

April 12, 2015 - Easter 2

Acts 4: 32-34

For over a decade after the divorce, my grown children and I would get together every year at my mother's place on Lake Simcoe north of Toronto. My son Zachary's birthday in early July was the opportunity to gather. It was the one celebration that everyone could make, so it took on more than the usual birthday significance. Now birthdays of a new generation get us all together.

The last summer that we were all able to get together at the lake, and after my mother had gone to bed, we started a musical jam session in the sunroom. Noah had been anxiously waiting a whole year for Tasha to return from teaching in Ecuador so that they could play together again. He brought two ukuleles from his latest music program at his school. Tasha and Noah played the ukuleles, Ashley, Vicki, Zack and I sang. John Dinner was grooving, which was the best he could do, and we liked it that way. My brother Bill was keeping time on a makeshift drum, surprising him and us.

In the midst of it all I stopped singing, leaned back and took it all in. All those years of Suzuki Music lessons twice a week; piano, flute, cello, and violin; all those difficult years of distance and separation; all the joys and sorrows of life together; and there we were, everyone contributing what they could, making the best kind of music possible. It was joyous but for me it began to change, to transform into a deep, profound satisfaction. I experienced resurrection where joy becomes a deeply fulfilling sense of satisfaction. There was my reshaped and expanding family creatively coming together in a wonderful, joyous unity.

"Grace was on all of us."

We all remember those times when we give ourselves to the music or to the larger moment.

We all remember the activities when we give ourselves to the greater good.

We remember these times because they don't happen every day. This is what was being remembered in our Acts reading.

In a slave culture, with a rigid class structure, dominated by a foreign empire, what was going on was new and unprecedented. Men and women, people of different classes, even slaves, all coming together and giving themselves to living and sharing as one.

When we give ourselves in the mission or the moment, when we allow the radiance of resurrection to well up and unite us as one – one heart and one mind, we discover that grace is on all of us. Our Joy becomes a deep inner Satisfaction that opens up to unity.

Now, we know that the Acts experiment didn't last. Just like gathering with my grown children, things evolve, expand and new ways of getting together emerge: But with "grace on all of us" we become God's New Day in new ways.

The Application for Today

With our Joy becoming deep inner Satisfaction which opens us to God's New Day let's sing 'Let Us Build a House', #1 MV vs. 4&5 Amen.

1 John 1: 1-7

I would like to retell a story of moving from darkness to light at Easter. Some might remember with glee the phrase "I couldn't have a meltdown because my mother was visiting."

It all started Easter Monday morning 2012.

We had celebrated Easter Sunday with a great morning worship service and a wonderful evening feast with family and friends. Bubba Watson had won the Master Golf Tournament, I was feeling good. Christ indeed had risen.

But Easter Monday morning everything changed as I looked out to the backyard and our huge pond was half empty. At least 1,000 to 1,500 gallons of water had disappeared over night. Either we had a hole in the liner somewhere a foot and a half from the top, or I hadn't properly winterized the hose running underground from the pump to the upper pond and waterfall forty five feet away.

A burst, buried hose bundled up with a power cable and a water line from the house was too much to handle. A hole in the liner large enough to lose that much water, that fast, that deep was unimaginable. But I had been worried, guilty even, that I hadn't used enough geological textile to shield the liner from the roots of the massive maple tree in our backyard. Things went dark and really quiet!

Now I have an expectation in life that things should just work out for me.

I can get pretty impatient when things don't work out. Right then the pond was not working out. After the best part of two summer's work, if this pond wasn't going to work out, I was going to fill it in! But before I got to that, we called friends with a pond and the consensus was turn off the pump and see if the water level holds.

Vicki turned off the pump and I went back to bed paralysed by the possibilities. I couldn't have a meltdown because my mother was visiting.

But I could go back into the gloom of the tomb!

A little while later, I got up again and went out. The water was the same, so it looked like the problem was the pipe. I started digging where the ground felt soft and I was sure the pipe was buried. It wasn't buried there! Turns out I had built a flagstone pathway right over the buried pipe for most of its length. The darkness deepened. I took to my bed again!

I couldn't have a meltdown because my mother was visiting!

The tomb was becoming a familiar place!

I got up again, my mind racing with all the work and mess of digging up the pipe, and wrecking everything! I was aware now that even if I did find the leak, it would probably burst again somewhere else. The implications were too much.

I was totally caught in the ego's world of woe. My pain body and self-pity were growing. Even the weather was against me, cold and threatening rain.

But, I couldn't have a meltdown because my mother was visiting!

I needed to access another, a different resource base.

So I sat quietly in the solarium and meditated on it.

I stared out the window at the scene and contemplated all the possibilities.

I sought the spiritual grace of understanding.

I listened to the inner wisdom and intuitions of the soul.

I looked at all my worries and fears and "I told you so's".

I faced my sense of entitlement that things should just work out for me.

I finally recognized none of this was personal, it was what it was; a burst pipe, but the impact of it would affect me intimately to be sure.

I began to let go of my self-imposed suffering.

And then the light began to dawn. The dark clouds of woe receded and Resurrection was back on!

I just had to abandon the buried portion of the burst pipe completely. It was the wrong kind of pipe anyway. I could bury the new pipe later, on the other side of the walkway and avoid disturbing the flagstone path and garden.

Off we went to Reno Depot and soon we were back with the right pipe, a few fittings and in an hour the pump was running, the stream flowing and the pond filling.

I was walking in the light. Let me tell you there was some deep Satisfaction going on right then.

I had gone from the light of simple Joy to the shadows of ego woe, to working through my soul into the resurrection radiance of deep Satisfaction.

I was living in the light!

This process is what our scripture lesson is hinting at.

If we are going to walk in the light we have to access the light. We have to learn to embrace God's grace and let it transform our thinking, let it transform our emotions and let it transform what we do. We have to let God raise us up to the light, and then be willing to live and be transform in that light.

The Application for Today

With our Joy becoming deep inner Satisfaction which opens up to the light of God's New Day, let us sing hymn #679 VU "Let There be Light"

Amen.