

We R2B a Generous People

Acts 4:32-37

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The context of Acts 4

- Chapter 1: The ascension of Jesus. Matthias as new apostle.
Chapter 2: Pentecost and the coming of the Holy Spirit.
The Birth of the Church, explosive growth.
Chapter 3: Apostle's healing and teaching.
Chapter 4: Persecution, prayer, and possessions.
- This passage gives us a snapshot of the church's internal life and what made it so compelling... "the Fruit of the Spirit!"
- Three main themes: **unity, generosity, and witness.**

Generosity can take many forms. Goodness, hospitality, kindness, unselfishness, charity, just to name a few. I have been praying for many years Colossians 3:12, *that I would be a person of tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.* I can only be this as I am clothing myself with Christ (the message of the passage)! If I AM 2B these, then We R2B these, together!

G-I-V-E

1: G- God first!

Generosity begins with God... "because He first loved us..."

1 John 4:13-21:

13-16 This is how we know we're living steadily and deeply in him, and he in us: He's given us life from his life, from his very own Spirit. Also, we've seen for ourselves and continue to state openly that the Father sent his Son as Savior of the world. Everyone who confesses that Jesus is God's Son participates continuously in an intimate relationship with God. We know it so well, we've embraced it heart and soul, this love that comes from God.

17-18 God is love. When we take up permanent residence in a life of love, we live in God and God lives in us. This way, love has the run of the house, becomes at home and mature in us, so that we're free of worry on Judgment Day—our standing in the world is identical with Christ's. There is no room in love for fear. Well-formed love banishes fear. Since fear is crippling, a fearful life—fear of death, fear of judgment—is one not yet fully formed in love.

19 We, though, are going to love—love and be loved. First we were loved, now we love. He loved us first.

20-21 *If anyone boasts, "I love God," and goes right on hating his brother or sister, thinking nothing of it, he is a liar. If he won't love the person he can see, how can he love the God he can't see? The command we have from Christ is blunt: Loving God includes loving people. You've got to love both.*

2: I- Inventive unity

Unity in one heart and mind (Acts 4:32)

a) The phrase "one heart and mind."

- This is more than just agreement; it's a deep, shared identity and purpose in Christ.
- Contrast this unity with the divisions and conflicts that can plague even churches.
- Mixed messages; **not having one heart and mind**. We have to work at this... we have to be creative... innovative....

b) The source of our unity.

- The **Holy Spirit's work** in our lives.
- Our **shared faith in Jesus** and **commitment to the gospel**.

Application:

How do we cultivate this kind of unity in IBC Madrid today?

What are the barriers to unity, and how can we overcome them?

We must prioritize and pray for, love, humility, and forgiveness.

3. V- Victory –in Jesus, in surrender, in giving generosity and sharing (Acts 4:32, 34-35)

a) Radical generosity of the early believers.

The Believers Share Their Possessions

³² All the believers were united in heart and mind (one heart and mind HCSV). *And they felt that what they owned was not their own, so they shared everything they had.* ³³ *The apostles testified powerfully to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and God's great blessing was upon them all.* ³⁴ There were no needy people among them, because those who owned land or houses would sell them ³⁵ and bring the money to the apostles to give to those in need. (Acts 4:32-37)

⁴⁴ *And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had.* ⁴⁵ *They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need.* (Acts 2:44-45)

Negative:

¹ *But there was a certain man named Ananias who, with his wife, Sapphira, sold some property.* ² *He brought part of the money to the apostles, claiming it was the full amount. With his wife's consent, he kept the rest.* ³ *Then Peter said, "Ananias, why have you let Satan fill your heart? You lied to the Holy Spirit, and you kept some of the money for yourself.* ⁴ *The property was yours to sell or not sell, as you wished. And after selling it, the money was also yours to give away. How could you do a thing like this? You weren't lying to us but to God!"* (Acts 5:1-4)

- They shared their possessions, and no one claimed that anything was their own.
- Remember, these were voluntary acts of love, not a mandate.

b) The reasons for their generosity.

- Their understanding that **everything belongs to God**.
- Their compassion for those in need within the community.
- Their desire to reflect the generosity of Christ.

c) The example of Barnabas (Joseph).

³⁶ *For instance, there was Joseph, the one the apostles nicknamed Barnabas (which means "Son of Encouragement"). He was from the tribe of Levi and came from the island of Cyprus.*

³⁷ *He sold a field he owned and brought the money to the apostles.* (Acts 4:36-37)

- His willingness to sell his field and give the proceeds to the apostles.
- His reputation as an encourager (his name's meaning).

Application:

Do you consider yourself a generous person?

Are you generous with your time, skills, attention, emotional and spiritual support, knowledge, hospitality, influence and resources?

How can we, at IBC, Madrid, cultivate a culture of giving and sharing?

4: E- Eternal reward

Powerful witness

a) The connection between the church's internal unity and its external witness.

- *"With great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus."* (Acts 4:33)
- Acts 8:26 ff. Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch.
- ¹⁸ *Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. ²⁰ Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."* (Matthew 28:18-20)
- The world was drawn to the church because of the love and unity they displayed.

b) The content of their witness.

- The resurrection of Jesus as the central truth of the gospel.
- The power of the resurrection to transform lives.

c) The conclusion of their witness.

- *"Great grace was upon them all."*
- God's favor was evident in their lives and ministry.

Application:

- How does our unity and generosity impact our witness to the world?
- Are we living in such a way that others are drawn to Christ?
- The importance of both word and deed in our witness.

Conclusion:

Main points: The early church was marked by a profound unity, a radical generosity, and a powerful witness.

I want to challenge you to:

- Cultivate deeper unity in your relationships.
- Practice more generous giving and sharing.
- Be bold in your witness to the resurrection of Jesus.

What will IBC Madrid look like be if we embodied these qualities?