

## Devotional

## The Island Boys

August 2, 2020

### Monday

Read Acts 4:32-5:11

Sin, in all its forms, is destructive and dangerous to community. Jack, the tribal leader in *Lord of the Flies*, is only interested in a community that is totally subservient to his power and the whims of his will. He rules by force and fear. There is no community, only savagery that operates according to his dictates. His care is for his power. His love is for his own glory. The only sacrifices he calls for are for others to sacrifice to his dominion. This can happen in our church, our homes, and in our own hearts.

The shipwrecked boys of Tonga: Sione, Stephen, Kolo, David, Luke, and Mano chose a different path. Seeing the desperate situation they were in didn't lead them to tear each other apart, choose winners and losers, and fall before authoritarian might. They came together to work for their mutual benefit. They took extra steps to diffuse their conflicts – how many of us as adults could use the practice of the time out to not have the flames of conflict be fanned? When one of them became injured, the others took care of him and did the work he could no longer do. They never failed to gather in prayer and song. They sacrificed for each other.

When you are in crisis how do you tend to respond? How did Jesus and the Church in Acts respond? What needs to happen in your life to respond to crisis like Jesus?

### Tuesday

Read Deuteronomy 15:1-18

It may always be a hard time to have a passage that references the nature of slavery in the Bible given our country's difficult history and legacy with brutal, race-based slavery, but the core of this passage is about every seventh year being a Sabbatical year allowing the land to rest, caring for each other (especially the poor), and being in just economic relationships. God is expecting everyone to be taken care of because God has provided enough. There aren't qualifiers for if people deserve it or not (none of us truly deserve anything from God). God expects us to care for one another.

How can you live into just relationships every day with the people you deal with in work, home, and neighborhood?

## Wednesday

Read Psalms 120 and 121

When we face difficult times as a church, like we do now, what path will we choose? When you face difficult times as a family, which you might now, what path do you choose? When our nation faces difficult times, as it does now, what path will you choose? That last question doesn't have a partisan answer, but like the rest it has a heart answer.

Character is laid bare in crisis and in tough times. The infant church chose honesty, integrity, and mutual sacrifice for the benefit of all. And they chose these ways to live in the patterns of Jesus who lived and spoke God's word truthfully, never strayed to live out the integrity of his convictions, and sacrificed himself for the salvation of humanity.

We can get caught in patterns of believing that life happens to us and thinking there is only one way to respond. No matter what comes upon us, we always have the ability to choose. What do you want to lift up about how you choose to live in difficult times? What should you celebrate about how God is shaping you?

## Thursday

Refresh yourself with the thrust of Acts 5:3-4 and 9 and then be prepared for more below!

Peter asks Ananias and then Sapphira why they have conspired to test the Holy Spirit. They are figuring that they will get away with their deception. If they tried to pull this scheme somewhere other than the Church, they probably would've gotten away with it or wouldn't have been found out for some time. But the Holy Spirit knows everything that happens in the community. People are accountable. You and I are accountable for what we do, say, and think. Ananias and Sapphira meet with the instant accountability for their scheme to deceive. Check out similar language of testing the Spirit in Exodus 17:2, Numbers 20:13, Deuteronomy 6:16 and 33:8, and Psalm 106:32 (and the verse surrounding these citations). God is gracious and God is just. We do well when we do our best to act with integrity towards the Triune God and heart-fully repent when we do not.

**Friday** – please read Acts 4:23-31 and 5:12-16 in preparation for Sunday worship.