

Acts 4:32-38

"4 Mark of Community Life"

God makes strangers family.

Outline:

Acts 4:29-30

*Help us continue to do what we can

*You will keep doing what you do

-He will save individual sinners and place them in the family of saints who love Him and love one another

2 Effects of Knowing Jesus seen in this text:

1. Our heart is loosened in relationship to things
2. Our heart is tightened in relationship to people.

"Now the full number of those who believed"

-beyond ability to count

-15,000-20,000 possibly

-not a pond or pool that didn't have stirred waters

4 Marks of Community Life:

1. Unity of heart and mind (devotion to the Lord) (32a)

-answer to Jesus's prayer in the John

-John 17:21

-powerful testimony

- John 13:35

-their were in unity in:

-heart- affections

-mind- intent/purpose/focus

-there was no division among them at this point.

-they were united in both affection and thought

-they were devoted to the Lord and to one another

-they were united deeper than just in presence

***The Gospel connects us to a people**

****Paul teaches the Ephesians about this unity of heart and mind.**

-Ephesians 4:1-6

-"unity of the Spirit"

-one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God, one Father

-he tells them to "walk in a manner worthy of that calling"

-humility, gentleness, patience, bearing with one another, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit

-The Spirit creates unity but we must be eager to maintain it

-the church gets divided on secondary and tertiary issues...

-may we be eager to maintain unity of heart and mind in devotion to primary things:

1. Affection and Devotion to Christ

2. Affection and Devotion to one another

-it's our greatest testimony of the work of the gospel and the power of Jesus

-the world can't deny otherwise strangers and individuals who are in unity of mind and heart

***Who do you need to call to maintain unity of the Spirit?**

2. Sharing their possessions (32b; 34-35)

-inevitably, needs arose with this many people

-when needs arose, so did the church**

-This is described in 2 different ways.

-32b- "what's mine is yours" —

-this isn't speaking of the selling of good, more like sharing of goods

-this was ordinary in their lives

-this is a continuous action

-34-35- "selling property as one had need"

-this speaks of an extraordinary act

-they would lay it down at the feet of the apostles

-the apostles were in charge of distribution

-they didn't love this either

-Acts 6, they reorganize

-a picture of submission to the Lord

-the apostles represented God, so laying the money at their feet as a symbol of submitting it to the One they represented

-note this is not in obedience to a legislation or rule made by the apostles

-They key is here they **voluntarily** did this...

-marked by humility- stemmed from their own view of themselves

-Fulfillment of Deuteronomy 15:4- "there will be no poor among you"

-Powered by the Holy Spirit, they took care of one another..

-Love the Lord your God... Love your neighbor as your self..

-“So intent were they on meeting each other’s needs that they had no concern for gratifying their own desires. Theirs was a humility stemming from seeing themselves in relation to Jesus Christ, and others as more important than themselves. Second, they were focused beyond themselves to reaching the lost world with the truth of the gospel. That left them little time to bother with trivial personal matters. Their unity stemmed from focusing on those priorities Jesus had left them: selflessly loving each other, and reaching the lost world.”- John MacArther

-a great way to maintain unity and humility is to serve someone else*

3. Powerful witness of the apostles (33a)

-The apostles kept witnessing of what they had seen and heard

-They could't stop

-it's in the imperfect tense, "continuous"

-this was an answer to their pray for boldness in v.29

-opposition fueled the flame of their passion to witness for Jesus

-Great Power- anointing of the Spirit

-what were they preaching? Their testimony

-why was this so powerful? They had personally witnessed the resurrection

-Practice sharing your testimony to someone this week

-why is it so powerful? Because you've personally witnessed the power of the resurrection in your own life... not with your eyes, but in your life

-gospel-centrality created a culture of grace

4. The grace of God was upon them (33b)

-When a church is devoted to unity and evangelism, it experiences the grace of God...

1. Favor with People
2. Favor of God

-A church that commits to these 2 things: Loving Unity and Evangelistic Zeal will have the grace of God resting upon them

Questions:

1. What spoke you in the scripture reading or sermon?
2. How does knowing Jesus loosen our hearts in relationship to things and tighten our hearts in relationship to people?
3. What were the 4 marks of their community life?
4. What does it mean to be “of one heart and mind”?
5. How can we fight to maintain unity and humility?
6. What is your testimony? Have someone share theirs.
7. How can a church experience the grace of God resting upon them?
8. What does it mean for the grace of God to rest upon a church?