

## Acts 4:32-37: Dose Christ Have Access To Your Wallet?

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### I. Introduction

How much money did you give to your church last year? Ten percent? More? Was it hard for you to give? If it was, why do you think it's hard for you to let go of your money? Does it annoy you when people ask you for money? If your friend needed you to sell some of your assets to help him, would you? Or would you think, "If I sell that house, my net worth will go down \$500,000." Could you ever imagine willingly, gladly selling that \$500,000 house to help someone in need? Would you like to have that kind of attitude toward your money?

### II. Acts 4:32-37: Is the Depth of Your Christianity Evident in the Amount of Money You Give?

**4:32**, having been released by the Sanhedrin (Supreme Court of Israel), Peter and John return to the rest of the apostles and report what happened. Upon hearing the report, they all praise God for His incredible deliverance in using two uneducated fishermen to defeat the powers that ruled Israel. But it wasn't a surprise to them, after all God controls the universe, including the universe around them. So they ask God for more boldness and miraculous power to proclaim the name of Jesus. God answers their prayer: He shakes the place where they're gathered, fills them with His Holy Spirit, and they go out and proclaim the word of God with boldness.

Then something remarkable happens, something which happened previously in Acts 2 when 3,000 were added to the Church: the thousands that were converted began treating each other like family and not just any family, but a family who deeply cared for each other. They shared everything, no possession was too great to be shared with the rest.

**4:33**, then it says that with great power the apostles were able to proclaim the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. What does it mean that they did it "with great power"? It certainly refers to the power they asked for in 4:30, i.e., the power to perform miracles which would validate their message about Christ. Does it refer to anything else? It may refer to another miracle, the same miracle that happened in Acts 2:44-47. All of a sudden strangers became close brothers. Those who needed something received what they needed from those who had it. Daily they spent time together over each other's homes. And what was the effect on the Church? It grew. The apostles' great power behind their message about Christ was not just their power to heal people. It was Jesus' power to transform a people who were divided by race, class, religion, culture, and economic status. They were now one close family, whatever barriers existed before, they were gone. The wealthy no longer saw the poor as outcasts, but family whom they wanted to care for.

At the end of 4:33 it says "and great grace was upon them all." What does this mean, what does it mean when God shows you grace? It means that He gives you something you do not deserve; He shows you favor in spite of you. That's what the Cross is about. The Cross is God taking the form of man in order to die the death you should have died so that you wouldn't have to die. What is the specific economic grace that is being shown to all these people who have come to Christ for salvation and who are now part of His family?

**4:34-37**, God blessed the poor and needy among them with tremendous economic grace. Whoever was poor, was poor no more. Why? Because the wealthy, the rich among them sold whatever needed to be sold, whether it was a piece of land or a house, in order to end the poverty of their new brothers and sisters in Christ. They even give a specific example of a man named Joseph who sells his land in order to help those in need. He was such a blessing to others that the apostles changed his name to Barnabas which means Son of Encouragement.

*What is so miraculous about wealthy folks selling their assets to help the poor?* We're all familiar with philanthropy but imagine being poor, in need of food, shelter, and clothing. Would you ever expect a millionaire in Beverly Hills to invite you into his home and treat you as part of his family? You'd be able to dine with them, enjoy their company and their credit cards. They treated you as one of their own. Imagine further that wealthy individual selling his second home to provide you a home. That's what took place here. It wasn't just philanthropy. No, they treated the poor like family and were concerned for them like family.

What makes it even more miraculous is the fact that in the Roman Empire there were several classes, but basically it boiled down to two: the poor and the rich. And the two classes never mixed, they even wore different clothes so you could tell them apart. But what happens to the wealthy once Jesus gets a hold of them? That's the thing about Jesus, He erases all barriers between people whether racial, religious, social, cultural, or economic (Colossians 3:11).

*Does how much money you give reveal how deep your Christianity goes?* Why did these rich folks let go of their money so easily? To answer this you have to ask, what makes rich folks hold on to their money, in fact, what makes everyone hold on to their money? You don't have to be rich to be stingy. What does money represent to people? Life, to the poor it represent a life of security. To the rich it not only represents security but a life of privilege and status. And the reason why both the rich and poor won't let go of their money is because they're afraid to lose their life, their life of security or of security and status. What's the problem? Their money has become their god, the god who will save them. This was the Rich Young Ruler's problem (Matthew 19:16-22).

Your giving is not a reflection of whether or not you will go to heaven. Salvation has but one condition: faith. Do you believe that Jesus is your Savior, your Life? That's the condition (John 3:16). Thus, giving money to the Church won't save you. But your Christianity should influence your giving. That is, once Jesus gives you life, if you will allow Him, He will change your view of money. You will give it not out of guilt or obligation but out of the grace that Jesus has shown you; He became poor that you might become rich. Thus you won't be mad or sad to give, you'll be glad to give (2 Corinthians 8:8-9; 9:7). The question is will He be your security, your privilege, your status? Or will you continue to cling to your money, whether you're rich or poor? The wealthy in Acts 4 let go of their wealth as their security, their status. Jesus became their status; He became their security; they knew that if they needed more money, their Savior could provide it.

**A man needs new office space for his business, will Jesus be his security or will he panic?**

He was given 30 days to find new office space. He was in a panic and wondered if he would ever find a new location to accommodate both businesses in 30 days! Then a friend reminded him how many times Jesus had saved him before. So he trusted and within 20 days he found a better location that was newer, with more amenities, and which reduced his workload every month.

III. Conclusion

*Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common.*