

Great Grace was Upon Them All

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Preacher: Pastor Andrew

[0:00] Well, it's good to be back with you this morning. I've been away for three weeks.

! I was supposed to be teaching a few weeks ago in Central Asia. That did not happen. There was a little bit of a change to our schedule, as some of you are aware of.

About a month ago, Sunday night, many of you are aware, some of you are not, my daughter had a cardiac arrest right after the service.

And she, for all intents and purposes, died right there in the bathroom. But by God's grace, through some of your actual activity in helping to restore her, resuscitate her, over the next several minutes, she is now at home.

Actually, I think she's here. She's here. Right? Right? This morning's passage is going to be a picture of what our family, what our family experienced over the past several weeks.

[1:25] A picture of investment. A picture of interest. A picture of a church that is vested. A church that cares.

A church that has been faithful to pray. A church that has been engaged in the process of ministering to Rachel and her husband and family.

Also to us and extended family. I am grateful for Maranatha Baptist Church. I cannot think of another church I would rather be in than Maranatha Baptist.

It's the work of the Spirit. God's work through the lives of the saints who were here that came through, that was evident, that was, that drew attention to the power of God and drew attention to the work of God in your lives as God's Spirit worked in you to minister to our family.

Thank you for your active, deliberate, and faithful investments in ministries to us over the last several weeks. Thank you.

[2:35] This morning we're going to be looking at a passage that is familiar to us.

A passage where the Holy Spirit's power is so visible, is so evident, and draws so much attention to His work in the lives of people that it is extraordinary.

It helps to accentuate what God intends or wants and desires to do for every single one of us. God's Holy Spirit dwells in every believer.

Everyone this morning of you who know Jesus Christ as your Savior, who have come to the place of admitting your sin, confessing your sin, and believing that Jesus Christ not only died for your sin, took the cost of your sin and mine on His body, and then was resurrected on the third day to extend to us eternal life for those who believe.

For everyone in this room and everyone who is watching on the live stream who have come to enjoy and experience the saving work of Jesus Christ through faith, you have the indwelling Holy Spirit.

[3:56] And since you have the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit intends to do something in you. the Holy Spirit will not allow you to stay where you are.

If you and if I are responsive to His work, His active, consistent, deliberate, faithful work day by day, if we are responsive to that work, what we're going to see this morning from our passage in Acts chapter 4 should shine through every single life, every single member of this body.

I think all of us could say that we want to see the power of God work in our life. Would you agree? I want to see the power of God work in my life.

I want it to be so unmistakable. I want it to be so clear. Not because I want attention on me, but I want the attention to go to Him.

I want God's glory to be so evident, to be so visible, to be so obvious, that the people that see my life and the people that see the lives of every believer filled with the Spirit will say, I want what they have.

[5:25] There's something quite exceptional about their life. Something quite extraordinary about them. I want that to be true of me too. But as we work through this passage today in Acts chapter 4, and I would encourage you to turn there, Acts chapter 4, if you're using the Pew Bible, it's on page 912.

The truth of this passage this morning is that while the power of the Spirit is present and the power of the Spirit is available, in order for us to really access and enjoy and experience the power, most times it comes one way.

You're not going to enjoy or experience the power of God if you don't need it. You're not going to experience or enjoy the power of God if you push it away and choose a road that's easy.

You're not going to enjoy the evident power of God without a struggle, without opposition, without hard things. That's when the power of God shows up and by God's grace His power was so evident four weeks ago.

His power was evident and I want to see God's power but what often like, oh, I want to see your power but I want to see the power easy, I want it to be easy, Lord.

[7:02] But it doesn't happen that way because when things are easy, you just don't need God's power. power. I want to encourage you right in this moment before we even get started in this passage today.

I want just you and the Lord, can I just encourage you to close, just you and God right now, close your eyes and think, you and God right now, answer this question.

God, I want to see your power. Oh God, please, let me see your power. And oh God, please, this next step, allow me to be open to you doing whatever it takes for that power to be evident.

Would you be willing to have that conversation with the Lord? God, whatever it takes, I know you are good. I know you allow hard things sometimes to happen so that your power can show up.

God, it's worth it. It's worth it so that your glory can be put on display. Well, I trust that is your prayer this morning.

[8:14] And our passage today from Acts chapter 4 will encourage us to see what that power looks like. It is the power of God. The power of God is resident in your life.

Do you see it? Can you enjoy it? Are you experiencing it? I trust you are. And I trust that as people are looking at your life, they're like, oh wow, the Spirit of God is so powerful through them.

I can see Him at work. Oh, may God be glorified through His evident power in us. You remember the context of Acts chapter 4.

We're going to be in verses 32, but you remember the story. It actually traces back to Acts chapter 3. Where Peter and John are going to the temple on the day of prayer.

And it's this hour of prayer. And they encounter this lame man. He's been lame since birth. And we come to find out, well, he's been alive for the last 40 years.

[9:16] And so, he's been there at the temple asking for money. This is just about survival for him. He wants money. So he asks Peter and John, they're walking by, do you got anything you can give to me?

And Peter says, well, you know, silver and gold have I none, but what I have I'm going to give to you. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk. And he doesn't just try to kind of creak up and try to stumble into place.

No, it says he leaps up. He's walking into the temple. He's praising God. It is clear that the work of God has happened. And because of this work of God, it says the people in the temple rush to where he is.

They're like, we know this guy. What is going on? There's something taking place here. What are we, what's happening? Some power has happened.

And of course, these people in the temple, they remember just a few weeks before that the same power was present in the Lord Jesus. And they're making this correlation.

[10:26] Okay, wait a second. This same power happened just a few weeks ago in Jesus. Now it's happening again. Who are these people? And Peter and John take, capitalize on the opportunity to teach the gospel.

They teach in boldness. And it says that Peter, by the power of the Spirit, he says, it's by the power of Jesus Christ, this man, has been healed.

Not that by the power of us. And he shares the gospel with them. It says he shares the gospel about the death of Christ and the resurrection of Christ.

He shares with them the truth they need to hear. The only truth that will save them from their situation, from their sin. And it's the same gospel that we preach today. And I would have you know the consistent pattern as we work our way through the book of Acts is that every gospel message must include the resurrection. There is not a gospel without the resurrection.

[11:31] And we're going to see attention drawn to that again as we work our way through this passage. Well, the people are excited about what God has done. Their response is 5,000 come to faith in Christ.

But while they're excited, the religious leaders are not. And they arrest them, they draw them in, they interrogate them. And Peter and John are there along with this once lame man who's now in the company.

And they're interrogated and threatened by the Sanhedrin. Well, the Sanhedrin releases them. They go back to their place.

So we find in chapter 4, verse 23, speaking of John and Peter, when they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and elders had said to them.

And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God. And we find that they prayed. This is the first lesson.

[12:37] This is not in the notes, by the way. Not the first point. But I think it's an important lesson for us to know. If we want to be people who are demonstrating confidence in God, we want to be people who are experiencing the power of God, we're people who pray.

We're going to be people who pray. That's what they do. They pray. They exalt the sovereignty of God. They acknowledge His authority in all situations.

I love the fact that they don't pray like me. They're not praying that God would fix this hostility. That He would put down the resistance. That He would do away with the adversity.

They're not praying that way. They know that God is sovereign, that God has a plan, and that God delights in using hard things to call attention to His glorious power.

They understand that, and so they're praying not for the problems to go away, but for courage to speak in the midst of those problems. Give us boldness, God.

[13:40] Oh God, help us to be courageous and bold to speak about You because they want the power of God to be evident in their life.

They want the gospel to be clear. They want God to get glory. It only happens this way, and so God answers. We find that in chapter 4, verse 31.

And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was what church? Shaken. And they were filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness.

The Holy Spirit comes on them in an extraordinary way and the room is shaken. It is unmistakable. God is present. God is here.

God's power is uncontested. You can trust it. And if we get a sense of that, we will enjoy the benefits of this unstoppable God.

[14:49] The same God who dwells in every single believer and promises the same power. Want access to that power? You have it. You want to enjoy the benefits of that power?

You can. And what does that power look like? Well, sometimes, it doesn't often look like a room that shakes. Matter of fact, sometimes it looks a little common and I think that's sometimes what our problem is.

And that's what we see. We're going to see this extraordinary work of God among these people.

And maybe it doesn't look extraordinary but it is. I wonder this morning if this is your experience.

Have you experienced God's power this way? Do you want to experience God's power this way? I trust we do. But it's costly.

It's costly because God's power has to make a weak people so that His glory can show up. because, as Paul will say, His grace is made perfect in weakness.

[16:00] We have to be willing to be shattered in order for God's power to overcome the breaking. Just a brief word about filling with the Spirit.

They were filled with the Spirit. What is that talking about? Well, it's not talking about a second indwelling. Okay? Once we have the Spirit, we have the Spirit fully, completely. It's not a second filling.

It's not a power-up as it were. Like they got some of the Spirit and they're able to operate a little bit but now this you got this power-up and the Holy Spirit I'm filled now.

Now I can do ministry. No. They had access to the Spirit entirely at the beginning. This filling is about more about dispensing self so that we can be more filled up with the Lord.

It's about putting away the things of our flesh so we can allow God to occupy more of our life. Paul refers to it this way in Ephesians.

[17:03] He talks about do not be drunk with wine but be filled with the Spirit. And the Greek is actually pretty emphatic where it says be being kept filled.

This is a continual process of the Christian life. This is laying down. This is submitting to His authority in our life. And this is moving moving according to His plan.

Not grieving the Spirit. Not quenching the Spirit. But walking in the Spirit. What the Spirit says through His Word we do without question. The more we do that the more the Spirit will occupy the spaces of our life and we'll enjoy His power.

Okay. How do we see the Spirit show up? First we see the Spirit show up in their united participation. Their united participation.

Acts chapter 4 verse 32. It says this, Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul and no one said that any of the things that belonged to Him was His own but they had everything in common.

[18:15] We see their participation. This Greek word *plathos* is the word full number. That's the that's where we get the translation full number. It's really the word multitude.

It's the word for many. This specific group is also governed by this definite article. It is the multitude not just an anonymous group and it's the multitude of those who believe.

Every single person who believe is part of this number and the full number every single one of them united.

That is the work of the Spirit. Full participation. a church that knew they belonged together.

And it wasn't just something theological that they gave mental assent to. It was something that they were actively a part of shoring up the process and making sure that was true about them.

[19:23] That they were in fact as a multitude however large that multitude must have been. they were together. They were unified. One heart. One soul.

As many of the individuals as there must have been. And we saw from Acts chapter 2 there's at least 3,000 men. We see from Acts chapter 4 there's at least another 5,000 men plus all the ones that got saved along the way.

In Acts chapter 2 verse 47 day by day the church grew and multiplied as God had favor. this could have been at least 10,000 men and you add women and children who knows 20,000 30,000 and God had done such a work in their life they're characterized this way one heart one soul full participation.

It's extraordinary. It's a work of God and it's significant that when the first signs of persecution begin to confront this church it doesn't fracture them it makes them that much more enabled and empowered to settle in.

We belong together and we've seen this over and over again as the mark of this people going all the way back to Acts chapter 1 verse 14 these all with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus and his brothers.

[20:57] Acts chapter 2 verse 1 when the day of the Pentecost arrived they were all together in one place. Acts chapter 2 42 and 44 and they devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and the fellowship the breaking of bread and prayers and all who believed were together and had all things in common.

Their unity is a work of the Spirit. That's what the Spirit does. He unifies a people. He makes them one.

One heart one soul this is exactly what Jesus Christ prayed for future followers of him. This is what Jesus Christ prayed for Maranatha.

Here's his prayer. Jesus Christ prayer for this church captured in John chapter 17 verse 20 says this I do not ask for these only but also for those who will believe in me through their word.

That's you. That's me. That they may be one just as you father are in me and I in you that they may be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

[22:15] Jesus cares about oneness. He cares about unity of this church and not just that we all kind of gather in one spot and not just that there's no presence of conflict here.

That's not what we're talking about in terms of unity. No, we're talking about a church that is so vested, a church that is so involved, a church that cares about one another so much that they are one heart, one soul, one objective, one priority, one purpose, one mission.

It's all, they're all in. All in. There's a research done back in the mid-90s. It's called the Robin Dunbar's research on social network layers.

And basically, they did an evaluation of how many relationships do we have and kind of what are the different spheres of those relationships. And what they found is this.

In the study, 5,000 recognizable faces. People that you recognize, you walk along, I think I know that face. I think I've seen them before.

[23:29] I can't quite place it. There's about 5,000 of those, okay? And then within that group, there's 1,500 of people who would be considered familiar.

Known names. You can generally identify that person by name. Then, a subgroup of 500, 500 acquaintances.

You actually know who they are, but the relationship is a little superficial. Now, we're tightening even more. Now, 150 meaningful relationships, people with whom there is real history, reciprocal relationship and trust, some sense of obligation to them.

And this was kind of all done through a study where who sends Christmas cards and how many are being sent and who do you send them to. And usually this 150 is this group, okay?

That there's some relationship, there's some reciprocity happening, there's something reciprocal, give and take that's happening there. But then we kind of tighten a little bit more to 50.

[24:33] 50 what would be considered good relationships, good friendships, people with whom you maintain personal relationship with. And then 15 who would be close or considered best friends, people you would confide in and turn to when there's something significant in your life.

And then 5, intimate, intimate friendships, these are the people who will drop everything to come to your assistance. I wonder who are your 50.

Who are your 50? How are you cultivating in that 50 of good friendships here at Maranatha, how are you cultivating better friendships?

I think it usually happens through service. It happens as we are ministering. Maybe it's a little bit more casual, but there's service taking place. There's a give and take that's happening.

There's an interest in their life. There's a personal commitment to try to minister to their needs. I wonder who are the 15? Who are these close friends or best friends?

[25:45] Who are you praying for faithfully? Who do you care about enough to know what their needs are and to take it to the throne of grace and to follow up with them to make sure that that friendship continues to grow deeper?

And maybe the five, this intimate circle? Who are you inviting to your home? Who are those friendships that you're developing and taking deeper? This is something that takes activity.

It doesn't just happen by accident. It's something that as the Holy Spirit is working in your life, he cultivates this kind of life, participation. But it takes work.

It takes work. Are you vested? Do you care for the Holy Spirit to show up in your life this way? I've got to admit, this is one of the harder ones for me.

It's something I definitely need to do better. And those of you who are part of the Maranatha directory app, it can be really easy.

[26:52] And those of you who are following along with the powerhouse prayer, there are names that are in that and through the course of the months working through every family and every name of individuals who call Maranatha their home.

Are we serious about seeing the Spirit's power show up in our life? Enough to take this seriously. To be participating in one another's lives.

Not just showing up on a Sunday morning, but being active in participation. I know I need to do better. I trust that you will also press in.

Their united participation. Second, we see their eager cooperation. Their eager cooperation. We see that in verses 32 and 34. It says, Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common.

Verse 44, And all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and they were selling their possessions and belongings, and distributing the proceeds to all as any had need.

[28 : 12] Now I just want to, just a word of the book of Acts. This is descriptive, not prescriptive, meaning this is what the church did, not necessarily what the mandate for us is.

But let me tell you, when the Holy Spirit is present, we want to follow the Spirit's lead, right? And so, if this is what extravagant love and participation looks like, if this is what cooperation looks like, if this is what the Spirit on a life looks like, oh Lord, please help me.

Help me to do better at this. Help me to be aware of needs. Help me to be cooperative in the process. And look at the comprehensiveness of these words.

How comprehensive. No one said any of the things, everything in common. Comprehensive nature of their sharing because they were all one heart, one soul.

They were a family, a spiritual family. family. This body was engaged. They were alert. They knew the needs.

[29 : 25] They were actively identifying and meeting those needs. They knew who they were. They knew who the problems were. They knew how they could contribute to those problems and help to remedy those problems.

You know, when I was a kid growing up, I learned from the example of my family. And I trust that as families, we are setting this pattern for our children as well.

And I think a lot of the things that I've learned and have benefited from have resulted from the great indoctrination of my mom and dad. When I was growing up, my dad being a pastor, he did not make much at all.

But my mom and dad had a spirit of generosity. They wanted to invite people into their home. They wanted to meet needs. And oftentimes what that meant is when we had people over to our house, there was only so much that could be put on the table.

And so when you have a family of six plus other guests that are coming, then that means there's not a whole lot to go around. So my dad had a code. The code that he would say before any of us would sit down was FHB.

[30 : 35] FHB. What does that mean? Well, it means family hold back. Family hold back. And so when he said FHB, we knew our portions were going to be intentionally small so that we could defer to our guests.

I wonder if in the church of Jerusalem that was kind of the mantra. Hey, FHB. FHB. Family hold back. We have the joy of contributing.

The joy of sharing. The joy of distributing. Family hold back. for the sake of the glory of God and the wonder of God providing through us and his spirit working in us not only to meet the needs of others but then to see how God graciously meets and attends to our needs as well.

You see, we can't understand or see that God is able to meet a need when that need is not present. And what a beautiful portrait of God's work when we're willing to share.

And that the family intentionally holds back. It was also important to see is that there wasn't a needy person because the needy people also had the same goal.

[31 : 59] They understood that they needed to press in as well. They needed to contribute as well. And so their needs were smaller. They were real needs.

They were truly impoverished. They were truly in short of what was necessary. And they only took what was necessary so the rest could be distributed to others. It was a collaborative, cooperative effort.

MacArthur has said they were focused beyond themselves to reaching the lost world with the truth of the gospel. That left them little time to bother with trivial personal matters.

Sharing requires awareness. It requires alertness. It requires being involved. It requires relationship so we know what the needs are and the work of the spirit in our life to be willing to share for the glory of God.

So we've seen their united participation, their eager cooperation, and in verse 33 we see their spirit-filled proclamation. Spirit-filled proclamation.

[33 : 13] And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection, here it is, resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Great power.

It's the word mega. mega. Mega dunamai. Great power. And this is the mark. This is the mark of a church that is filled by the spirit.

This is the promise that Christ gave to the disciples very early on in Acts chapter 1. He says in Acts 1.8, remember what he says? You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you. See, power always has a purpose. Power always has an objective. It's always directional. It's always with the purpose of making much of God, not in making much of me.

And that power was promised early and it becomes this consistent evidence of what we see all the way through. Acts chapter 2, verse 43, awe came upon every soul and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles.

[34 : 23] That's power. Acts 3.12, and when Peter saw it, he addressed the people, men of Israel, why do you wonder at this or why do you stare at us as though by our own power or piety we have made him walk?

Power was present. The Spirit was working. It was a power of proclamation. That's what they prayed for. Courage, boldness to proclaim Christ.

And this is when people turn to God. They find that God gives them overcoming strength.

Overcoming strength. And they return to pray with their friends and God through his Spirit gives them, his Spirit fills them for a purpose to proclaim, to witness.

And when they come back, what do they do? They witness, they speak. I wonder how many of us need that kind of power. Man, it's so easy to be afraid, isn't it?

It's so easy to be intimidated by opposition. And maybe some of you are in positions where you've been told to keep your mouth shut.

[35 : 37] That if you say certain things, that you're going to risk losing your job. And I don't know, there's wisdom in speaking at the right times, being wise as serpents and harmless as doves, but I wonder, even in some of those casual relationships, how much of us, God, I need your power to be present in my life.

I need your speaking, proclaiming power, not only to have courage, but the wisdom of your Spirit to be able to say what needs to be said in this moment.

He will give that. He gives wisdom. He gives power. His Spirit provides it. United participation, eager cooperation, Spirit-filled proclamation, and then Spirit-enabled transformation.

We see that at the end of verse 33. And with great power, the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and then this, and great grace was upon them all.

Great grace was upon them all. What does that mean? They're already saved. They're already part of the fellowship. They've already experienced the grace of God, this unmerited favor in drawing them in to Christ.

[36 : 57] They've enjoyed the benefits of this work in their life. What is this grace that we're talking about? Great grace was upon them. And I think as we read through the rest of the book of Acts, and as we then access some of the letters that the apostle Paul preached and wrote, then we come to understand grace is more than just salvation.

It's the work of the Spirit in life. It is the evident nature, the evident presence of the Spirit working in a life to transform them, to make them something that they're not, to change them from what they were to what Christ intends to do for them.

God's grace was evident. It means His Spirit was so obvious, so tangible, so evident, so visible, it's like, wow, God is here.

That's what we mean when we talk about the grace of God, the great grace of God. That everyone looking at this church said, ah, I know how to explain this.

God is here. God is among His people. It's unquestionable. I know what's happening. And we, as we look through the book of Acts, that's what we see.

[38 : 17] Acts chapter 6 verse 8, I'll just give you a couple examples. And Stephen, full of grace and power. He's already saved. What is this grace?

Well, it's the evident work of the Spirit. Coupled with power. With great grace and power was doing great wonders and signs among the people. The grace of God was on him. Acts 11, 23.

This is the church of Antioch. This church of Antioch was growing and multiplying and flourishing because of the preaching of God's word. And Barnabas will go to this church. And it's interesting.

It's fascinating. Notice what it says in 11, 23. When he came, speaking of Barnabas, when he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad.

And he exhorted them to all remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose. He saw the grace of God? What did he see? Oh, he saw this kind of church that we're talking about this morning.

[39:15] He saw a church that was participating with one another. He saw a church that was cooperating in sharing. He saw a church that was thriving in gospel proclamation because the church was exploding.

The grace of God was there because the Spirit was working. It was evident. It was clear. God's here. God is here. Oh.

You want that kind of grace? That's the kind of grace that the Spirit desires to do for every single one of us.

Great grace. Not just supplementary grace to get you to the next day. But great, extravagant, overflowing, abundant grace.

The power of God working in your life. That kind of grace. That's what we can have if we allow the Spirit to have His way in our life.

[40:18] life. But it comes at a cost. And so that's what the Apostle Paul talks about in 2 Corinthians 12:9.

Where Jesus says to Paul, after he says, will you take away this inconvenience in my life? And by the way, I think it's appropriate to pray that God takes away thorns in our flesh. That is appropriate. But we need to be ready for the response when the response comes. And God's response to him is, Paul, my grace, my grace is sufficient for you.

For my strength is made perfect in your weakness. Therefore, I will boast in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

I want the grace. And if that means I got to be weak, oh God, give me the weakness so I can enjoy your grace, your power, your strengthening might for your glory.

[41:25] In verses 34 to 35, we come to their deliberate act of consecration. Their deliberate act of consecration. It says, 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 and laid it at the apostles' feet. And it was distributed to each as any had need.

I love this. And consecration is a word to set apart from common or secular use to something that's consecrated, something that's dedicated to God, something that has a spiritual purpose.

And that's what these people were doing. these disciples who wanted to contribute, they were aware of needs, but sometimes they weren't. And in their desire to be part of the work of God, they just entrusted or consecrated, they dedicated those funds to the apostles.

They laid it at their feet and said, this is for Christ. This is for Him to use however He sees fit. And sometimes we are in, as it were, the driver's seat of helping to meet specific needs of people around us because we're aware of them.

[42:43] But sometimes, sometimes we don't know about needs and sometimes we might know about a need but we want to be anonymous in the process. We consecrate this to God. We lay this offering at the feet of the leaders and we allow God to use our gifts for His glory.

A couple principles of giving. First, giving is to be anonymous. It's to be anonymous.

In Matthew chapter 6 verses 3 and 4 it says, When you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. May your Father who sees in secret repay you openly.

Trust the Lord, give anonymously. Second, giving needs to be in faith. And we find that all throughout the scripture. We find from 1st Timothy chapter 3:3 that the qualification for a leader is not to be a lover of money.

We find throughout the scripture the commitment of giving that requires a measure of faith. We're trusting the Lord to take care of the needs that we have as we're distributing to others.

[43:55] Third, giving needs to be voluntary. We find that from 2nd Corinthians chapter 9 verse 7. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

Fourth, giving is an eternal investment. Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust corrupt, where thieves break through and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust corrupt, where thieves do not break through or steal, for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

We recognize that the giving that we contribute, while physical in nature, really has a spiritual element. We are giving for the sake of eternity. We're trusting the Lord with those gifts and asking that he would be glorified in the giving of those things.

Finally, we've seen their united participation, their eager cooperation, their spirit-filled proclamation, their spirit-empowered transformation, their deliberate act of consecration, and finally, the continuing evidence of dedication.

The continuing evidence of dedication. And now the spotlight shifts to one. Now we've been working to look at an entire group, a multitude there in Jerusalem, and now the lens kind of shifts, and now we're kind of spotlighting this person Barnabas or Joseph.

[45:24] He's just one of the collective. But God uses this dedication of this man Joseph, who is known by the apostles as Barnabas, as kind of a starting point as it were, to launch the rest of his faith-filled ministry.

Verse 36, Thus Joseph, who was also called by the apostles Barnabas, which means son of encouragement, a Levite, a native of Cyprus, he sold a field that belonged to him and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

This is significant. He sold his property. We find earlier in verse 34 and 35, they sold their homes. This in the first century was significant because this was their future.

And much of this property had been handed down generation after generation after generation. This was their legacy. And yet they were willing to abandon these things for the sake of the cause. Primarily the cause of showing Christ and being useful for gospel ministry. And here's Barnabas.

[46:39] And we know his story because this is kind of the first glimpse of his dedication that God then takes this work or act of faith and he multiplies it.

What seemed like a subtraction for Barnabas will actually become an addition because God will now multiply his ministry. Yes, he's laid down his physical property, but if you know the rest of the story, you'll understand that Barnabas becomes so influential and so prominent that it is Barnabas that actually goes and fetches Paul, brings him back to Antioch, and the church mission begins. That's Barnabas. Sometimes God uses extraordinary acts of faith, obedience, to begin the process of working in our life to get us to something even greater.

But my guess is for most of us in this room, God will normally just use common and ordinary steps of faith. What does God say? How do I need to obey?

How will I then benefit and see the work of God's grace in my life? I trust that every single one of us want great grace.

[48:03] It happens one way. It happens as God leads leads us through his word and through his spirit, and we say yes. Are you willing to say yes to the things that God has called you to do this week?

And when you do, God by his spirit will enable that work and glorify himself. May God be glorious among us.

Let's pray. Father, thank you for the example of this church that we see here in Acts chapter four.

And Lord, I pray that you would help us not to see this and just epitomize this. This is an exceptional church, and we can draw attention to the wonder of what you did among these people.

And while that is true, Lord, I pray that you would help us to recognize that you can do this same work in us because we have the same spirit. Lord, may we be yielded to your work.

[49:18] May we learn to say yes. And may the mantra of our efforts and activities be FHB, family hold back for the sake of the glory of God and the benefit benefit of the body.

May you be glorified. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. God bless you. Have a great week.