

ONE HEART AND MIND

1 Acts 4:32-5:16 (Key Verse: 4:32)

“All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had.”

In today's passage we are going to learn how we should live as Christian believers and what attitude we should have towards the mission that God has given us. From the key verse we are told that the believers in the early church were one in heart and mind. When the believers were one in heart and mind, they shared everything and there was no needy person among them. Therefore, we are going to learn what it means to be one in heart and mind, what are the benefits thereof? Secondly, we are going to learn how we also can be one in heart and mind. Lastly, we are also going to learn about the dangers of not being one in heart and mind. May God be with each one of us today, to humble our hearts and receive God's message deeply.

In the closing of last week's passage, we saw the believers earnestly and sincerely raising their voices to God in prayer, they did this for God to grant them the ability to go out to speak the gospel to the people even in the midst of opposition. They needed strength from God, for Peter and John had reported to them that the religious leaders warned them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. When they prayed, God answered and the place where they were was shaken, and they were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly. Now in today's passage, after the believers received the Holy Spirit, we see them doing something interesting. Let us look at the **key verse 4:32**: *“All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had.* The believers were one in heart and mind. What does this mean? This means unity rose among the believers, they became one. This means just like in marriage, they cared for one another, and they had the same goals and purpose. In **1 John 3:11** we learnt how Apostle John eagerly encouraged the Christian believers to love one another. Being united, having common goals, vision and purpose, as well as loving one another is so critical for God's holy church. And so, when the Holy Spirit came upon the believers, it enabled them to be united, to be one in heart and mind.

Just as unity was crucial for the gospel ministry of the early church, it is still very crucial for us today. We also need to be one in heart and mind. The early church expressed their unity through sharing everything they had with one another, no one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything. As human beings we have so many limitations, even during the early church I believe there were many different kinds of people with various limitations such as laziness, some had more some had less etc. But because of the power of the Holy Spirit, the early church shared everything. In our ministry, God has blessed us with common life among brothers and sisters. It is quite amazing how the brothers and sisters live together and share everything. All this is possible because of the power of the Holy Spirit.

When I was in my first year, I used to have flat mates about 4 of them, at the beginning we used to share everything but 3 months down the line conflict arose, and we stopped sharing any food or anything. From that time on I promised myself that I will never share anything with people, I always wanted a single room. But to my amazement, years later when I joined common life with Sh. Khomo in the Bible house cottage we shared everything, and we lived in harmony. We lived in harmony because of the Holy Spirit, missionaries and all members of our ministry prayed so earnestly and sincerely, and God answered by granting us the Holy Spirit which enabled us to have one heart and mind. I believe that is why today our brothers at the Bible house live together and love one another

in harmony, sharing everything they have. Naturally it is not easy to share everything, it is only when the Holy Spirit comes upon us that we could be united and share everything.

Furthermore, to remain in one heart and mind we need to renew our faith daily. How can we do this? Let us look at **verse 4:33**: *“With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God’s grace was so powerfully at work in them all”* To renew the faith of the believers daily, the apostles continued to testify with power to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, when they did this, the believers faith grew, and the grace of God was poured out on them. When the message of the resurrection of Jesus Christ was preached daily to the believers, they could repent daily, they could set their hopes on the kingdom of God, they could be encouraged to be witnesses of Jesus Christ, they could dedicate their lives to serving the gospel ministry of Jesus Christ. When they heard the gospel of Jesus’ resurrection, they could allow the Holy Spirit to work more and more in their lives. So as Christian believers today, we also need to renew our faith daily, we need to repent daily and come to God daily to receive grace and be transformed into the likeness of Jesus Christ.

In **verse 4:36-37** it says: *“Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means “son of encouragement”), 37 sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles’ feet.”* Because of the message of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, Barnabas could be transformed into a son of encouragement. Barnabas sold his field and brought the money to the apostles’ feet to share it among the believers. And so did other believers, they sold their property and brought the money to the apostle’s feet. Furthermore, because of the message of the resurrection of Jesus, later we will encounter how Barnabas was so instrumental in introducing apostle Paul to the Christian church.

As Christian believers we need to continuously come to God, we need to continuously feed ourselves with his words daily, to be transformed. Christianity is not only a Sunday thing, we do not have to wait for conferences to experience the great work of the Holy Spirit, but as we daily come to God and hear his word, God can transform us to do amazing things that the world does not understand such as sharing everything, such going out into the world bringing more souls in the faith just like Barnabas, the son of encouragement.

As the passage proceeds, we meet a man named Ananias and his wife Sapphira who also sold a piece of property. Let us look at **verse 5:2-5**:

“With his wife’s full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles’ feet. 3 Then Peter said, “Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? 4 Didn’t it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn’t the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied just to human beings but to God.” 5 When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened.”

What went wrong with Ananias and Sapphira? Was it greed? Actually, their main problem was that they did not have the resurrected Jesus in their hearts, and this opened a window of opportunity for Satan to enter their hearts. When we do not renew our hearts daily and receive the word of God we open a window of opportunity for the devil. When the devil entered Ananias and Sapphira’s hearts he planted greed in their hearts, he planted deception. Instead of speaking honestly to Peter that they are only offering a portion of the sales money, they rather wanted the people to think they are good Christians who offered everything. This showed that they had no regard for God, they used the

things of God loosely to please people, to satisfy their own sinful fleshly desires, that they are good people, to be respected and the likes.

When Satan entered the hearts of Ananias and Sapphira, he corrupted their hearts and set them on earthly things. And all this is because they did not have Jesus in their hearts. In **Colossians 3:1-2** it says: *“Since then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.”* When Ananias and Sapphira set their minds on earthly things, they lied to the Holy Spirit. They did not have to lie, but because they were so drawn to the selfish way of earthly things they lied to the Holy Spirit. They had no regard for God, and so because this sin, they both died.

How could God punish Ananias and Sapphira in this way, bringing so much fear amongst the believers? **Firstly**, Ananias and Sapphira getting such a punishment reveals how severe the sin of deception is, how severe the sin of pleasing people while disregarding God is. Furthermore, this reveals that God hates sin, it reveals how bad sin is to us today as well. We might not exactly die from the sin of deception, but deep down we will experience death in our hearts because we are far from God, and eventually if we do not repent, we will die an eternal death.

Secondly, God punished Ananias and Sapphira to preserve the unity that has been established in the church. The church was and still is very dear and precious to God, it is God desire that we become one in heart and mind, that is why God sent the Holy Spirit. So to protect the unity Ananias and Sapphira who were used by Satan to divide the church were rooted out.

Thirdly, When Ananias and Sapphira died, in **verse 5:11** it says: *“Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events.”* Great fear seized the whole church because God wanted to give the church a lesson regarding what attitude they should have towards God. God is the creator of the heavens and the earth, he is almighty, sovereign, and so all people should fear God. We should treat God’s things with reverence. Ananias and Sapphira treated the things of God with disrespect, they did not have regard for the things of God and so by their death, God planted fear in the church, to restore the fear of the Lord. To bring people to repentance and to come to God sincerely on daily basis, so that Satan will not enter their hearts. God did all this, to bring the believers to Jesus, to help them to depend and put their trust on the resurrected Jesus and not to live to please people.

After God had restored the fear of the Lord in the people’s hearts, the attitude of the people changed. Let us look at **verse 5:13-14**: *“No one else dared join them, even though they were highly regarded by the people. 14 Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number.”* The message was very clear that the fundamental purpose of the church was to fear and revere God, it was to be one in heart and mind, and this was very clear even to non-believers and they held the Christian believers in high regard.

Furthermore, the fear that God planted in the people’s hearts made it clear that the Christian church is not a human organization. The Christian church is God’s dwelling place, filled with believers who are one in heart and mind, who revere the Lord. As a result no one dared to join the Christian church for casual reasons, only those who sincerely received the grace of Jesus and surrendered their lives to Jesus. Today as well, God has blessed us with many friends in our ministry this should not be only reason we are here, to socialize and the likes. But rather we should seek to be one in heart and mind, we should repent daily and accepts the message of the resurrected Jesus so that the Holy Spirit may continue to work in us, enable us to share everything with one another in harmony. So that we can

be used as a blessing to campus students, by inviting them, sharing everything with them and most importantly sharing with them the word of God and the love of Jesus. Peter and the other apostles shared everything that they had, they shared the gift of healing with the people, they performed many miracles and healed the people laid on mats on the streets and those tormented by the impure spirits.

Conclusion

From today's passage we have learnt that God's desire and will for us as Christian believers in the church is to be one in heart and mind, meaning we should be united and share everything. We have learnt that we cannot do this by our own strength, but rather we should eagerly pray to God as a church, for God to pour his Holy Spirit upon us. Being united as a church is the work of the Holy Spirit, loving one another and sharing everything we have is the work of the Holy Spirit.

We have also learnt that in order to keep the lamp burning, for the Holy Spirit to keep working, we need to firstly renew our hearts daily through meditating on the word of God, meditating on the message of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. When we do not renew our hearts daily, we open a window of opportunity for Satan to enter our hearts, to confuse us, to plant earthly desires, deception, and greed which hinders us from living with unity with one another.

We have also learnt that in order to keep the lamp burning we need to fear God, we need to treat the things of God with reverence. We have learnt that the Christian church is not just a social organization, but rather God's dwelling place which we have been called to, to live Holy lives pleasing to God. We have been called to be one in heart and mind, to share everything and to bring salvation to campus students and all people by sharing the message of the resurrection of Jesus Christ with reverence.

Amen