

# 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 one in heart and mind." (4:32a).
- B. Unity is established when the gospel (good news) of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is proclaimed (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>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)**

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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)

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<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.
  - They needed to love God and love others more than self and stuff.
  - They needed to live in repentance.

#### **IV. HOW TO APPLY THIS LESSON**

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- A. **Immerse** yourself into a local body of believers in Jesus (Acts 4:32a).
- B. Become **sensitive** 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**.

