

2 Investing in Others Church Expansion Series

Acts 4:34-35

July 22, 2018

Acts 4:34-35 There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold ³⁵ and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

The Early Church was Characterized by Three Outstanding Qualities that today's Church needs to reaffirm.

- I. **Investing in Others Requires Sacrificial** Giving (**34**) for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them

When the Church had a need, God would direct someone in the church to sell off something to meet the need!

Galatians 6:2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Does this verse only mean that we are to just put our arm around someone who is hurting trying to comfort them with our prayers or are we not also to put action to our prayers?

James 2:15-16 If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that?

II. Investing in Others Requires **Sharing** the Proceeds (34) and **brought the proceeds** of what was sold

Philippians 2:4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the **interests of others**.

They sold their stuff and brought the money to the Church! **“Old Stove given to the church.”**

I remember back in 1992 after **Hurricane Andrew** destroyed South Florida. I was part of a team that took supplies to Florida City Baptist Church where the Florida Baptist Conventions had set up their feeding station. My pastor had recently arrived at FBC Dade City and he led the team. His personal vehicle was a very small Toyota pickup. He has just recently bought his wife a brand new Town & Country Minivan. He asked her if it was ok to take her van instead of his truck. Her response: **“It’s not my van it’s Gods van.”** He took the van! Did you notice her attitude!

James 2:8 If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall **love your neighbor** as yourself," you are doing well.

III. Investing in Others Requires **Surrendering**

Control (35) and **laid it at the apostles' feet**, and it was **distributed** to each as any had need.

These people gave up things that were precious and important to them, so that they could meet the needs of their brothers in Christ! In other words, they were not just living for themselves, but they were living for the good of the flock.

What a lesson for us! May we be willing to sacrifice what we think is important for the good of the body of Christ. Whether it be **our time, our talents, our tithes** or some possession or the other, may we be willing to **lay it down** so as to help a brother in need. There is a sacrificial heart beat within the breast of our Savior! May that same heart guide us to love one another rightly and to show that love, in a way that honors God and lifts our brothers.

What these verses are saying may sound rather like Socialism or Communism. **Dr. John Phillips writes** on this in his Commentary “Exploring Acts.”

*“This is the basic philosophy of Communism, and a noble idea it is in many ways. But Communism breaks down because of the **selfishness of the human heart** and because it is administered by ambitious men **intoxicated with power** and enforced by the ruthless application of raw power.”*

He goes on to say;

*“Here we see the real thing at work. The motivation was Christian love---the manifestation a common, **voluntary sharing**. There has never been such a visible demonstration of oneness of the Body of Christ. The whole Christian community was **intoxicated with the Love of Christ**.”*

There you have it when you give **Motive is the key**.

2 Corinthians 9:7 Each of you should give what you have **decided in your heart** to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for **God loves a cheerful giver**.

Don't give on a whim. Go to God and ask Him what He wants you to give.

We see that in the early Church instead of being **Greedy** they were **Generous!**

The early church was also **United**, **Unselfish** and **Unafraid.**

Serving in the Middle East we have men and women who are willing to give the **ultimate sacrifice** of losing their lives in order to keep America free. Are we in the church willing to give of our livelihood to **set the captives free?**

When it comes to Benevolence, I believe we should always start at home. In the Church!

Galatians 6:10 So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to **everyone**, and **especially** to those who are of the household of faith.

Yes Everyone but especially those **inside the church!**

1 John 3:17 But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet **closes his heart** against him, how does God's love abide in him? ¹⁸ Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in **deed and in truth.**

We are to Invest in People's lives! Not to enable them to remain where they are, but to empower them to reach their potential in Christ!

Praise Team Takes The Platform