

**PRAY**

- Last meeting we ended in Chapter 4 about the wonderful community giving of this first church.
- I'd like to spend a little time reflecting on this communal attitude of giving.
- That takes us back to Chapter 2 where the Spirit of God came down on the day of Pentecost and fill the crowd.

◇ It tells us that the followers were **devoted and in awe**

| Act 2:42 -47  
| NET **Reverential** awe

- Then we read in chapter 4 of Peter and John being arrested and taken to trial.
- Upon their release a group gathers together and prays.
- Let me pick it up at the end of Chapter 4 where the chapter should be split.
  - ◇ These next two stories really belong together.

| Act 4:32-37

- ◇ And it says, "The group of those who believed were of one heart and soul"
- ◇ They were of one heart and soul, interesting remark.
  - Aristotle being asked, What is a Friend? Answered, One soul dwelling in Two bodies
  - Some 300 years earlier.
- Levites can't own land...but Joseph was from Cyprus. Possible explanation.
- Now contrast that with the beginning of chapter 5

| Act 5:1-11

- "And a great fear come upon the whole church and upon all who heard of these things."
  - ◇ Remember this "great fear" I will mention it a little later.
- There is obviously information we are not privy to.
  - ◇ Ananias and Sapphira must have talked of this exchange with Peter prior, such that he knew they were being dishonest in holding back proceeds.
  - ◇ Peter makes it plain that it was their property and their money after the sale so why lie about it. What is the purpose in that?
    - Contrast that with **4:32**, "...no one said that any of the thing that belonged to him was his own..."
    - Example of Kids sharing...mine mine.
      - It is all Gods and it is temporarily in our possession...

- ◇ Unless of course we don't see it in this "Light". In the light of the Lord.
- ◇ Then we possess it, we own it, it is our dominion.
- ◇ In creeps greed and pride of ownership.
- But it didn't take very long for the first church to show signs of hypocrisy, did it?
  - ◇ It is a human trait. Not a trait in God's image, but a fleshly trait of which we saw in the story of Adam, Eve and a certain serpent.
  - ◇ Tells us there that Ananias and Sapphira "Kept back" part of the money...
    - The Greek term used is rare. It is used in context of embezzling.
    - The same Greek word was chosen in the Greek Pentateuch.
      - IN the book of Joshua, where Achan embezzles some treasures acquired after sacking the city of Jericho.
      - This was after the Hebrews were warned that God directed them that He had plans for it and to put it all in the treasury and take none for yourselves.
      - Same connotation of taking that which the Lords.
      - Achan dies also by the way.
  - ◇ So the point that Peter was making is why lie about it.
    - Ananias and Sapphira weren't gaining anything, they already owned it.
    - They didn't have to give up all the proceeds.
    - So again, why? What was the motive?
      - They wanted to be part of it but still held money above God.
      - They were more social than in Love with Christ...and everyone is doing it.
      - They worshiped money more than God.
    - Satan filled their hearts, that they wanted to hide the motive.
      - Peter does not say, why did Satan fill your hearts that you loved money more than God.
      - Peter says, why did Satan fill your hearts that you would lie.
- Lie to the Holy Spirit. You have not lied to man but to God.
  - ◇ This is the conviction of us all. That we would justify our sins.
  - ◇ They Tested the Lord together.
    - Mal 3:9-10; we are challenged to test God's promises. He is a God of His word.
    - 1 Jn 4:1; we are told to test spirits to ensure they are from God.
    - But in this case Ananias and Sapphira are testing God's existence or at least His involvement in Human endeavours.
    - Do we test God?
- Give me neither poverty nor riches, but sustain me Lord.

- Ananias is judged quickly and harshly.
  - ◇ Takes them about 3 hours to prepare and bury him and the burial party returns.
    - Same time as Sapphira shows up.
  - ◇ Common practice many scriptures not to let the dead lay around. Due 21:23
  - ◇ Embalming practices very uncommon until Civil War USA (aside from mummification for royalty in Egypt)
- And then we see Sapphira suffer the same quick and harsh judgment.
  - ◇ I have to ask the question why, when so much hypocrisy runs rampant in our day.
  - ◇ Why so swift and harsh judgement then and let hypocrisy linger now.
  - ◇ I will try and address this question later on by wrapping it into a similar question about miracles.
- But for now I'd like to revisit the idea of Communism that was brought up last time.
  - ◇ This community had everything in common. A common wealth.
  - ◇ This is the root in the word communism. Commune, common.
    - Of course the failure in Marxist communism we have found, largely is motive.
    - The motive of the Marxist communist philosophy was for that of the good of the nation. Nationalism.
    - Here in the Acts church the motive is God
      - The difference is v. 32, they were of one heart.
      - The difference is 2:43, they had a reverential awe
      - The difference is v. 33, "great grace was upon them all"
      - This was voluntary out of the love for God and people.
    - Remove God as the motive and you have failure. (opium of the people...ha)
      - If I could Reference **1 Sam 8** as an example of removing God as the motive.
        - (God states to Samuel): For it is not you that they have rejected, but it is me that they have rejected as their king...
        - (Samuel warns the Israelites): You will cry out because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, but the LORD won't answer you in that day.
- These people in the "Acts church" placed God first. They had so vivid a belief.
  - ◇ Recognizing this world and our belongings as temporary.
  - ◇ Their Devotion, Reverential awe, their love for one another.
- But before we drift off into this *perfect land of oneness and bliss* let's look at this in a more realistic light.

- ◇ This is no small undertaking.
  - We will see the logistics difficulties and and cultural bias needing attention in later chapters.
- ◇ And recognize that this is the first in a long story about culture and the Theology of Poverty
  - Some contend (Chuck Smith) that this was financially damaging to the Jerusalem Church and we see many comments in Acts and through out Paul's writing about brining offering back to Jerusalem. (Acts 24:17 & Rom 15:27)
  - We have seen Jesus teach much about the poor and our heart toward the poor.
  - The ideology of poverty in the middle ages made charity a condition of salvation.
    - Based off the apocryphal books Tobit 4:9-11 and 12:9. Sirach 3:30, 4:1-6, 20:21
  - Almost making Poverty a necessary condition.
  - Church possitioned itself as the distributer of charity of and thus a required middle man.
  - in late 1300's Wycliffe began being questioned the postion of the institutional Church being required in the roll of alms distribution.
- ◇ We then find post reformational churches all throughout Germany organizing a more autonomous less controlling roll in charity.
- ◇ This is where we start seeing hospitals form and assistance to crippled.
- ◇ And many more projects of charity develop over the several hundred years becoming more and more governmentally organized institutions.
- ◇ Now we have the complexities of everything from governmental welfare to good ol' fashion church benevolence to institutions under the guise of charity committing abominations.
- There would be a very intriguing study of the human condition.

⊗ I am honestly enamerd by the tangibility of God in the human condition.

- Here is another example of that tangible manefestation of God.

|Act 5:12-13

- **v. 13** “they were meeting together” compare to v.13 “the rest dared not join them”
  - ◇ They didn't dare join them.
  - ◇ Obvious separate group identity in public. Showing that those were afraid to attach themselves to the group unless they were true converts. Example of Ananias.
  - ◇ But held in high honor.
  - ◇ Luke puts in a hyperbole contrasting those who dare not join them to their numbers increasing.

|Act 5:14-16

- v. 16 This looks just like the Continuation of Christs ministry.
- v. 12 (NET) Through the hands of the apostles.
  - ◇ Now that Christ is gone His work is being done by...the Holy Spirit... Essentially Jesu.
    - But through the church... known as the body of Christ.
    - 1Cor 12:12
  - ◇ Describe the Body of Christ (Literal view) and us as empty vessels or vehicles.
- Here in this last section we are seeing (what Chuck Smith calls) Healing by the principle of the release of faith.
  - ◇ Much like the Woman touching hem of Jesus garment.
    - We have the faith in Jesus but put a limitation on it.
  - ◇ 1 Cor 12:4-11
    - "...who apportions to each one individually as He wills."
    - To Edify.
- I ask why so tangible and so ethereal in my life.
  - ◇ In this is wrapped the same question of the punishment of Annias and Sapphira.
- Gods Sovereignty to judge, punish, bless, forgive, gift and destroy as He sees fit.
  - ◇ Story of baby Angel.
  - ◇ [Joh 20:29](#) Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."
    - Strong faith does not need miracles.
    - That is not to say God miracles are any measure of ones faith or lack there of.
    - That is just to say that they are not neccessary.

⊗ How ever dramatic God may chooses to manifest Himself in your life. If you shout it from the roof tops you are bound to find oppostion.

| [Act 5:17---](#) |

- **V. 17** Jealousy of the Sadducee.
  - ◇ Because of the apostles popularity and honor the were being given.
  - ◇ KJV "indignation".
  - ◇ Greek, heated or zeal from envy, jealousy, anger

- **V. 20** The angel tells them to go and teach in the temple courts again.
  - ◇ Make it obvious and get caught again.
  - ◇ “all the words of this life” - Love this term.
    - The only words that matter. Jesus is salvation.
- **V. 21** Sanhedrin often meet in the chamber of Gazith.
  - ◇ Internal chamber in the outer temple.

| Act 5: --26 |

- Different sects of the Jewish leadership. (Hand out)
  - ◇ Sadducee's held the majority of seats in the Sanhedrin at the time. So they controlled the political structure of Judea.
    - They were very strict followers of the law
    - Josephus.

⊗ These hard lined “republicans” bring Peter and John in front of the supreme court.

| Act 5:27-42 |

- **v. 28** Referring to 4:18; but Peter told them that it was impossible for them to not spread the news. Fair warning....
- And sure enough, he filled Jerusalem with your doctrine.
  - ◇ Funny that in MT 27:24-25 these same guys said.

When Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but that instead a riot was starting, he took some water, washed his hands before the crowd and said, "I am innocent of this man's blood. You take care of it yourselves!"  
In reply all the people said, "Let his blood be on us and on our children!"

- ◇ Now they are a little peeved that Peter is calling them to task on it.
- ◇ Notice Peter's previous mention of guilt of Jesus crucifixion to the other Jews.
  - It contained the statement of Forgiveness

**Act 2:37** Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"  
**Act 2:38** And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.  
**Act 2:39** For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself."

- Now he does not get past the witness of Jesus resurrection
  - Look at the sect chart. Sadducee's don't believe in life after death. He is talking to a brick wall.
- Obey God rather than people.
- Gospel in a can. v. 30 -32
  - ◇ God appointed Jesus.
  - ◇ Repentance, forgiveness, salvation.
  - ◇ Holy Spirit.
- Now they are livid and want to kill him.
  - ◇ **Exo 22:28** "You must not blaspheme God or curse the ruler of your people."
- Gamaliel, Possibly Paul's teacher Acts 22
  - ◇ Solid historical evidence in the Mishnah
  - ◇ Gamaliel give an interesting picture of the recent history of Jewish Rebels.
  - ◇ Puts focus on Jesus not Peter
  - ◇ Remember 5:19, God is on a mission you will not be able to stop them.
- They are beat as a warning
  - ◇ They were rejoice having been worthy to suffer in the sake of Jesus name.
 

**Heb 12:3** Think of him who endured such opposition against himself by sinners, so that you may not grow weary in your souls and give up.

**Heb 12:4** You have not yet resisted to the point of bloodshed in your struggle against sin.

**Jas 1:2** Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds,

**Jas 1:3** for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.
  - ◇ It is no wonder that these people has such a love for each other that they would consider themselves without possessions.
    - Jesus is manifested in each individual in the body of the church.
    - Jesus grows fruit through our faithfulness and worship of Him and trust in his Sovereignty.