

Fourth Sunday of Easter – 2024

Saturday, 4/20 at 4:00 | Sunday, 4/21 at 9:00



Amazing Unity and Love Among the Believers!

Text: Acts 4:32-35 NAS 1995

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ:

Are you living **with doubt** or **with certainty**?

Let us avoid these categories:

- *I **doubt** the Bible is true!*
- *I **doubt** Jesus is the Son of God!*
- *I **doubt** Jesus died and is now alive!*
- *I **doubt** that all will exist in eternity!*
- *I **doubt** that Jesus is the only way to heaven!*

Our doubts are reflected in our actions!

In this sermon, let's be open to ★ God's word and ★ the work of the Holy Spirit, so that we walk away with incredible certainty and renewed desire to live to God's glory!

We are in a **9-part sermon series** on some parts of the book of **Acts**, this is part 3 of 9. So far, we have looked at **Chapter 3** ♦ *the miracle and proclaiming of Jesus to Jewish people* and ♦ the beginning of **chapter 4**, *the arrest and proclaiming of Jesus to Jewish leaders.*

As **chapter 4** continues, the Jewish leaders ▶commanded and ▶threatened Peter and John to stop teaching about Jesus. Then they gave this **courageous** and **faith-filled** reply: “...we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20).

Then the believers gathered and prayed an amazing prayer, including a request for **greater boldness** to tell others about Jesus. After they prayed, the Bible records that “...the place where they had gathered together was shaken (Acts 4:31).

We are now near the end of **chapter 4** as we come to the topic of **amazing unity and love among the believers!**

1. **Amazing Unity:** ³² **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.**
 - a. **One in Heart and Soul**: The heart contains what we believe: “...if you... believe in your heart that God raised [Jesus] from the dead, you will be saved...” (Rom. 10:9). The early NT believers agreed with the teaching of the apostles, who taught Jesus and the OT Scriptures:
 - i. They were **all** members of the one true Church!
 - ii. They were **all** members of the body of Christ!
 - iii. They were **all** united in heart, mind, and attitude!
 - iv. They were **all** heaven-bound through Jesus!
 - b. **Right View of Possessions**: Most would say about their possessions: **I worked, I bought, and I own**. But God is calling us to ▶see ourselves as managers rather than owners AND ▶be open to managing what we have been entrusted according to His will.

c. Who Should and Should Not Receive Help?

- i. The Vulnerable – YES: The Bible puts widows and orphans into that category. Long ago, it was very difficult for a **widow** to support herself. **Orphans** are children without parents – *because the parents died or abandoned their children*.
- ii. The Able – NO: The Bible says, “...if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either. ...such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread” (2 Thess. 3:10, 12).

d. The Federal Government Is Destroying America:

“Instead of addressing record inflation, encouraging work, and preventing a recession, [the federal government keeps expanding] welfare without work incentives...”¹ For example: **2022 – 1.2 trillion** to fund 80 welfare programs; **2023 – 2.6 trillion** proposed for welfare spending. Over half of Americans are living off the govt, which is WAY TOO MANY!

2. Marveling at the Resurrection:³³ **And with great power the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon them all.**

- a. The Resurrection: ✓ **Jesus** promised it; ✓ **the Father** did it; and ✓ **the apostles** gave eyewitness testimony that Jesus – *though dead* – is alive!
- b. Abundant Grace: Grace is *God’s undeserved favor or God’s Riches At Christ’s Expense*. As the apostles testified and the people heard, *they were blessed!*

¹ <https://budget.house.gov/press-release/7582>

3. **Applying the Resurrection:**³⁴ For there was not a needy person among them, for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales³⁵ and lay them at the apostles' feet, and they would be distributed to each as any had need.

a. Resurrection **ATTITUDE**: *Since Jesus Is Risen...*

- i. Physical death is not the end!
- ii. I will be raised when Jesus returns!
- iii. God will provide whatever I need!
- iv. God will enable me to help others!
- v. I want to glorify God now and forever!

b. Resurrection **ACTIONS**: *Those Believers In Jesus...*

- i. Gladly gathered to hear and learn God's word!
- ii. Showed sacrificial love to each other!
- iii. Worked as they were able!
- iv. Gave generously to help those in need!
- v. Received when they were unable to work!

Let Us Pray: Dear Holy Spirit, as You worked wonderfully and powerfully in the hearts and lives of those early NT believers, so grant us: ♥ True unity – based on the Bible;
♥ management of our resources – to God's glory; and
♥ genuine love – that takes sacrificial action for others!

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