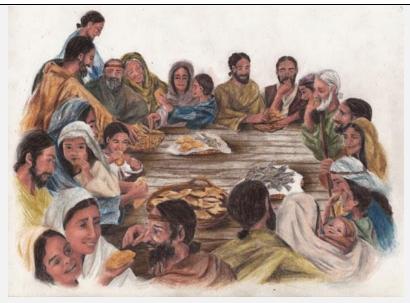
# **PART 7: INSIDE THE HUDDLE**

ACTS 4:32-5:11

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# **MAIN IDEA**

Luke takes us inside (huddles) the early church to show how it became strongly united through generous sharing based on the good news (gospel) of Jesus' resurrection.

# I. HOW UNITY IS ESTABLISHED: THE GOSPEL

- A. Unity is established when all believers<sup>1</sup> are <u>one in heart and mind.</u>" (4:32a).
- B. Unity is established when the gospel (good news) of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is <u>proclaimed</u> (4:33a).
- C. Unity is established when God's grace is powerfully at work (4:33b).

#### II. HOW UNITY IS EXPERIENCED: GENEROSITY

- A. Their sharing was extensive.
  - They shared everything (4:32b).
    - → This is not endorsing communism because their sharing was voluntary not required by the

"How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!" (Ps. 133:1 NIV)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> About 8,000 to 11,000 believers (Acts 4:4 states 5,000 men but their wives must also have been part of the crowd of believers).

state.

- They shared regularly (4:34b).
- They shared their riches (4:34c).
  - → It was sacrificial; they could have remained richer.
- They shared appropriately, to those in need (4:35).
- B. Their sharing was effective.
  - The result: no one in the church body was needy (4:34a).
- C. Their sharing was exemplified.
  - Barnabas<sup>2</sup> (also called Joseph) sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet (4:36-37).
  - As such, Barnabas became a role model for Christian sharing.

# III. HOW UNITY IS ENDANGERED: HYPOCRISY (5:1-11)

- A. Ananias and Sapphira were determined hypocrites (5:1-11)
  - They were spiritual posers, deceivers, with a faked piety.
  - They gave in to Satan's influences.
  - They kept some of the money from the selling of their property and lied about giving it all.
  - They were praise seekers, probably trying to gain a reputation like Barnabas.
    - → Barnabas and Ananias did the same.
    - → Both sold property, both brought the proceeds of the sale to the apostles, and both committed it to their disposal.
    - → Ananias and Sapphira selfish motive were probably to gain a reputation like Barnabas's.
    - → As Peter plainly said later, their property was theirs to be sold and the money from the sale was also theirs.
    - → The difference was that Barnabas brought all the sale money, while Ananias brought only a portion.
    - → We have to assume that Ananias and Sapphira entered into some kind of verbal contract to give the total amount to the church.
    - → Ananias and Sapphira committed a double sin, a combination of dishonesty and deceit.
  - They lied to the apostles and to the Holy Spirit.
- B. What happened to them: instantaneous judgment (5:5-11)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Barnabas' nickname ("son of encouragement") was given by the apostles because of his generosity.

- Ananias was struck dead instantly by God.
- Later, Sapphira also tells the same lie and is also struck dead by God.
- C. What they needed (and what we need)
  - They needed a healthy fear (reverential respect) of God.
  - The needed to love God and love others more than self and stuff.
  - They needed to live in repentance.

# IV. HOW TO APPLY THIS LESSON

- A. <u>Immerse</u> yourself into a local body of believers in Jesus (Acts 4:32a).
- B. Become <u>sensitive</u> to the needs of others in that local body of believers.
- C. Share your resources discreetly (Matt. 6:1).



D. Depend on fellow believers when you are in need.