

Acts 1:8 *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.*

After the Holy Spirit came, the church began and grew exponentially. We see the culmination of all that Jesus came to restore and we see a group of people who experienced Kingdom living.

Acts 4:32-35 *And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul; and not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own, but all things were common property to them. 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, 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, and they would be distributed to each as any had need.*

To find how these things came to be, we need to start with **verse 32** and the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul. To experience oneness begins with the cross of Jesus Christ. They served one Lord, had one Spirit in them, and shared...

- ONE Heart
- ONE Soul
- THE Way
- THE Truth
- THE Life
- ONE Kingdom
- ONE God
- ONE Savior
- ONE Heaven
- ONE Spirit

Their oneness gave way to a supernatural caring for one another. God wants us to experience this oneness today. The motivating factor of the Kingdom was love for one another and it allowed the church to experience Kingdom living.

If you remove the love motivation, then all that's left is coercion. Coercion feels like you are losing something; it's an attempt to try to produce in the physical that which can only be produced in the spiritual. **Verse 34** *For there was not a needy person among them, for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them...* This allows for doing under our own power. The coercion version says "Your sins nailed Jesus to the cross" and that puts the burden on self. The Biblical version says in **I John 3:16** *This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us.* And that puts the burden on Jesus and His love for us.

Begin with **verse 32** for the spiritual understanding of oneness. This leads with the motivation of love. Kingdom living comes from a consuming love for one another not a coercion.

John 15:12 *This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.* How has Jesus loved you and me? Jesus died on the cross for you and for me. "...love as I have loved you..."

In Verse 32 Underline “*belonging*.” They had a right to that which they possessed and were completely in control of those things. But they made belongings available for the benefit of others – a willing surrender. What things do I have rights to today? What things even beyond the physical? personal opinions? preferences? perspective? The path to Kingdom living is to willingly surrender the things that belong to us that will benefit the body of believers.

Are we too concerned with what we are losing rather than what we can gain? Can we be grateful about things God stripped out of our lives? When the motivator is love, then the sacrifice seems so minimal in order to gain what is promised.

Recently, one picture showed a man dressed in full protective gear in order to see his brother in the hospital. Then the next view of this same man compared mask-wearing as a communist order. The first mask involved the love of a brother, willingly setting aside his preference. The second view showed no love or regard for others but only personal rights.

Acts 4:32 needs to come and be understood before **verse 34**. The Kingdom was never about what they sold or surrendered – it was about a willingness to give up for the benefit of another. You can't take from me if I'm willing to give.

Acts 5:1-6 Heed the warning of Ananias and Sapphira - a conversation about the motivation behind their actions. There are few things more damaging to the gospel than people who carry the gospel in their mouth but not in their heart. **2 Timothy 3:5** *holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these.*

Luke 9:23-25 *And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it. For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself?* Following Jesus always leads to the cross. It leads to a laying down of my own desires and gaining a far greater prize than anything this world has to offer.

Begin...**Acts 4:32** *And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul.* Love is always at the center of the Kingdom - a willingness to come to a place of oneness.

I Corinthians 13 What Love Produces...the beautiful motivation of love and oneness. A love for one another never fails - let love be our motivation.

Jesus can put us in the Kingdom of God that never fails. Pray this: *Dear Lord Jesus, I believe You are the Son of God. I believe that on that cross You took my guilt, my sin, and my shame and You died for it. You faced hell for me, so I wouldn't have to. And You rose again to give me a place in Heaven, a purpose on Earth, and a relationship with Your Father. Today, Lord Jesus, I turn from my sins to be born again. And now, God is my father, Jesus is my Savior, The Holy Spirit is my helper. And Heaven is my home. Amen.*

Describe the oneness of the first church in Acts 4.

Explain how verse 32 must come first and then lead to verse 34.

Where, today, do we see preferences to keep our rights and ownership rather than share with others?

Above the turmoil in life today of opposing opinions, how can we rise above the disunity?