members of Christ’s body. And we work in concert as we take our lead from Christ our head…   1. **The Corporate Identity and Emphasis in the Readings**    1. In Acts 4 see how much the believers love His Bride …    2. In 1 John 1:7, “If we walk in the light, as he is…    3. In John 20 Thomas missed out when not assembled… 2. **The Resurrection Makes A Difference!**    1. As the high note of Easter Sunday fades away …    2. The lives of believers can never be the same…    3. Believers! Don’t be a baptized unbeliever… 3. **In the Search for Personal Identity and Authenticity**    1. In His image, and yet community distorted by sin…    2. The futile and anxious search for the authentic self…    3. We are given our identity as a gift…   **Final Word –** Friends, Jesus Resurrection means that He has redeemed us from the wreckage of sin and so that we can belong to Him rather than to the tyranny of Satan and his realm of death. That makes us twice His. We belong to Him because we were fashioned and made by Him. And then lost to sin as the consequence of our rebellion, He purchased us back at the cost of His precious blood. Easter Faith makes a difference in our lives individually. We can never be the same. And it also makes a big difference in our being knit together in His Body with other members. Our life in Him is inextricably life in the communion of saints, the Church of Christ our Lord, His Risen Body.  **1Jn 1:7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.  **Jn 20:24** Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came.  **Ps 148:14** He has raised up a horn for his people, praise for all his saints, for the people of Israel who are near to him. Praise the Lord!  Corporate Identity: Consider *His flock*; *His Body with many members*; collectively *His Bride*; the *Household of Faith.* | **Acts 4:32-35 ESV**  *They Had Everything in Common*  32Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. 33And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. 34There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold 35and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.  **John 20:26-29 ESV**  *Jesus and Thomas*  26Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” 27Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.” 28Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” 29Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”  **Ac 2:41-42** So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. (Ac 2:42)  **Ac 5:14** And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women.  **Ge 1:27** So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.  **Ep 6:1-3** Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), “that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.”  **Ps 100:3** Know that the Lord, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.  **Ga 3:26-27** For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. |