

## Sharing the Wealth, Scene I

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Acts 4:32-37

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Synopsis:

One of Jesus' favorite topics was money. It is one the church's least favorite topics. Why do you think Jesus spoke about money so much?

Today we discover the answer:

There is neither powerful proclamation nor gracious living apart from gracious giving. And, there is no gracious giving apart from powerful proclamation and gracious living. Money and the good news are intertwined. These next few weeks we will see positive and negative examples of this.

### I.

#### **Power and Grace: Whence?**

Acts 4:33 "With great power . . . and great grace"

#### 1. Why is the church always talking about money?

- church member thinks so
- session does

Let's take a guess at the answer

#### 2. Take a vote:

Who wants *powerful proclamation*?

e.g.'s Moves you to change

Who wants *gracious living*?

e.g.'s Loves you to change

Answer:

Powerful proclamation and gracious living are linked to gracious giving.

(Point to) Mouth---Heart---Wallet are related

Next 4 weeks: Sermons about Wallet (Annual Fund Campaign)

## II.

### **Gracious Giving: It starts with all of us**

Acts 4:32 “Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul”

READ v 32a

All = *plethos* = linked to v 31 (Holy Spirit comes on all)

Reminds of Deut 6:5 (heart, soul, might) = deepest part

Deut 15:4-5 (result of one God is one giving people)

READ v 31 Last week prayer

All receive HS, all from deepest part give, live,  
and proclaim grace.

### Where else in the Bible?

What is the most boring portion of Bible?

-My dissertation, 2 years of work

READ Exodus 35:20-35

All (v 20)

Everything brought (v22 ff)

Leaders taught (v34)

100% participate

100% variety

Restaurant versus Potluck

-few participate, sameness

-many participate, variety (E.g. Fred Eastman’s fudge)

Gracious giving is a potluck affair

100% participate

100% variety

TAKE AWAY: everyone pledge and give this year

## III.

### **Gracious Giving: It’s Not Mine!**

Acts 4:32 “No one proclaimed private ownership of any possessions”

READ v 32b

Seagulls (movie): Mine! Mine! Mine!

Scripture teaches God owns it all

-Last week prayer:

Ps 146 “Heaven, Earth, Sea . . . everything”

-My life: How did I get where I am?

-Someone gave to me

Gracious people realize who owns it all

-Givers realize the gift

-Few in our church

-Plaques around here: Skafte, Lammert, Cramer

Money: Stewardship vs Annual Budget (It's about money)

-move from shyness to boldness (held in common)

-move towards talking about money (to apostles)

Money: Attitudes

We: private, dirty, discouraging

Bible: open, celebratory, encouraging

TAKE AWAY: let's talk about money

-We need challenge of openness, celebration, encouragement

#### IV.

**Gracious Giving: From Plenty to Want**

Acts 4:34 “There was not a needy person among them”

READ vv 32-35 in habitual, ongoing fashion

Imperfects in Greek (vv 32-35) = Ongoing

-habitual, occasional,

-not communism (Troeltsch “primitive love communism”)

-sold and gave as needs arose

\*Here's what would regularly happen . . .

Aorist in Greek vv 36-37 = Specific examples

READ vv 36-37

-Barnabus (notice how specific v 36)

-Specific people in my life:

Dale House: 25cents an hour, The Unit (given)

Frank: Ph.D., house, McColls

“That's My Job” Conway Twitty

Do it for someone else when you have means  
Barb and I: Not much money  
-shared home for three years with German Girls  
-shared home this past 1½ years with Tonya  
-journey to 10% on income (no safety net)  
-church, IV, Frontier Fellowship, World Vision, Dale  
House, Young Life  
Geneva: giving this past year 175K above budget  
-Kenya  
-Simpson  
-Kevin O'Neill

#### TAKE AWAY:

Begin the habit of giving (pledging and occasions)

#### V.

#### **Why Gracious Giving?**

Acts 4:33 "Great grace was upon them all"

#### Power and Grace? Where are we?

##### Clear Vision:

Jesus in our heart  
Bible in our hands  
Feet out the door

##### Made Changes:

Refocus to engage rather than attract  
Staffing plan: Carolyn, Emily, Front office  
Worship Schedule change (trad and contemp)

Hold course and sail ahead

##### Next Year:

1. Strategic Initiatives:  
Iglesia Park, Alzheimers, your service
2. Staff salaries: no raise last year, little 3 years  
Children's Director to rebuild ministry

#### Power and Grace?

Mouth---Heart---Wallet