

The Church on Mission: "Spirit-led Generosity" **Acts 4:32–5:11**

1-20-19

Led by the Holy Spirit: Learning from Scripture how to leave the old life behind and rely on the Spirit to walk in my new life in Christ.

Missional: Living daily for the mission of Christ to see people love God, love others and become disciple-makers.

I. The Spirit strengthens the church for unity and generosity. (Acts 4:32-35)

Joseph Hellerman - "The central value that characterized ancient family relations was the obligation to demonstrate undying loyalty toward one's blood brothers and sisters."

Mark 3:31-35 – "And his mother and his brothers came and standing outside they sent to him and called him.... And he answered them, 'Who are my mother and my brothers?' ...he said, '...whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother.'"

~This isn't a call to absolute poverty.

~This isn't a demand for us all to sell everything.

~This is an invitation to live radically generous in Christ.

1. Generosity is a result of God's grace.

2 Corinthians 9:7 – "Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion...God loves a cheerful giver."

2. We give generously to what we love.

Matthew 6:21 – "...where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

3. Generous giving is both intentional and spontaneous.

1 Corinthians 16:1-2 - "Now (take up)the collection...On the first day of every week..."

2 Corinthians 8:2-4 - "...(they) have overflowed in a wealth of generosity ... (they gave) beyond their means, of their own accord. Begging us...for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints."

4. Generous giving results in thankfulness.

2 Corinthians 9:11 - "You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion...your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God."

5. Generous giving means we first give ourselves.

2 Corinthians 8:5 - "...and this (giving), was not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then...to us."

II. The Spirit distinguishes between generous and greedy giving. (Acts 4:36–5:4)

Matthew 6:1 - "Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven."

III. The Spirit judges and protects the church. (Acts 5:5-11)

1. Judgment came because they pursued their own glory

2. Judgement came because they pursued their own good at the expense of others.

3. The judgement of affluence is extremely dangerous.

Romans 8:32 - "He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, freely give us all things?"

Faith Sheet This Week

1. What would a life of radical generosity in the church look like today? How might dishonesty creep into our giving?
2. How can reflecting on the gospel of Jesus lead us to be generous in giving? Why is it that sometimes only extravagant giving will suffice? Matthew 26:6-13
3. What do the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira say about the purity of the church and also our witness to the world?
4. Why should we today see removal from the local church through church discipline as more serious than receiving the death sentence from a court of law? Matthew 18:15-20
5. Why do we often fail to see hidden or ongoing sin as a matter of life and death, especially when it comes to finances and generous giving? Pray for one another to be generous in all of life.