

A GOSPEL GRACE FILLED RADICAL COMMUNITY
BEING MISSIONAL AND CONCERNED IN CARING!
ACTS CH4:32-37

RE-CAP!

The Church in Jerusalem was initially:

- 120 people - **Ch1:15**
- then 3120 people - **Ch2:41**
- then 3120+ people - **Ch2:47**
- to 5000 men probably anything from 5000 - 10,000 people - **Ch4:4**

Peter has preached on three occasions up to this point:

1. Ch1:15-26
2. Ch2:14-36
3. Ch3:12-26
4. Ch4:8-12

(There will be 8 by Peter - Ch1:15-22; 2:14-41; 3:6-26; 4:8-22; 5:29-42; 10:34-48; 11:4-18; + 15:7-11)

The apostles are filled and continue to speak boldly! Ch4:31

ILLUSTRATION

Plasters! Do you remove them “quickly” or “slowly?”

GREAT GRACE CAUSES RADICAL TOGETHERNESS! V32

What does new life in Christ and a Gospel Grace Community look like?

Compare Ch2:42-47:

1. The Church trained and educated its members. V42
2. The Church brought its members together. V42+46
3. The Church moved members into relationships of mutual support and fellowship. V42+44
4. The Church had both small group meetings and large group meetings. V46
5. The Church practised the ordinance/sacrament of the Lords supper. V42+46
6. The Church spent much time in group prayer. V42+46
7. The Church practised radical stewardship. V44+45+46
8. There were deeds/actions of power which verified the apostles teaching. V43
9. The Church had a general spirit of JOY. V47
10. Community life was extraordinarily attractive to outsiders. V47
11. The Church was evangelistically effective. V47
12. ***When people were saved they were incorporated into a deep relationship into the Church body not just the Lord. V42-47***

With Ch4:32-37:

1. The full number were of one heart and soul. V 32
2. They were willing to share. V32+34+35
3. They had everything in common. V32
4. All need was responded to. V34+35
5. The Christians were willing to sell possessions to meet need. V34+37
6. Radical examples of attitudes to wealth and needs. V32-37

What are the similarities? I would suggest the following:

FIVE VITAL SIGNS OF A SPIRIT FILLED CHURCH FROM BOTH PASSAGES!

1. **GOSPEL** – is central from which everything else flows
2. **GROWTH** – personal ownership, a desire to grow in holiness
3. **GROUPS** – healthy discipleship groups, walking together
4. **GIFTS** – Christians using their gifts to build God's Church
5. **GIVING** – Christians using their time, talents and treasure

Luke reports for us the remarkable generosity and care that the early Church had for one another, which is extraordinary given how quickly the Church had grown from 120 to 5000+ and how so often when this type of radical growth occurs, division and neglect of individual needs can become apparent!

This generosity and care comes about through God's grace, when we are united together in God's mission and in God's care for one another.

GREAT GRACE CAUSES RADICAL TESTIFYING ABOUT JESUS! V33

The apostles bear witness to the resurrection of Jesus, which is exactly what they were appointed and charged to do (Ch1:8+22)! They were promised power for this work (Ch1:8) and were given this power (Ch2:1-4), which could be seen in miracles (Ch2:22; Ch3:12; Ch4:7) and expressed in powerful convincing speech (see above).

GREAT GRACE CAUSES RADICAL GENEROSITY! V34-37

We have a great example of “grace in action” with Barnabas – meaning “Son of encouragement” who sells “a” field, not all his fields, and lays it at the apostles feet! ***Personal possessions but not private possessions!*** Being sinful people, we can be so drawn to private possessions. Things that have gripped us, perhaps to the point, where we really do have difficulty in letting them go, especially to help other Christians. How do we deal with that? ***Great grace sees outwardly not selfishly!*** We need God's scandalous grace! Without grace, we cannot let go, when we know we should!

Barnabas is put forward by Luke, who will shortly contrast him, with Ananias and Sapphira! Barnabas, mentioned here and in:

- Ch9:27 – Stuck up for Paul in front of the early Church! (Galatians Ch1:18)
- Ch11:25-26 – Found Paul and took him to Antioch!
- Ch13:1-6 – Sent out by the Antioch Church!

- Ch13:46 – Speaking boldly with Paul!
- Ch14:4+14 – He is an apostle!
- Ch15:36-39 – Had a huge disagreement with the apostle Paul over John Mark!
- Colossians Ch4:10 – A cousin of John Mark!
- 1st Corinthians Ch9:6 – Like Paul, never took the rights of an apostle!
- Galatians Ch2:9-14 – Gentile missionary work, but easily misled! Whenever the apostle Paul mentions Barnabas, it is always with words of sympathy and respect!

What an example!

“Laid at the apostles feet” - the last expression here suggests that some formal transfer to a common fund, overseen by the apostles to meet need within the Gospel Community!

Barnabas' giving was in keeping with his name and his character, as we will see through Luke's recording in later chapters!

APPLICATION

Remember the 5 “G's”!

Remember the 6 mince pies! 2 strong Christians, 2 wobbly Christians, 2 non-Christians!

Remember the tyre illustration! Keep asking to be filled!

THROUGH GRACE – LET'S BE RADICALLY GENEROUS!