

“How Beautiful”

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Acts 4:32-37

JENI

Today we have had a lot going on in the service. We connected with Jeni Pedzinski from Thailand to chat about what God has been doing in her life and the lives of young girls in her community.

What happened was that God began working and Jeni recognized what God was doing and responded by joining that work. Then we heard about it and joined in the work through prayers, personal connections, and financial support.

How beautiful!

BABIES

Then we had the baby dedication of Hainer and Lilian. It is such a joy to see a couple of babies growing up in two wonderful families. On top of that, to see their families' commitment to raise these two kids in this community of faith is simply inspiring.

We can trace God's work way back in the Olsen family. Of course

Shelley and Tim, and Emma and Adam have grown up themselves in families of faith where they were encouraged to look to God for hope strength and guidance. They were encouraged to be part of a worshiping family of faith. We know that Tim and Emma grew up with Bill and Carol and before them their grandparents were also part of this church community with a dedication and priority on living as people of faith.

We look at this history and can affirm, how beautiful!

GRADUATES

Again, like with the babies we dedicated, God has been at work in the lives of the graduates we have honored today: Paige, Grace and Emily. God was at work when they were born, when they entered pre-school or kindergarten for the first time. God provided a family of support for them, and also friends who would encourage them, and teachers who would nurture them.

We can look at each of them and say “Wow! Look at what God has done to prepare them for the next steps in their journey.” Together we can say, how beautiful!

We each have a story, and if we have eyes to see it, we will

recognize God's finger prints all over our stories. We each can declare of God's work, how beautiful!

I want to read a story from the book of Acts and share a very brief reflection. Remember as I read, that the people you will hear about are our ancestors in the faith. It is on their shoulders that we stand.

READ ACTS 4:32-37

Before this passage was written, God was at work. The Holy Spirit had brought these people together as a new kind of community.

They were rapidly adding new people into their community. This presented a huge challenge to keep up with educating the new folk about the ways of this new community and organizing to do the new ministry to which God was calling them.

One of the markers of this new community was that, even though they were increasingly diverse, they were unified in a remarkable way. Luke wrote that they were of one heart and soul.

It doesn't say that they all believed in exactly the same way, although they did believe Jesus was central to their being a community.

Instead, what bound them together was something very deep within them — it rested in their hearts and their souls, right at the center-most part of them. It was like connecting at the foundational level of what it means to be human. In fact, this is exactly what was happening. They were alive as God created human beings to be alive.

They celebrated being human together and that meant honoring that all things were God's — all of their land, their possessions, their intellect and emotions, their very lives. This freed them to share.

They shared their lives together such that nobody lacked anything — nobody lacked what they needed. How beautiful!

Is that not what we also are celebrating today as decedents of these first Christians? We are celebrating God's work in us.

As we look at how God has been at work in the past, and how God is at work in the present, it is perhaps easier to trust that God will continue to work in our future.

And future generations will look back on these times and say "How beautiful!"