

“God-enomics”

Sermon by Dan Harrison, pastor of Church of the Covenant, Lynchburg, VA 4/11/2021

Acts 4:32-35

There are competing ideas about how people believe the Creator intended for us to live. One group, we will call this group A, believes strongly that God created us to fight for resources, to capitalize on what we can for our own profit. Another group, we will call this group B, believes strongly that instead of fighting for resources, we should evenly distribute them so that all will benefit. Now, of course, these concepts are typically much more complicated than that, but for the sake of illustration, it is better to simplify the ideologies as much as we can. Isn't it true that each concept frightens the opposing group?

When Senator Dawes from Massachusetts traveled through Indian Territory in the late 1800's he was appalled at what he saw. When he stopped at one of the train stations to observe the native communities there, he asked his guide, "Who's farm does this one belong to?" When his guide told him that it belonged to everyone in the tribe, Senator Dawes was outraged. He thought, "How can this be?" And he spent the rest of his years in the senate working to abolish communal lands from the tribes, eventually creating the Dawes Act, which forced all tribal members to take a plot of land as their own. This created the blood quantum system, to discern how much Indian blood you have and how much you are entitled to. We are tracked by these measures to this day by the federal government, designed to manage the problem: Community.

There is nothing scarier than people who live in community with one another. It was a scary thing when Jesus' first disciples decided to have all things in common, to care for one another's needs. Though our country likes to consider itself a "Christian nation," there is nothing Christian about our economic system, and most of us know this. I, for one, am less interested in Christianizing our public economic system as much as I am in seeing this level of mutual care within our spiritual community truly realized. Today's teaching is a hard one. It requires sacrifice and love, but I want to encourage us all to evaluate the power of working together to care for the needs of one another, to increase our "seeds and needs" fund to care for the needs of our community members and beyond, to follow the example of the first communities of faith we see in Acts, where "they had all things in common." This will not be easy to do, and we will feel the pain in doing it, but we also feel love overflowing in our very souls. This makes it all worth it, to ease the pain of others. Here is a poem by the Sufi poet Rumi:

There is a community of the spirit.

Existe una comunidad del espíritu

Join it, and feel the delight

of walking in the noisy street

and being the noise.

Únete a ella y siente el deleite de caminar por la
algarabía.

Drink all your passion,

and be the disgrace.

Bébetela toda tu pasión y sé la deshonra.

Close both eyes

to see with the other eye.

Cierra los ojos para ver con el otro ojo.

Open your hands,

if you want to be held.

Abre las manos si quieres que te abracen.

Sit down in this circle.

Siéntate en este círculo.

Quit acting like a wolf, and feel

the shepherd's love filling you.

Deja de comportarte como un lobo y siente como te
inunda el amor del pastor.

At night, your beloved wanders.

De noche, tu amado deambula.

Don't accept consolations.

No aceptes consuelos.

Close your mouth against food.

Cierra la boca a todo alimento.

Taste the lover's mouth in yours.

Saborea la boca del amante en la tuya.

You moan, "She left me." "He left me."

Vas gimiendo y diciendo: "me ha dejado".

Twenty more will come.

Vendrán veinte más.

Be empty of worrying.

Vacíate de preocupaciones. Existe

Think of who created thought!

¡Piensa en quién creó el pensamiento!

Why do you stay in prison

when the door is so wide open?

¿Por qué permaneces en la cárcel cuando la puerta está
abierta de par en par?

Move outside the tangle of fear-thinking.

Deshazte de la maraña de pensamientos temerosos.

Live in silence.

Vive en silencio.

Flow down and down in always

widening rings of being.

Fluye y fluye en ondas de existencia en constante
expansión.