

Born with Identity
Part 14: Faithful Givers!
Slide Notations

Acts 4 “The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul; no one considered the things they owned were their own! The power surrounding the witness of Jesus was on them all! No one lacked a thing because people who had extra sold it and made it an offering and the Apostles distributed it to equip all the saints...”

This is what it is... a moment frozen in time... unlike any other in history! A beacon testifying to the power of God to overcome worldliness/for kingdom! People of differing backgrounds, interests, complications, relationships, principles, duties, motives, families, age... Reality of other world/overshadows all! This is not communist Utopia... ***Spirit life, revealed!***

The place where kingdom reality and Holy Spirit power overcomes the tangible experience of this life and the love of all other things!

Witnessing one moment in time, pointing to eternity, and one degree lower, where nothing mattered but mission and everyone being free and equipped to participate!

Seeing... the extinction of selfishness; swallowed up in pure genius and overflowing love without any laboring effort, any conscious effort, to do so!

Happened this one time and never been duplicated since... because no feeble world system or fleshly effort can begin to compare!

Acts 4 Stands in time for what the church can look like, should look like... And leaves a target for us to attempt! Once again, this is not a voluntary leveling down of rich, to lift up the poor! The issue isn't *income, comfort, equality...* **The issue is stated loud and clear: “the witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus,” and great grace (charis) was upon them all” as the result!**

Measuring w/a monetary standard may appear to be a communistic attempt... Where *distinction* of the resourceful, diligent, and rewarded sinks... And the impoverished are lifted (*momentarily*)... But this is not a monetary matter... **This is an all-in love for God's kingdom that cancels out all other loves/cares!**

But the modern American church doesn't look like the early church... We still have the same mission... to witness to the resurrected Lord... We still have the endowed and the needy... When we can get the eyes of the people off the distractions... We can equip the church and do/work! On again, off again, proposition...

Need to get “steady” if can't go back!

Getting Steady... “The tithe is the Lord's, it is holy unto Him!” **Lev27.28-32** Tithe/“tenth” of “incoming” *is the Lord's!* The Lord considers it “devoted” to Him and “accursed” for human consumption... We can take it from Him and use it for stuff; but “waste mgmt.” coming...**Is54.16** From the beginning we have tried to do it our own way, **Mal 3.7-9**, bro't a curse! Catastrophe w/o insurance! Bring it into the storehouse/blessing! **v10**

Getting Steady...

“The tithe is the Lord's, it is holy unto Him!” **Lev27.28-32** The tithe is designated already for the priests and the upkeep of the “temple” and can't be re-designated by us... The tithe is the “law” that exists when NT believers don't *freely* give more... And if done faithfully, “steady,” more than enough to meet local congregation needs! Good managers can use it to cover benevolence/building funds...

Our Future... *More* of the same kinds of ministry we did this year! Salvations! (198 + 895 + 1700)... Massive VBS, Fall Fest, Christmas Outreach, Apartment ministries... Greater Midweek Children's ministry... More additions to campus to house increased ministry...(2000,03,07,09) 2011

We can do it by bringing individual projects into view, and taking offerings, every one doing what the Lord enables them to do – or – we can do it the best way, steady, tithing!

Our Future... Provisions of 'clothing' and equipment for our Body... well within *our* reach... Open before us, like land promised to Israel, "just across a river..." Given to know there are obstacles, in the same land that there is bounty/blessing! No one is in denial/God wants it known what He will help them overcome! Confirmation comes... and the moment of decision arrives...

Our Future... "Surely, the land is full of promise... and here is the proof..." **Nu13.27** But the obstacles are there... are they are many and strong... **v28,29** Caleb speaks, "Let us go up at once and possess it for we are well able!" **v30** "We can't, it's too much... we're just too little in our own sight!" **31-33** And the people wept **14.1** God was angered v11,12 people turned back **v21ff** Only those "follow fully" went in! **v24**

Caleb's speech: the promise is good and the time is now and the Lord will bring us in and give it to us... just don't rebel or be afraid, *the obstacles are food for us* and the Lord is with us!