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FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER
Year A

Acts 2:42-47

This is a picture of the early Church.

Those who had been baptized devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

1. Where are they all praying? _____
2. Who prays in the Temple? _____
 - a. So what religion are they practicing? _____
3. Does this description smack of communism? _____

Psalm 23 Page 612, BCP

Dominus regit me

1. The LORD is my shepherd; *
I shall not be in want.

2. He makes me lie down in green pastures *
and leads me beside still waters.

3. He revives my soul * and guides me along
right pathways for his Name's sake.

4. Though I walk through the valley of the
shadow of death, I shall fear no evil; *
for you are with me; your rod and your staff,

they comfort me.

5. You spread a table before me in the
presence of those who trouble me; *
you have anointed my head with oil,
and my cup is running over.

6. Surely your goodness and mercy shall
follow me all the days of my life, *
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD
for ever.

I have no comment.

1 Peter 2:19-25

This is believed to be written by a disciple of Peter to encourage a struggling congregation.

It is a credit to you if, being aware of God, you endure pain while suffering unjustly. If you endure when you are beaten for doing wrong, what credit is that? But if you endure when you do right and suffer for it, you

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have God's approval. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps.

"He committed no sin,
and no deceit was found in his mouth."

*This is from one of Isaiah's suffering servant's
Song in chapter 53*

When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

1. Do you think we should seek suffering? _____
 2. What should our attitude be towards suffering? _____
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John 10:1-10

This is a wonderful but not perfect metaphor.

Jesus said, "Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers." Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

So again Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."

1. Who are the sheep? _____
 2. Who were the thieves and bandits? _____
 - a. Be more specific. _____
 - b. Who might be thieves and bandits today? _____
-
3. How do we reconcile Peter and John?
 - a. From John like the 23rd Psalm, whoever enters by Jesus will go out and have pasture, life more abundantly.
 - b. I Peter says Jesus suffered leaving us an example.

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