



Lesson 12 November 21st, 2020

Sharing Love

JUNIOR LESSON

Study Scripture – Acts 4:32 – 5:11

Background Scripture – Acts 3 – 5:11

Key Verse:

And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul: and not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own, but all things were common property to them.

Acts 4:32

We are looking in this Lesson at an experience in the church in Jerusalem that had just started under the leadership of the Apostles of Jesus Christ. They were the leaders. They are the ones that Jesus Christ gave the authority to teach everything about Him and about His Father in Heaven.

The Scriptures tell us that these early believers in Jesus Christ were so close to each other that they were of **one heart and soul**. This means that they were so close together and loved each other so much that they wanted the best for each other and they were prepared to use anything that they had owned even to selling property that they had in order to find money to help those that were poor and in need.

This was a display of the special kind of love which we call **agape love** that God had for His people. Once you believe in God you are supposed to show this kind of love to others. The early Christians obey God and did just that.

When they obeyed God and loved the brethren they were obeying the commandments of God and in response God showed His great power and the Apostles taught the people about Jesus Christ and His resurrection and they did all kinds of miracles such as healing the sick and the lame and people that had all kinds of diseases. This attracted a lot of people into the church and the church grew tremendously. They came to understand the love of God and the benefits that the love of God would bring to people who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Everything was going well. Many of the rulers of the city of Jerusalem could hear this message about the Lord Jesus Christ and they even saw the many miracles that the Apostles did. They saw the love that the people in the Church showed each other and they saw the benefits of the people **abiding** in Christ.

The writer of the Book of Acts was named Luke. He put a great deal of emphasis on the fact that the people in the early church looked after each other. They would even sell their possessions and distribute the money that they made to help all those that were in need. One man called Barnabas sold an expensive field and gave the money that he made from the sale to the Apostles so that they could use it to help people in the church.

Barnabas knew that Jesus had taught that when you have money it does not really belong to you for it is God that gave it to you and God expects you to use it with wisdom to support yourself as well as using it to help others. Jesus encouraged His followers to build up treasures in Heaven by helping others and by investing in the people of God. These treasures in Heaven are treasures that would never go bad or decay and would stand you in good stead when you saw God.

The people loved that kind of action Barnabas did and gave him the name of **Son of encouragement**. He loved people and would do whatever he could to comfort, encourage, and help them. The people in the church thought that what Barnabas did was very good and a lot of other people were encouraged to donate money from sale of property to help the people in the church. Those generous people developed a great reputation and the people in the church loved them even more for the good that they were doing.

But then one couple who wanted to get the praise of the people decided to sell a piece of land that they had and they told everybody that they were giving all the money that they made from the sale to the church to help the people. This of course was a great lie for what they did was to keep back some of the money for themselves.

Now they were not being forced to give all the money that they made from the sale to the church. They had a right to keep some of it for themselves. But what they should not have done is to tell that great lie and be a hypocrite just because they wanted praise from the people. They made a bad choice and it led to bad consequences for them.

The Apostle Peter confronted them and asked them why they had done such a great sin for they had sinned by lying not only to the people in the church but they had sinned against God. God did not like when people in the church told that kind of lie saying that they gave all their money to the church and to God when in fact they did not do that.

God does not like when you say you're doing something to bring honour to Him when in fact you're only doing it to bring praise and honour to yourself. God certainly does not like lying. When Peter told this man named Ananias that he was lying to God he fell down dead on the spot

Then sometime later Ananias' wife named Sapphira came in. She did not know what had happened to her husband. Peter asked her what she had received when she and her husband sold the land. She named the figure. He asked her why she and her husband had



agreed to say they had given all the sale money to the church for in saying that lie she had been lying to God. She too fell down dead immediately.

You can imagine the reaction of the people in the church. They became very afraid of lying to God. Nobody would pay that trick anymore. God wanted the people to behave themselves and not to tell lies about what they were doing for God.

What God didn't want the people to live a life of fear. So the Holy Spirit continued to give the Apostles power to do all kinds of great signs and wonders and to continue healing people. The church therefore became happy again and did the work of spreading the Gospel continuously.

They continued loving and helping each other just as God had wanted them to do.

God wants you to be of **one heart and soul** with the people who belong to God. People who believe in Jesus Christ the Lord belong to one body. The people in this body of Jesus Christ should be even closer to you than your own family. If they belong to Jesus Christ you will be close to them not only because they are your family but also because they belong to the Lord Jesus Christ.

We have learned from the experience of this early church that you should be generous. When you love others you will be generous toward them. Many people in the world are astounded when they hear that people have donated all kinds of savings to good causes, providing scholarships for deserving and financially needy students even though they could have used the money to live in luxury. One writer tells us about what this famous United States general and Government official said”:

“Gen. Colin Powell once said, “Young people need to learn the paradox of giving-- that when we help others, we get back far more than we contribute”.

So remember that what you have is what God has given to you. He expects you to use it wisely. You should use your time as well as your money wisely. So don't turn your back away from tutoring some elementary school kids that are in need or spend a few hours a month helping some senior citizens that are lonely or dying or spending some time on a weekend cleaning up an empty lot so that people can use it to do good things. The satisfaction will be great when you make a difference in the life of others.

