

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Part 13 – The Problem of Honesty

Acts 4.32-5.11

Fearless – leaning in and saying yes

The church being awesome (4.32-37)

- Unity (v.32)
- Witness (v.33)
- Good works (v.34)
- Generosity (v.35-37)

The church being stunned (5.1-11)

- Dishonesty -> Discipline
- Discipline -> Mega-Fear/Awe

The problem with honesty is that God expects it and we're all inclined differently

Because God expects honesty:

He gives us an honest book

- “Going back to the church in the book of Acts” isn't all it's cracked up to be

He faces a deceitful foe

- The primary way Satan works is through lying – deception – half-truths
- The way we fend him off is by wielding the shield of faith (Eph 6) – the faith that comes through intake of the Scriptures (Rom 10.17)

He desires honest dealings

- We have biblical teaching in both examples and means
- Regarding money examples, we have Barnabas vs. A&S
- Regarding money means, we have tithes and offerings (including sale of assets, end of life)
- It is a diagnostic – I can look at my treasure and locate my heart
- It is a directive – I can move my heart by allocating my treasure
- The call isn't to give more money (although we need it for ministry) – it is to go all-in and let Him transform you (and your pocketbook) that shows up in the whole idea of “equal sacrifice, not equal amount”

He hates hypocrisy

- Superficial and appearance-oriented
- The harshest judgments are for hypocrites, posers who refuse to live honestly - Jesus' harshest words were for the exact same kind of people
- Why such brutality and why so ferocious? It's because it belies what the church actually is, who we can be, and most of all – WHO JESUS IS (is He worth it all or is He not?)
- You cannot expect to get away with sin – he may not kill you but you can't say that He doesn't take it seriously
- Question: I am a hypocrite, so am I in danger? Short answer: all hypocrisy is an affront to God. Longer answer: the fact that you admit it is the first step in living honestly with God and others. Repentant hypocrites have nothing to fear, just like repentant _____ have nothing to fear. Jesus died for that and rose again so we can overcome it and be transformed by Him

He aims at the heart-level

- This pushes the suburbanites pretty hard in the areas of appearance and possessions (both fall under the umbrella of sacrifice)
- Our response to trials and treasures are the way God helps us see our hearts and helps others see Him

If we are going to be part of the beautiful portrait of grace, generosity, and witness in the church, we have to go all in and do so fearlessly, suffering no superficiality or substitute

Questions for Discussion:

1. Describe the time when you have seen the church be awesome. What were the circumstances? What actions were involved? What was the result?
2. Describe a time where you have seen hypocrisy in the church. What were the circumstances? What actions were involved? What was the result?
3. Toward the end of the sermon, Trent asked the question: "Are you holding anything back from God? Is there a compartment of your life that is closed off to Him?" How would you answer that? If you can't stick your finger on one, what would be the most likely area to get a "No Trespassing" sign posted? What needs to change?
4. In the sermon, we argued this is about being all-in with Jesus. How have you seen Jesus transform your life before when you have gone "all in?"
5. Who is the most generous person you know? How does that generosity get expressed? How would you gauge your level of generosity right now? If giving is both diagnostic and directive, how do you need to use giving to direct your heart? (Matthew 6.21) What is one step you need to take?