

# “UNITY OF HEART AND SOUL”

Acts 4:32-37

Pastor Keith E. Gephart

## INTRODUCTION

Sing: “**Blest Be the Tie that Binds**” Really?

- How often are you at church services and fellowships?
- How much do you love being with believers? Who are your best friends?
- What is your relationship with believers? Any quarrels?
- Are you actively involved in service—ministry?
- Would you rather be with your Christian friends or watch your favorite TV show?
- Is there a conflict between God’s family and your family, or do you put them on the same level of importance?
- Do you share what you have with needy believers? Or are you extravagant in buying and selling—esp. at Christmas time?

The tie that bound early Christians was very strong—**so should be the tie that binds us. WE SHOULD HAVE A UNITY OF WITNESS, OF SPIRIT AND HEART, AND OF POSSESSIONS.**

### I. UNITY OF \_\_\_\_\_(33)

A. The \_\_\_\_\_ of Their Witness (cf. v. 31)

1. Evidence of Consistent Teaching (despite persecution)
2. Evidence of signs and wonders (cf. v. 30)
3. Evidence of Christian Unity—lending credibility to their preaching

B. The Object of Their Witness: \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord Jesus (This was the very teaching that they had been forbidden to promote!)

C. The Nature of their Witness—A “paying back”—as of a debt (cf. Rom. 1:14: “I am a debtor.” The Lord had a claim on them; their **duty** was to bear witness.

D. The Enablement for their Witness: “Great \_\_\_\_\_ . *Have you experienced His GREAT GRACE?*

### II. UNITY OF SPIRIT AND \_\_\_\_\_ (32a. They were of **one heart and soul**)

This unity covers the combination of emotion and mental —*affection and thought*. **There was no grumbling, fighting, or griping.** They were a \_\_\_\_\_, yet they were ONE! Why? Because they were **believing**.

### III. UNITY OF \_\_\_\_\_ (32b, 34-35)

A. Shared Ownership (32b) **Not even one** among so \_\_\_\_\_ dared to claim that what he had belonged exclusively to himself! It was not uniquely his. Rather, *“all things were common property to them.”* Such is made possible by the NEW BIRTH.

**Let us be honest. Is this the attitude that we have toward our personal possessions? Is this how we respond to the needs of our fellow Christians who are in needs—BOTH AT HOME AND ABROAD?**

*How are we using our money and possessions in a way similar to the early church?*

#### B. Sale of Property (34)

1. Not a \_\_\_\_\_ believer among them—they could not take care of the entire world! Of course this does not mean that no one had needs, but that *no needs went unmet!*
2. “As many as were owners of lands or houses”
3. “Would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales”—as the needs arose; this was an action taken from “time to time” as the verb shows.

#### C. Distribution of the Goods (35)

- “At the \_\_\_\_\_’ Feet”—The Apostles were *in charge of this ministry*. The expression conveys *the authority* of the apostles, *the respect* which the members had for them, their responsibility *as teachers*—their sitting and gifts at their feet, and likely also the \_\_\_\_\_ of the members bringing the gifts.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **person** who had need would be taken care of.
- We also see the unity of the church, and the apostolic authority in the body.
- This ministry was necessitated by both opposition from \_\_\_\_\_ and by sin from \_\_\_\_\_

### IV. EXAMPLE OF UNITY—\_\_\_\_\_ (36-37)

His given name was “Joseph.” He was a Levite. He was from Cyprus.

His name given him by believers was “Barnabas”—“Son of Encouragement.”

- We need similar leaders in our congregation today—leaders who will lead not merely by word, but also by example.
- We need to be united *not only by word of preaching, but also by generosity of \_\_\_\_\_.*

### CONCLUSION

How united are you to God’s people?

*We must stick together, or we may HANG SEPARATELY.*

A nation divided against itself cannot stand—neither can a church!