

Weekly Sermon Discussion Guide

June 23, 2019

The Importance of "Why"

ACTS: The Journey Continues

Acts 4:32-37

EXPLORING THE SERMON

- What did you hear?
- What did you think or feel about what you heard?
- What is one thing you can take away from the sermon this week?

KEY VERSES

³² Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. ³³ With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. ³⁴ There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. ³⁵ They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need. ³⁶ There was a Levite, a native of Cyprus, Joseph, to whom the apostles gave the name Barnabas (which means "son of encouragement"). ³⁷ He sold a field that belonged to him, then brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet. **Acts 4:32-37**

DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION

The questions of "why" are among the hardest for us to answer. However, when we do ask "why" it not only causes us to dig deep, but also to wrestle with the nature of God. Asking "why" has the potential to strengthen our faith more than anything.

When have you wrestled with the "whys" in your life? What effect did the process have on your faith?

This passage helps us think about the connection between faith and our money, and it is especially helpfully to consider it outside of stewardship season. The degree to which these early Christians were so faithful and trusting with their money and possessions seems almost unreal. Luke's comment that "*there was not a needy person among them*" is hard for us to fathom.

How can the way we handle our money and resources be an indicator and catalyst for our spiritual health?

What have been the biggest challenges for you in trying to be a faithful steward of your money and resources? What has helped you?

A misconception in the church's history is that we give for two main reasons: the needs of the institution, and to help the poor. These reasons are why most people give, but this system ultimately creates a power dynamic between the giver and receiver.

How does this particular system keep us separated from those to whom we give?

Why is this way of giving more sympathetic than empathetic in nature?

With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all (v. 33). Grace can be defined as "unmerited divine favor."

How was this great grace the "why" and motivation behind the disciples and early Christians' way of life?

When we begin to understand the great grace bestowed upon each of us, even as we daily fall short of God's glory, it leads to more empathetic acts and giving, not merely charity giving.

Like the early Christians, how can this great grace become our "why," and move us to give not as a rule, but because it brings us joy?