



THE LOVING AND GENEROUS COMMUNITY ACTS 4:32-37

Acts 4:32-37

32 Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. 33 And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all.

Acts 4:32-37

34 There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold 35 and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need. 36 Thus Joseph, who was also called by the apostles Barnabas (which means son of encouragement), a Levite, a native of Cyprus, 37 sold a field that belonged to him and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

Why is this beautiful?

**We long to be a part of a genuine community
where people choose - freely, voluntarily - to love and be generous.**

This idea — a community where everything is shared — wasn't new.

Plato - Everything in common, but it was not voluntary.

Communism/socialism - Everything in common, not voluntary.

Pythagoras - Everything in common, voluntary, but among a select circle of equals.

Essenes - Everything in common, voluntary, but only by withdrawing from society.

Jerusalem Church - Everything in common, voluntary, while remaining fully engaged in ordinary life and society.

Why have people throughout every generation and every culture dreamed of this?

We are created to be a part of a genuine community where people choose - freely, voluntarily - to love and be generous.

"It feels like home... like something we lost and want back."

How is a loving and generous community birthed?

Acts 4

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How is a loving and generous community birthed?

Acts 4:33 And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all.

At the center of this radically generous community was the story of the risen Jesus.

How is a loving and generous community sustained?

Internal Battle

Acts 4

34 There was not a needy person among them, **for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them** and brought the proceeds of what was sold 35 and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

34 (NIV) For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them...

Voluntary and proportionate.

Imagine you're on an island...
but you're not alone, there are 100 of you.

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but you're not alone, there are 100 of you.
What would that island look like 1 year later? 10 years?
One generation later? Two generations later?

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Would it look that different
than the world we live in today?

How is a loving and generous community sustained?

External Battle

We noted at the beginning of chapter 3 that, as soon as the Spirit came upon the church, Satan launched a ferocious counter-attack.... An alternative title for this chapter might be 'The strategy of Satan'. His strategy was carefully developed. - John Stott

The Devil Attacks on Three Fronts

2. **1. Persecution**
 - Apostles are threatened and arrested (Acts 4:1-22; 5:17-41)
 - Satan tries to crush from the church from the outside by persecution.
- **2. Distraction**
 - Apostles away from the ministry of word and prayer. (Acts 6:1-7)
 - Satan tries to derail the church from within by distracting believers.
3. **Subversion**
 - Ananias & Sapphira compromise (Acts 5:1-11)
 - Satan tries to divide the church from the inside by moral corruption and compromise.

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 - Ananias & Sapphira compromise (Acts 5:1-11)
 - Satan tries to divide the church from the inside by moral corruption and compromise.

[His] second and more cunning assault was moral corruption or compromise. Having failed to destroy the church from outside, he attempted through Ananias and Sapphira to insinuate evil into its interior life, and so **ruin the Christian fellowship.** - John Stott

The real target is...
Your trust in the church

Why do people stop loving the church?

Almost always it is some version of moral corruption or compromise.

The devil does not even need to make you stop believing in God.
He just needs to make you give up on God's people.

Why does the devil work so hard to destroy the church?

The church is the primary witness of the gospel in the world.
Not just in what it says — but in what it does. Word and deed together.

"See how they love one another... how they are ready even to die for
one another." — Tertullian

Then, why believe in the church?

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With all its flaws, all its failures,
all its broken leaders and disappointing seasons,
God still used the imperfect church for two thousand years —
not because of the church's great strengths,
but because of his great grace.

A sign of immature faith is not just naiveté, but cynicism.
A sign of mature faith is a trust not in any person, but in God's grace.