

LEAD SHEET

ACTS : You Won't Believe This! - WK. 1

UNITY AND GENEROSITY

JANUARY 17, 2016

THIS MONTH'S FAITH SKILL:

NAVIGATE THE BIBLE

If you want to know God better, read His Word!

GETTING STARTED

Today we are going to begin a study on some key stories from the book of Acts. It is my hope that they inspire you to be more and more devoted to Jesus.

DIGGING IN

Read Acts 4:32-37

Today, we are going to begin a series of a few accounts from Acts that you may find hard to believe. Some of them are hard to believe because they are miraculous. Today, we are going to study a passage that is hard to comprehend because it is just not something we see the Church doing regularly these days.

Re-read verse 32

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the most surprising part of this verse and the believer's behaviors towards one another?

(Unity, sharing, etc.)

2. What do you think it means to be of "one heart and mind"? *(The believers were unified.)*

3. Do you find it strange that no one claimed any of their possessions as their own? Why or why not?

(We are pretty individualistic these days.)

Re-read verse 33-35

Discussion Questions:

1. What did God's grace among the people lead to, according to verse 34? (*"There were no needy people among them."*)
2. When you think of God's grace, what do you typically think of? (*Forgiveness, mercy, etc.*)
3. Do you ever associate grace with generosity as this verse does? (*Not usually.*)
4. How did folks express this generosity? (*They sold their own belongings and brought the proceeds to the Apostles.*)
5. How were the proceeds distributed? (*They were distributed to those in need.*)
6. How is this similar to how people give now? How is it different? (*Today, most people do not sell land and give all the profit to the Church.*)

Re-read Acts 4:36-37

Discussion Questions:

1. Who is listed as an example of this great generosity? (*Joseph, who was also known as Barnabas.*)
2. What did he do? (*He sold a piece of property and brought the proceeds to the Apostles.*)
3. What do you think Barnabas had to believe about the people of God to be willing to do this? (*He had to trust the Apostles and care deeply for his fellow believers.*)

Unity and generosity are two things that the Bible discusses a lot, but we do not talk about them as much in the contemporary Church. However, we are going to talk about both of these things now.

MAKING IT REAL

Let's talk about unity first.

Read Psalm 133:1, John 17:22-23, and Ephesians 4:3

Discussion Questions:

1. According to Psalms, being unified is what? *(Good and pleasant.)*
2. According to John, why does Jesus want us to be unified? *(So that others will know that Jesus is God, and that they are loved.)*
3. What effort should we employ to keep unity according to that Ephesians passage? *(Every effort.)*

Unity is a tough thing to find and it is a tough thing to keep. Especially in a world that is so personalized and individualistic.

General Discussion:

- Do you think the Church of today is “completely” unified? *(It is hard to think so; there are so many denominations, etc.)*
- Do you think our student ministry is unified? Why/why not? *(Allow for discussion.)*
- Does unity mean you agree on everything? *(No, but it does mean that no disagreement will lead to division.)*
- How do you think people can become unified? *(Allow for discussion.)*

Read Colossians 3:14

It seems like the first century Church was unified because they loved one another. If you look around and see a divided Church, it is easy to want to point the finger at

other people. However, perhaps the best thing we can do is love each other. That is what bonds us together in unity. It also leads us to a life of much generosity.

Read Proverbs 11:25, 2 Corinthians 9:6, and 1 Timothy 6:18

Discussion Questions:

1. What will happen to those who are generous according to Proverbs 11? (*They will prosper.*)
2. Do you think that necessarily means financial prosperity? (*Not necessarily, though that may happen.*)
3. If it doesn't necessarily mean financial prosperity, then what is it that we "reap" as stated in 2 Corinthians 9:6? (*Greater community, people will be generous with you, spiritual blessing, knowing you did the right thing, etc.*)
4. Is 1 Timothy 6:18 a suggestion? (*No, it is a command.*)
5. Why don't more people take this more seriously? (*We are selfish.*)

Unity and generosity are key expressions of Christian community. It is easy to point fingers and complain about others not being generous, or more unified, but it really starts with us.

General Discussion:

- What is one way that you can express greater unity with other Christians? (*Join or start a prayer group at school, do not participate in gossip, get to know someone not like you, sacrifice for other people, etc.*)
- What is one way you can be a more generous person? (*Sponsor a child, give regularly to the Church, sell something and give the proceeds away.*)

- If each of us does one thing, what is the result? *(A lot more is accomplished toward gaining unity and generosity. More people's needs are met. The Church grows stronger.)*

The more we devote ourselves to generosity and unity the more the Church grows. The early Church grew rapidly during this period, even in the face of persecution, because they were united in trials, but also because they cared deeply for one another in an active way. That was the Power of God working among them. The Power of God can work among us too.

CLOSING PRAYER

Pray that your students demonstrate unity and generosity in their lives.