

## Sacrificial Sharing

### I. Slide1 Announce:

A. Slide2 Kelly: Murr Food Pantry

B. I heard this week, *We are separated by distance, but united in the Story of God.*

1. Through this time, God is still writing our story(ies). Or even better *writing us into His story.*

### II. Slide3 Intro: Sacrificial Sharing

A. Here we have a summary of *the early church's growth and activities.*

B. Outline: Great Power. Great Grace. Great Fear. Great Giving. [Gk. *megas/mega*]

### III. Slide4 GREAT POWER (4:32-33a) [read 32-37]

A. This power was of course was in that *they were filled w/the HS* (31).

B. And its results? 1 heart, 1 soul - the early believers were living in **harmony & unity**

1. Proof of this was expressed in the sharing of their resources with one another.
2. Through the charity of the wealthier members, *like Barnabas*, the **needy** received enough. None among them was in **need**. *The Lord is my Shepherd I shall not lack/be in want.*

### IV. Slide5a GREAT GRACE (4:33b-37)

A. Story: I have a friend in **Kosovo** who understood this concept of *meeting needs* better than I. He had **26** in his *household* [2 other brothers & their families, & his family]. He explained, *We pool all our resources & finances together so all will have.* I ignorantly responded, *well that works well if your brothers are hard workers!* He said, *No, actually both of them were **without work** for a while, & I supported **all 26 of us**...* (& then the clincher) ***because that's what families do!*** (schooled again)

B. (32) *they had **everything** in common* - man I have a problem with sharing w/Kelly what's on my plate.

1. Slide5b \*Radical Attitude (everything in common) leads to Sacrificial Action (selling property) Which leads to distributing what was proportionate to genuine need.
- C. (33) Were giving their testimony to the resurrection - This was the central truth of their message, *Jesus was alive!* (we celebrated just last weekend)
- D. (33b) Great grace/Mega grace, like abundant living has lil to do w/material things.
1. Notice this abundance was upon **all of them**, not just the leaders, the possessors of certain gifts, or those of a certain socio-economic level.
- E. (34) Not a needy person among them - the Greek word used here, *endeēs*, probably refers to those who require assistance in order to meet their daily necessities.
1. Result? No poverty existed in the church.
  2. Slide5c Peter Wagner, *Nothing is wrong with having rich people in the church, but something is wrong about having poor people in the church.*
- F. Maybe John was remembering Barnabas when he later wrote, *If someone has enough money to live well and sees a brother or sister in need but shows no compassion - how can God's love be in that person? Dear children, let's not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions.* 1Jn.3:17,18 NLT
- G. (36,37) A godly believer named Barnabas is singled out as an example of this *sacrificial sharing*. (< title)

## V. Slide6 GREAT FEAR (5:1-11) [read 1-11, note BUT]

- A. Great Fear (5,11) - the community realizes with renewed gravity that Jesus' lordship and the holiness of the community must be *taken seriously*.
- B. Ananias and Sapphira lie, and God kills them. Sounds so OT. [Title: *a Grave Sin*]
1. Weird, a church with its own youth-care-taker-ministry.
  2. The story demonstrates *how seriously* people should take their commitments before God.
- C. The sincere self-sacrifice of Barnabas is now contrasted/compared with the hypocrisy & greed of Ananias & Sapphira.

1. His gift exposed the sin of Ananias & Sapphira; just as Mary's gift (bottle of perfume) exposed Judas' sin (Jn.12, *this could have been sold for...*)

#### D. THE DECEPTION (1,2)

E. No doubt they both were glad to be apart of the movement and were serious about their involvement. But they sought to go after *both worlds*: sell the property & make a show of giving it to the church, but keep part of the proceeds hidden.<sup>1</sup>

F. (2) kept back - Ananias and Sapphira's sin was not in failing to give the entire sum of money; they sinned in pretending to honor Christ with the whole amount while withholding some of it for themselves.

1. They lied in order to keep some of the money, which is certainly (greed), but perhaps *more significantly* they desired to be honored for their perceived generosity (hypocrisy).

G. With his wife's knowledge - Sapphira was **complicit** in this sin. [*swift punishment?* she had 3 hours to think about it]

#### H. THE DISCOVERY (3,4)

I. The couple lied to the HS, to God, to the Church & to Peter. And it cost them their lives.

1. Ananias had violated his own integrity, perjured the very spirit of God who now lived in his life. [the *1st Lie Detector* was not in 1921, but was the HS]

2. (pos they were believers) Maybe a 1Cor.5:5 situation?

*You are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.*

J. (4) Remember...this was **entirely voluntary**. Completely in their control before & after the sale.

1. Did it not remain your own - deception was not necessary to retain part of the money, so the only reason to lie was in order to claim greater honor and status within the Church.

<sup>1</sup> Shepherd's Notes; pg.18

K. Their sin was not as much **taking money from God**, but in **pretending to be something they were not**.

1. The **kingdom principle** is **not** to **do without** material goods. The principle is that we should not give material goods **Preeminence**.

a) It's **seek 1<sup>st</sup> His Kingdom**, then we won't **lack material goods**.

b) In the Lord's prayer, we 1<sup>st</sup> pray **Your Kingdom come**, then **give us this day our daily bread**. [the order is important, it indicates priority]

L. **Note**: 1st it's lying to the **HS**, then in vs.4 lying to **God**. *The language implicitly assumes the HS's identity as a divine person.*

M. **THE DEATHS** (5-11)

N. **ANANIAS' DEATH** (5,6)

1. His sin was traced back to **Satan** (4). This was **no small matter**. This sin was **a betrayal of Jesus** and harmed the **integrity** of the entire community.

a) The **will of man yields**, it isn't **overpowered**. When **Satan** is **resisted** he **will flee**.

b) He had the **liberty to retain**, the **liberty to sell**, the **liberty to give only part**, but **not** the **liberty to lie**.

2. He had no chance to react. **Why so severe a punishment?** How would **you** fare under the same situation? What if he/you promised to give a certain amount **but** then got more \$ for the property? Is that **extra** his/yours **or** Gods?

3. **Consider, hypocrisy comes in many shades of dark**.

a) Not only exaggerating gifts, **or** minimizing the means of giving, **but boasting** wrongly of worship, your devotions, your use of time, etc.

b) Have you ever wanted the **credit & the prestige** for **sacrificial generosity**, without the **inconvenience** of it?

O. Sad, the **1<sup>st</sup> burial** in Christian community was that of a **hypocrite**.

1.\* But **my question isn't** why did he punish **Ananias so swiftly**? **But why has He kept me alive knowing my heart, hearing my mind, & seeing my actions**, for 39 yrs, 8 months, & 12 days since I gave my life to Him?

P. **SAPPHIRA'S DEATH** (7-11)

Q. The event had a **powerful effect** on the church. *Uhh Yaah!*

1. God's **quick & decisive** punishment created **great fear** in the church.
2. Its members were **terrified** – a *natural response to witnessing the power of God*.
3. Such *radical judgment* is **not** the **usual** way God deals with believers 2day.
  - a) We need to get the message there are **consequences** to our decisions...& they come in *all kinds of different ways*.

R. Again, this event has **little to do** with the amount a person **gives**.

1. The importance lies with **one's attitude**.
  - a) *Outward & Inward attitudes* are affected by *Upward attitude*.
2. Their offering was to **impress** the congregation.
3. The fact they held back the \$, & claimed they had given the whole sale price, reflected a **self-serving** attitude, **not** one that **served God**.

S. (11) **Great Fear upon the whole church & upon all who heard of this things** - The Christian community learns that *God will protect the purity of the early church*.

## VI. Slide7 GREAT GIVING

A. **Giving principles** - At one point Jesus said, in Mt.6:3,4 *But when you give to someone in need, don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. Give your gifts in private, and your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.*<sup>2</sup>

1. Did Jesus mean that **giving** should always be **done in secret**?
2. Here Jesus was dealing with **Motives**.
3. **But** the most important verse which sets up the entire passage is (vs.1) *Watch out! Don't do your good deeds publicly, to be admired by others, for you will lose the reward from your Father in heaven.*
4. Jesus is **not saying** that others should not be aware of our good deeds, **rather** he's commanding we **don't do this** in order to **receive peoples** recognition.

<sup>2</sup> Randy Alcorn, *Giving*. In Faithlife Study Bible.

5. Jesus is warning was that **public recognition** can clearly **tempt** people to **give for the wrong motives**, like here and Acts 5.
6. And remember earlier in the same sermon (Mt.5:16) Jesus said, **let your light shine before people so that they can see your good works and glorify your father who is in heaven**. Here is his command to let your deeds be **seen** by others **sometimes**. [So, there is a time for **giving to be seen**, **when** it's done **at the right time** and **for the right reasons**].
7. **Lastly**, if good deeds were never to be seen by others, **then** the early church **violated this** in here (w/Barny) & **then** by telling us about it.

B. If you want to grow in your love toward someone, **give!**

1. **Givers make the best: spouses, parents, friends, employees, Church members**. **Why?** because they love **big & love well**.
2. **"Generosity is a demonstration of love."**
3. **God's people, who have God's heart, for God's mission, give generously to Gods people**. (starts there, & then it fans out)
4. Remember this generosity is **not natural**, it's **supernatural**.
5. **How was Barnabas an encourager?** Here, through his **generous giving**. And so are **so many** of you...
  - a) **This week**: Roger/1000 **surgical facemasks**, I took to Rancho Med Center.
  - b) **Many** of you **baked cookies** for MPD Dispatchers & night shift Wed & treated them to dinner. **Many** donated funds and we blessed all MPD with a Mill gift-certificate. **Many** gave towards **food** & helped in food distribution to **individual needs both in/outside** our body.
  - c) The day after Kel & I received our **Stimulus Check**, she heard of 2 different friends, who immediately upon **getting their Check** said, **We have enough, let's give it to someone in need**. I looked at Kel & said, **I'm embarrassed, not only was that not my 1st thought, it wasn't a thought**. [grow up & be like so many of U]
  - d) **TY CM** for your **Great giving**. For your **Sincere Self-Sacrificial** giving.