

Influence Ministries

I LOVE MY CHURCH

LESSON 4

TITLE: GIVING YOUR ALL.

Acts 4:32-35 GNT

³² *The group of believers was one in mind and heart. None of them said that any of their belongings were their own, but they all shared with one another everything they had.*

³³ *With great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and God poured rich blessings on them all.*

³⁴ *There was no one in the group who was in need. Those who owned fields or houses would sell them, bring the money received from the sale,*

³⁵ *and turn it over to the apostles; and the money was distributed according to the needs of the people.*

How many of you either had a hope chest someone kept for you or are keeping a hope chest right now for someone else?

Maybe you didn't have an actual hope chest, but you did have something precious that you wanted to save and pass down to future generations.

We hang on to them because we know they might mean something to those coming behind us.

Possibly the value of the item will skyrocket and become an Antiques Roadshow moment for our grandkids.

Maybe it's great-great-grandma's change purse with a story attached about making it to a new life in the land of opportunity.

Regardless of the reason, it's being saved because it holds hope, promise, memories, and value for the future.

And to put it in a box for the time being is a sacrifice.

You can't use it right now because you want it available for someone else to have and hold in the future.

It's the exact concept we see played out by the early church—and one very serious way we get to love our church!

When it comes to possessions, the first church knew how to give for the kingdom's sake.

The passage in Acts says, "Not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own". The first church had a loose grip.

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And in case we're quick to say, "Well, they just didn't have a lot, so it was easy for them to have a looser grip," remember Ananias and Sapphira—struck dead because they lied about how loose their grip was.

The truth is, it's not ours. It never was.

It's God's and we're the bank.

He invests with us and hopes to see a good return on His investment.

And His measurement for that good return is how we love the church with what we have.

You have three things that can only be measured by you.

Your time.

Your talent.

Your treasure.

Release your grip. This is not a simple message of "Give to the church."

This is a message about "I Love My Church".

The things that we consider valuable is what God uses to advance His Kingdom.

Making room in our budgets to help... that's exactly what the first church was doing.

"For there was not a needy person among them, for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales and lay them at the apostles' feet." (Acts 4:34-35)

The first-century church wasn't keeping hoards.

They were not storing up for a rainy day.

They weren't even hanging on to their personal property!

They were showing their love by giving of their, time, talent, and treasure.

I'm simply suggesting that if our lifestyles keep us from being generous with the kingdom, it's time to make some adjustments and changes.

Maybe I need a less expensive car or it's time to drop cable/satellite television, or maybe I just need to live on some kind of budget.

And once we've loosened our grips and tightened our belts, then we have the opportunity to... to bless the kingdom at my full potential and God reciprocates to me.

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Great revival came when the early church did so.

“And with great power the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon them all. For there was not a needy person among them.” (Acts 4:33-34)

And what was the result of that generosity?

“Testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus”

We must be loving our church and then, like the first church, we must be willing to sacrifice.

LOVING OUR CHURCH IS:

INTENTIONALLY LOVE THE CHURCH.

KNOCKING DOWN FENCES.

SERVING IN THE CHURCH.

GIVING YOUR ALL.