

Acts 4.32-5.11

1. Luke returns to a familiar theme in acts: radical generosity as an expression of the unity of the church. The church was so united that people even sold their own personal things to take care of those in need.

- a. Why do you think that Luke brings this up again?
- b. What kinds of thoughts and feelings do passages like this stir in you? Why do you think that is?
- c. Have you ever experienced this kind of generosity in the church? If so, how did it affect you? If you haven't, how do you think it would have affected you?
- d. What is the largest obstacle in your own life to practicing this kind of generosity?

2. Pastor Mike highlighted the fact that being generous isn't about giving a certain percentage, but it is about being willing to invest in the kingdom by giving to meet the need(s) that God is presenting to you.

- a. With this kind of definition of generosity, what does it look like, practically-speaking, to be generous?
- b. What do we learn about faithful generosity from Barnabas' example?
 - *He used whatever he had to meet the tangible needs he saw around him in the church.*
 - *He entrusted his gift to the leadership (i.e. laying at the apostle's feet).*
 - *He gave without condition.*
- c. Where is your heart currently when it comes to giving and what does faithful generosity look like for you in this season of your life?
- d. What needs in the church has God put on your heart to support? Or put another way, how are you being called to invest in the kingdom right now? (Remember we can invest and meet needs with anything that God gives us—like abilities, gifts, time—not just money.)

3. Luke intentionally contrasts Barnabas' positive example with Ananias and Sapphira's negative example.

- a. How was Ananias and Sapphira's giving different than Barnabas'?

b. What specifically did Ananias and Sapphira do wrong according to the text? How were they trying to “lie to the Holy Spirit?”

Based on Peter’s response and their example being juxtaposed with Barnabas’, it seems that the couple were trying to look like they had given all of the proceeds to the church, when they really hadn’t. The issue wasn’t what they did with their money, but that they were trying to look like they were generous in a way that they actually weren’t.

c. How are we tempted to try and deceive others around us (e.g. church leaders, other congregants or friends) by attempting to look like we are more spiritually mature than we actually are?

d. How are we tempted to try and deceive ourselves, instead of recognizing where we are really at?

4. Integrity is where our behavior matches our true inward character. We aren’t pretending to be something we are not. But at the same time we are living in a way that is consistent with our convictions and what God has done in us.

a. How do we avoid using the idea of “being real” or “authentic” as an excuse for sin, laziness, and immaturity?

b. When it comes to living out our Christian unity and investing in the kingdom, what are some convictions that God has given you that you need to live out more faithfully?