



Acts 4:32-37 “The Filling of The Heart (Pt. 1)”

Intro:

For the following two weeks we will compare and contrast two types of hearts. One filled by the Holy Spirit (Acts 4:31) and another filled by Satan (Acts 5:3). Both people were in the same congregation, both claimed to follow the same God and both seemingly did the same good works, but not both were filled with the same Spirit and eventually God exposed who truly ruled and filled each person's heart. This week we will observe the characteristics of a heart that is filled with the Holy Spirit.

V.32

*“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.”*

1. Unity

The words "heart" (*kardia*) and "soul" (*psyche*) together describe the inner person—the mind, desires, affections, and will. Luke is describing a people who were united from the inside out. This was far more than physical togetherness or shared attendance at gatherings. It was a supernatural unity produced by the indwelling Holy Spirit. **Such unity is not produced by social gatherings or events, but by believers submitting themselves to God's Word, God's Spirit, and God's ordained order within the local church.** (Passages to consider: Philippians 2:2, 1 Peter 3:8, 1 Corinthians 1:10, Philippians 1:27)

2. Love

Love is not a feeling it's an action, specifically the action of sacrifice and here we see it clearly displayed. The phrase “they had everything in common” does not mean they lived in a commune or didn't believe in private property. It simply means that they lived with open arms. They held whatever they had lightly in their hands ready to release it easily if a fellow believer had a genuine need. They consistently placed the needs of others before their own desires. This is another evidence of a heart filled with the Spirit. It goes beyond philanthropy or occasional generosity—it becomes a way of life rooted in an eternal perspective and a deep love for Christ and His people. (Passage to consider: John 13:34-35).

V.33

*“And with great power the apostles were giving their **testimony** to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all.”*

3. Powerful Witness

The power of the testimony lied in the first two characteristics. Their unity and love gave credibility to the message they proclaimed because they not only preached the gospel—they lived it. Yet they did not stop at living it; they boldly proclaimed it. Both are necessary. Jesus reminds us in Luke 6:45 that "out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks." A heart filled with the Holy Spirit cannot remain silent about Christ. As our hearts are filled with Him, our mouths naturally overflow with His gospel. Spirit-filled believers understand that their purpose in this world is to glorify Christ by proclaiming Him. (Passages to consider: John 17:20-23).

V.34-37

“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.”

4. Generosity

The phrase “not a needy person among” them shows that they took responsibility for taking care of the needs of those in their congregation. Again this isn’t just philanthropy or a benevolence program, **this is a lifestyle that evidenced they were following Jesus**. Now it’s also important to define what was considered as “need”. This is something Paul carefully defines in multiple of his letters to the church, he defines what is genuine need and what is unwillingness to work or discontentment and greed. Acts 4 does not teach that the church must satisfy every desire or every request for help. Rather, Spirit-filled believers gladly met **genuine** needs among God's people. The rest of the New Testament guards this generosity with wisdom: those who are physically able to work should work (2 Thess. 3:10–12), families should bear their God-given responsibilities to care for their family members in need first (1 Tim. 5:3–16), believers should work so they have something to share with others (Eph. 4:28), and Paul carefully distinguishes between genuine need, unwillingness to work, and discontentment by teaching that **if we have food and clothing, we are to be content** (1 Tim. 6:6–8). Much of what we call "need" is often not need at all but discontentment or greed.

1. Order

Rather than everyone distributing their gifts however they saw fit, they recognized the authority Christ had given the apostles and willingly entrusted the resources to them for distribution. A Spirit-filled heart does not resist God's order but gladly participates in it. This naturally complements the unity described in verse 32. True unity respects the roles and responsibilities Christ has assigned within His church. Instead of insisting on doing things our own way, Spirit-filled believers gladly honor God's design, respect those He has placed in leadership, and faithfully fulfill the role He has entrusted to them. (Passages to consider Ephesians 4:11-16, Hebrews 13:17, 1 Thessalonians 5:12–13, 1 Corinthians 14:33/40, 1 Corinthians 12:4–31, Titus 1:5, Romans 12:3–8).

Conclusion and Main Idea:

Luke concludes this section by introducing us to a man named Joseph, whom the apostles called **Barnabas**, meaning "Son of Encouragement" (or "Son of Exhortation"). This is no accident. Barnabas is not simply an example of generosity; he is an example of a heart filled with the Holy Spirit. There is a beautiful irony here as well. Barnabas was a Levite. Under the Old Testament land allocations, the tribe of Levi received no territorial inheritance because the Lord Himself was to be their inheritance (Num. 18:20; Deut. 18:1–2). Yet here stands a Levite willingly giving up the land he possessed and laying it at the apostles' feet. Rather than clinging to what he owned, he held it loosely for the sake of Christ and His Church. His security was not found in earthly possessions but in the Lord.

Barnabas' life reminds us of the main truth of this passage: a heart filled with the Holy Spirit produces from the inside out, overflowing in unity, sacrificial love, bold witness, generosity, and joyful submission to God's design. May this "son of exhortation" continue to exhort us today to daily submit ourselves to God's Word and the Holy Spirit's leading, so that these same evidences would increasingly be seen in our own lives for the glory of Christ.

Memory Verse:

“And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness. 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.”

Acts 4:31-32 ESV

