

Small Groups @ TBC Sermon Discussion Notes

Date of Sermon: March 19th 2017

Speaker: David Lawrence

Title: The Generous Community & the Grasping Couple

Introduction: This passage portrays the beautiful, generous community which God intends his kingdom people to form (4:32-36), and alerts us to the terrible prospect of greed and sin within the community (5:1-11).

Review: Invite one or more who have heard the talk to give their own brief review.

Read: Acts 4:32-5:11

Reflect:

1. What strikes you about the description of the church in Acts 4:32-35.
 - How close does this come to the way you would describe TBC to a friend? What accounts for any differences?
2. How does the 'grace of God' being powerfully among them, translate into 'there being no needy persons among them'? (Does 2 Corinthians 9:8 give a clue?)
 - Does this give us any new perspectives on what 'grace' is, and what it achieves?
3. The view of church described here views the church as *God's new society* (and not, for example, just being a religious club, Sunday service or place for 'spiritual experiences').
 - How do people in the group resonate with the idea of being a citizen in God's new society?
 - How does this contrast with other views of church that people (in the group, or people in society) have of church?
 - Do people find this view of church more attractive, or not? Why?
4. Why was the money brought and put at the apostles' feet and not just given to the poor (the phrase comes three times in the passage)? Does this offer us any principles for our own giving?
5. The Old Testament background (e.g. Deut 15:1-8), Jesus' teaching (e.g. Luke 12:22-34) and the New Testament books (e.g. 1 John 3:16-18), hold a steady view of what God is seeking in his society.
 - How would you describe the 'economics of God's Kingdom'?
 - How do we respond to this as Christians in the wealthy 21st century Western world?

Leaders: feel free to be selective and creative with your use of these notes.

Don't feel you have to use all of the material, but
do try to keep the shape of Review – Read – Reflect – Respond
and **DO make room for the 'And Finally' questions!**

6. In the talk, David referred to the recent TBC leaflet on giving. He mentioned the following Biblical principles for handling our money. We should:

- *see our money as a gift from God, not as our private possession. (1 Chronicles 29:14)*
 - *give regularly and generously in gratitude for God's goodness to us. (2 Corinthians 9:6-8)*
 - *give according to our means, retaining only what is necessary to sustain a simple lifestyle. (1 Timothy 6:6-8)*
 - *give according to the needs of others. (2 Corinthians 8:1-15)*
 - *give through our local church. (Acts 4:34, 35)*
- Discuss them together. Which are the most challenging? What makes them challenging?
 - Are there any other Biblical principles that the grope would wish to add to the list?

7. In the light of the discussion thus far, why was Ananias and Sapphira's deceit and greed so important/tragic (5:1-11)?

8. In what way were they wrong:

- about the true nature of the Church?
- about the character of God?
- about themselves as citizens of a new kingdom?

And finally:

As you conclude, ask each person:

- What is the main thing you are taking away as an action point?
- How can we pray for you?
- Is there anything we can check on next time we meet?

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