

## THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MARCH 1ST, 2026 // BOOK OF ACTS

### GENEROSITY OF THE CHURCH (ACTS 4:32-37) "OF ONE HEART AND MIND"

This is a miraculous work of the Spirit. It is not natural to look at one's possessions as not their own. The Greek does not state that everyone sold their possessions as a requirement but as a response to needs as they arose.

- When God touches our lives in this way we start to see His ownership of everything we have and find it easier to hold all things in common.

### "GREAT GRACE WAS ON ALL OF THEM"

Verse 33 is the result of the early church's heart displayed in the previous verse. They put God first, people second, and their material possessions were a very distant third.

- When our eyes are properly focused on God above all else, His great grace and favor will be evident everywhere, but His grace is hard to see when our focus is diverted elsewhere.

### BIBLICAL GENEROSITY (BENEVOLENCE)

The church must discern who is truly needy and the best way to help (1 Timothy 5:3).

- If someone can work and provide for themselves then it is their responsibility to provide and not the church's (2 Thessalonians 3:10-12; 1 Timothy 5:8; 1 Thessalonians 4:11).
- If someone has family that can support them then the church should not (1 Timothy 5:3-4).
- It is not wrong to think that someone receiving support from the church should give back to the church body (1 Timothy 5:5, 10).
- The church should examine moral conduct before giving support (1 Timothy 5:9-13).
- Support from the church is to be given for basic necessities of life and is to start with those within the church first (1 Timothy 6:8; Galatians 6:10).

### "THERE WAS NOT A NEEDY PERSON AMONG THEM"

Luke gives us an example of an individual with a generous heart. Joseph was known not just for his generosity with material possessions but was so generous with encouragement that they called him Barnabas, meaning "son of encouragement."

- There were people in need (Matthew 26:11; Mark 14:7), but the needs were met because of the generosity of the church.
- "For there will never cease to be poor people in the land; that is why I am commanding you, 'Open your hand willingly to your poor and needy brother in your land.'" (Deuteronomy 15:11)

### DISHONESTY OF THE DISCIPLES (ACTS 5:1-11) CONTRASTING STORIES

To contrast the heart of Joseph, known as Barnabas, Luke tells us about "a man named Ananias" and "his wife Sapphira," who also "sold a piece of property."

- Similar to the story of Achan in Joshua 7:1-26, Luke tells us that Ananias and Sapphira kept back part of the money for themselves.

### THE LUST FOR PUBLIC PRAISE

Luke says the couple "brought a portion of it and laid it at the apostles' feet." This was a very public demonstration, and they likely witnessed the reaction to Joseph's generosity.

- They lusted after public praise and wanted to give the appearance of being generous and sacrificial without committing to being generous and sacrificial.

### SUPERNATURAL KNOWLEDGE

The Holy Spirit, who created unity in the church, apparently told Peter of Ananias's deception.

- The sin was not that Ananias withheld money but that he deceptively pretended to give it all. Though this manifested in greed, pride was at the root of it all. He wanted everyone to acknowledge his spirituality.

### ACKNOWLEDGE SIN AND TRUST GOD

Peter, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, pointed out the sin in the hearts of Ananias and Sapphira, but God took care of the judgment.

- We understand that deceit, divisiveness, and double-mindedness always undermine the Holy Spirit's work and Church's effectiveness. These things must be addressed, but we trust God with the consequences.

### "GREAT FEAR CAME ON ALL WHO HEARD"

Verse 11 is the first time we see the Greek word for "church" (*ekklesia*) in Acts as Luke tells us that the death of Ananias and Sapphira brought two results: fear in the church and fear in the city.

- Most likely this fear, which is a holy awe and reverence, not terror, was centered on God's power and the ugliness of sin.

### PRESERVATION OF THE EARLY CHURCH

The judgment against Ananias and Sapphira was at a critical time for the early church and, if not addressed, could have corrupted it from the root.

- We can look at this as a harsh punishment against Ananias and Sapphira, especially for a sin that seems so common today, but instead, we should wonder why God delays his righteous judgment in all other cases.

### POWER DISPLAYED (ACTS 5:12-16) THE SPIRIT BRINGS UNITY

Luke records the apostles praying together that God would continue to do signs and wonders "through the name of your holy servant Jesus" (Acts 4:30), and we see their prayer was answered as remarkable signs and wonders continued.

- Beyond the many signs and wonders, a great display of the Spirit's power is that they were all united together with one accord.

### "ALL TOGETHER IN SOLOMON'S COLONNADE"

The fact they gathered in Solomon's Colonnade is of great importance.

- The second temple was a massive compound comprised of extensive covered colonnades and more restrictive areas at the center of the temple. The apostles gathered to share the gospel in an area of the temple that was open to all.

### A CULLING LEADS TO GROWTH

Verse 13 says that "no one else dared to join them," yet verse 14 says, "believers were added to the Lord in increasing numbers."

- People knew following Christ was a serious matter and the judgment of Ananias and Sapphira reduced the level of casual followers as true Believers were added to the Lord— not a church, a person, or even a movement.

### NOTHING MAGICAL ABOUT PETER'S SHADOW

The idea of hoping Peter's shadow would touch them is foreign to us, but in the ancient world, a person's shadow was an extension of that person.

- The people in Jerusalem were so convinced of Christ's power displayed through the apostles that they thought they could be healed by Peter's shadow, similar to when a woman was healed by touching Jesus' garment healed (Luke 8:44).

### "A MULTITUDE CAME TOGETHER"

This section ends with the first mention of the gospel reaching those outside of Jerusalem as people came to them.

- Though this was an exciting time in ministry, the apostles were told to go out in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8), and it would be persecution that forced the apostles out of Jerusalem.

### "OUR" POSSESSIONS

- Do we hold a worldly view or Christian view of "our" possessions?
- Do we view what we have as "ours" or "His"?
- Is our focus on ownership or stewardship?
- When we look at all the things we have been given (1 Chronicles 29:16), our grasp on those things will reveal whether we are motivated by greed or by need.

### "OUR" IMAGE

- Have we traded in the image of spirituality without the reality of spiritual life?
- We can deceive ourselves and others, but we cannot lie to the Spirit, for God is not mocked.
- Whose image are we trying to maintain?
- Our focus and energy should not be expended on protecting our image but projecting His image to the world.