

Context

1] set in the time of the early church just after the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost

2] the church was threatened and prayed by the Sanhedrin (the Jewish council) 'grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness' (4:29)

Intro

32 Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul,

Full number – every single one

I.e. 'about 5000 men' ++ (4:4)

Who believed –

Cf Heard the Word, believed (Acts 4:4)

For God so loved the world that he gave his only son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life; (Jn 3:16)

Note – Christians are ones who believe in ... the resurrection of Jesus

One heart and soul

cf Combination used 11 times in Deuteronomy (e.g. Deut 4:29)

Nb Means one in mind /thinking and sharing lives together.

and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common.

No one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own

i.e. no one said i.e. treated them..... It was a decision of the individual not the imposition of a collective order

Everything in common –

i.e. all together with all things in common (2:44,45)

cf the principle of the cheerful giver (2 Cor 9:7),

the practice – first day of the week...as he may prosper you (1 Cor 16:14)1

Be generous - it is a Christian 'hall mark'

33 And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus,

With great power

Cf But you will receive power when the Holy spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses ... (Acts 1:8)

God empowers His servants to declare 'Jesus'

The apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection
Nb Apostles were 'witnesses to the resurrection' (1:22)

The proof of the Gospel is the resurrection.

The message = 'Christ crucified' (1 Cor 1:23)

****Jesus' resurrection is the key****

****Note - The Gospel is the Apostles' testimony to the resurrection****

of the Lord Jesus,

nb 'Lord' signifies Jesus; divinity

cf against the Lord and His anointed one (4:28)

and great grace was upon them all.

cf theme in Acts - Stephen, full of grace and power (6:8) those who through grace had believed (18:27) testified to the grace of the Gospel (20:24)

Nb you are saved by Grace, not of ourselves, not of works so no one can boast (Eph 2:8,9)

****God's grace is upon ---all who believe****

34 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; 35 and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

Not a needy person among them

****Note - Physical need amongst the church is an affront to the Gospel****

as many as were owners ...sold

nb focus on generosity not on law

laid it at the Apostles feet

I.e. a gift to God first then to those in need cf (5:2)

****Give first to God, then let Him distributed it to the needy****

36 Thus Joseph, who was also called by the apostles Barnabas (which means son of encouragement), a Levite, a native of Cyprus, 37 sold a field that belonged to him and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

Joseph

Nb means 'may He add'

Barnabas, son of encouragement

Nb All contribute to the social well being of others negatively or positive

****Be a 'Barnabas' - encouragement - amplifies the good****

Levite

I.e. a member of one of the 12 tribes of Israel

Cf A great many priests became obedient to the faith (6:7)

A native of Cyprus

Nb Barnabas and Paul's 1st place visited on their first missionary journey (13:4)

Sold a field that belonged to him and brought the money and laid it at the apostles feet

Nb As a Levite, not permitted to possess land? (Josh 3:4)

Conclusion

1] The power for Christian witness is given by God, the Holy Spirit

2] The sign of the Truth of Jesus is His resurrection. The message is 'Christ crucified'

3] The evidence for the Gospel of Jesus is 'great grace'

Surprise? *Is this a situation – 'having everything in common' that is for that time or is this an example to be followed for all time?*

It was for that time - 'Having everything in common' is not repeated elsewhere in the NT

Summary

All believers were united, practically and spiritually (32)

The apostles proclaimed truth of the Gospel by Jesus' resurrection, and all live graciously (33)

There were no needy folk for everything was given to God and shared (34,35)

This was typified by Joseph, called Barnabas, the encourager with the sale and gift of a field (36,37)

Main Point *The truth of the Gospel is evidenced in God's grace among His believers*

Key Verse *And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus and great grace was upon them all (33)*