

"One Heart, One People"  
Pastor Wally Contreras  
July 12, 2020

"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. And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. 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. Thus Joseph, who was also called by the apostles Barnabas (which means son of encouragement), a Levite, a native of Cyprus, sold a field that belonged to him and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet. But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, and with his wife's knowledge he kept back for himself some of the proceeds and brought only a part of it and laid it at the apostles' feet." (Acts 4:32-5:2)

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Pastor Wally in discussing that the members of the church were of one heart said that whatever is in one's heart comes out of the mouth (see Matthew 12:34). How often and how much do I have to censor what would come out of my mouth to override what is truly "the abundance of [my] heart"? Explain.

God promises me a new heart ("And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh, that they may walk in my statutes and keep my rules and obey them. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God." Ezekiel 11:19-20; see also Ezekiel 36:26). Based on my ability to "walk in [His] statutes and keep [His] rules and obey them", would my co-workers, family members and friends all say that I have truly undergone His heart transplant procedure? If so, how so? If not, why not?

What connection, if any, is there between the statement that the first church members "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" (Acts 4:32) and Jesus' statement that He did "...not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me" (John 17:20-21) and why?

Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary said of Jesus' prayer for unity that "Our Lord especially prayed, that all believers might be as one body under one head, animated by one soul, by their union with Christ and the Father in him, through the Holy Spirit dwelling in them. The more they dispute about lesser things, the more they throw doubts upon Christianity." Have we as a church been guilty of disputing "lesser things" thereby throwing "doubts upon Christianity"? If so, how so and what lesser things? If not, why not?

John Piper said that "first, the heart is tightened in its relationship to people, and second, the heart is loosened in its relationship to things. Faith in Christ creates a bond of love to people, and cuts the bond of love to things." Acts 4:32a tells me that no church member "...that any of the things that belonged to him was his own." How's my heart condition when it comes to the "things" that I own and why?

In Acts 4:33 I see that "with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all." (emphasis added). John Piper went on to say: "And so it is that the Holy Spirit is discredited in the church today. Some people come to worship and operate totally on the human level, never even reckoning with the living presence of God in this room. Some come and give theoretical assent to his presence but don't really come to terms with the awesome fact that he hears every thought in their mind and sees every imagination of their heart. And others come and convince themselves that the thoughts of the heart are not serious enough to forsake because grace always means tolerance. In each of these three cases the Spirit is discredited and demeaned. Hebrews warns that it is possible to outrage the Spirit of grace ("How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace?" Hebrews 10:29)." If I'm not experiencing "great power" if and when giving "testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus," could it be because I fall in to one of Piper's three categories of people? If so, how so? If not, why not?

How much of my testimony is focused on me (what Jesus did for me and how my life has been changed) and how much is focused on "the resurrection of the Lord Jesus" or do I see them as being one-and-the-same? Explain.

Pastor Wally said that this first church received "great grace – mega-grace" and the church was "firing on all cylinders". How about our church? Are we firing on all cylinders? If so, how so? If not, why not?

In Acts 4:34-35 we learn that “[t]here 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.” So, does Scripture give us any insight as to how this first church was able to discover those who fit into the “as any had need” category within their church membership? Explain.

What is necessary in order to be able to expose needs in the church and what are some strategies that we may want to consider that can address those who fit into the “as any had need” category in our church?

Deuteronomy 15:7 says that “[i]f among you, one of your brothers should become poor, in any of your towns within your land that the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart or shut your hand against your poor brother” and Proverbs 3:27 tells me to “...not withhold good from those who deserve it when it's in your power to help them.” How difficult is it for me to live a life that reflects this kind of heart for others and why?

A.W. Tozer in his book “The Pursuit of God” regarding a church being of “one accord” asked, “Has it ever occurred to you that one hundred pianos all tuned to the same fork are automatically tuned to each other? They are of one accord by being tuned, not to each other, but to another standard to which each one must individually bow. So one hundred worshipers [meeting] together, each one looking away to Christ, are in heart nearer to each other than they could possibly be, were they to become 'unity' conscious and turn their eyes away from God to strive for closer fellowship.” Although Tozer’s comments were written with worship in mind, they reveal the secret of Christian unity. The more we center our thoughts on Christ, the more we will be drawn to one another as His followers and the more our differences will fade into insignificance. So, am I “in tune” with Christ? If so, how so? If not, why not?

Do I sense unity with all other believers or are there some that I have decided are just too difficult to love? If so, how so? If not, why not?