



## Silverdale Baptist

REACH ~ HOW? BY SACRIFICIAL GIVING ~ 11/6/2022 ~  
Acts 4:32-37; 5:1-2

### Big Idea

How do we reach the lost? By sacrificial giving.

### Getting Started

**How do you define “sacrificial giving”?**

**How have Americans made materialism one of their biggest idols?**

Jesus said that *“where your treasure is, there your heart will be also”* (Matthew 6:21). What does your bank account say about your heart?

### Learn

1. Jesus is the Master of your stuff.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 4:32-35.

**What do you learn about sacrificial giving and generosity in these verses?**

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 5:1-2.

**What do you learn about a selfish spirit in these verses?**

2. Jesus uses your stuff for His kingdom.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 4:36-37.

**How would you describe Barnabas from these verses?**

### 3. Ask Jesus how to manage and give your stuff.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MATTHEW 25:19-23.

**How does Jesus respond to those who manage their resources well?**

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MATTHEW 25:24-30.

**How does Jesus respond to those who don't manage their resources well?**

### 4. Give sacrificially to God's kingdom.

**Luke 7 records the story of the woman with the alabaster jar. What motivated her to do what she did?**

## Apply

**How do you respond to the statement...Sacrifice is giving up something that you love, for someone you love more?**

**What are the indicators in your life that show where your heart is devoted?**

**What sacrifice are you willing to make to participate in the Reach Apison Campaign?**

## Pray

Father, examine my heart and align my heart with Yours. Thank You for the privilege to partner with You in reaching Apison. By Your grace help me to trust You to respond to Your leading. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

## Dig Deeper

### **The Generosity of the Believers (Acts 4:32-37)**

The believers had prayed and God's Spirit had filled them and given them new power. The church that depends on believing prayer will know the blessing of the Holy Spirit in its ministry. How can we tell when a local church is really filled with the Spirit? When you go back to the record of the first filling at Pentecost (Acts 2:44-47), you discover three outstanding characteristics of a Spirit-filled church.

**It is unified (2:44, 46).** This is a God-given spiritual unity, not a man-made organizational uniformity. The church is an organism that is held together by life, and that life comes through the Holy Spirit. Of

course, the church must be organized; for if an organism is not organized, it will die. However, when the organization starts to hinder spiritual life and ministry, then the church becomes just another religious institution that exists to keep itself going. When the Holy Spirit is at work, God's people will be united in their doctrinal beliefs, as well as in fellowship, giving, and worship (Acts 4:32).

**A Spirit-filled church is magnified and will have "favor with all the people" (2:47).** In spite of the opposition of the rulers, the common people were drawn to the believers because something new and exciting was happening. When the religious leaders tried to silence the church, it was their fear of the people that restrained them (Acts 4:21; 5:26). Yes, a Spirit-filled church will have its enemies, but what the Lord is doing will attract the attention and the admiration of people who are hungry to know God.

**A Spirit-filled church is multiplied, because the Lord will daily add new believers to the church (2:47).** Evangelism will not be the work of a chosen few, but the daily delight and ministry of the whole congregation. In the early church, each member sought to be an effective witness for Jesus Christ, no matter where he happened to be. No wonder the church grew from 120 to over 5,000 in just a short time!

How did Satan's attack affect the spiritual condition of the church? Not at all! The fact that Peter and John were arrested, tried, and threatened had absolutely no effect on the spiritual life of the church, for the church was still unified (Acts 4:32), magnified (Acts 4:33), and multiplied! (Acts 4:32)

One evidence of the unity of the church was the way they sacrificed and shared with one another. When the Holy Spirit is at work, giving is a blessing and not a burden. We must keep in mind that this "Christian communism" was very unlike the political Communism of our day. What the believers did was purely voluntary (Acts 5:4) and was motivated by love. No doubt many of the new believers were visitors in Jerusalem, having come for the feasts; and they had to depend on their Christian friends to help meet their daily needs.

Nor should we think that every believer sold all his goods and brought the money to the Apostles. Acts 4:34 indicates that some of the members "from time to time" sold various pieces of property and donated to the common treasury. When the assembly had a need, the Spirit directed someone to sell something and meet the need. While the early church's spirit of sacrifice and loving generosity is worthy of our emulation, believers today are not required to imitate these practices. The principles of Christian giving are outlined in the epistles, especially in 2 Corinthians 8–9; and nowhere are we instructed to bring our money and lay it at the pastor's feet (Acts 4:35), as though he were an apostle. It is the spirit of their giving that is important to us today and not the "letter" of their system.

Joseph, nicknamed "Barnabas" (son of encouragement), is introduced at this point for several reasons. First, he was a generous giver and illustrated the very thing Dr. Luke was describing. Second, his noble act apparently filled Ananias and Sapphira with envy so that they attempted to impress the church with their giving and ended up being killed. Third, Barnabas had a most important ministry in the church and is mentioned at least twenty-five times in the Book of Acts and another five times in the epistles. In fact, it is Barnabas who encouraged Paul in his early service for the Lord (Acts 9:26–27; 11:19–30; 13:1–5), and who gave his cousin John Mark the encouragement he needed after his failure (Acts 13:13; 15:36–41; Col. 4:10).

Levites were not permitted to own land, so it is difficult to understand how Barnabas acquired the property that he sold. Perhaps that particular law (Num. 18:20; Deut. 10:9) applied only in Palestine and the property was in Cyprus, or perhaps the corrupt religious leaders had become lax in enforcing the law. There is much we do not know about Joseph Barnabas, but this we do know: he was a Spirit-filled man who was an encouragement to the church because he gave his all to the Lord. Not every believer can be like Peter and John, but we can all be like Barnabas and have a ministry of encouragement.

### **The Hypocrisy of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1–11)**

George MacDonald wrote, “Half of the misery in the world comes from trying to look, instead of trying to be, what one is not.” The name that Jesus gave to this practice is “hypocrisy,” which simply means “wearing a mask, playing the actor.” We must not think that failure to reach our ideals is hypocrisy, because no believer lives up to all that he or she knows or has in the Lord. Hypocrisy is deliberate deception, trying to make people think we are more spiritual than we really are.

That was the sin of Ananias and Sapphira: putting on a lovely “front” in order to conceal the shabby sin in their lives, sin that cost them their lives. Ananias means “God is gracious,” but he learned that God is also holy; and Sapphira means “beautiful,” but her heart was ugly with sin. No doubt some people are shocked when they read that God killed two people just because they lied about a business transaction and about their church giving. But when you consider the features connected with this sin, you have to agree that God did the right thing by judging them.

Warren W. Wiersbe, [\*The Bible Exposition Commentary\*](#), vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 420–422.