

RADICALLY GENEROUS

ESSENTIAL CHURCH: ACTS, PART 1 · ACTS 4:32-5:16
SEPTEMBER 28, 2025 · PASTOR MATT ERICKSON

All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had.” (Acts 4:32)

The Radical Generosity of the Early Jesus Movement (Acts 4:32-37)

- Generosity as the overflow of God’s radical generosity to us in Jesus
- A movement devoted to one another that gets real with radical generosity
- Examples of radical generosity within the early church: Barnabas

A Story to Save Us from Aiming for the Wrong Thing (Acts 5:1-11)

- The presence and power of God in the new covenant people
- Ananias and Sapphira’s deceit at the divine and human levels
- Living radically generous for the right reasons (and not for the wrong)

The Radical Generosity of God in God’s Family (Acts 5:12-16)

- The wonders of the apostles
- The wonders of the community
- The compelling nature of the early family of God

The Radical Generosity of God’s Family Today

- Receiving God’s radical generosity in Jesus Christ
- Sharing God’s radical generosity in Jesus Christ

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. When have you experienced surprising generosity? It could be something you have received or it could be something you have been a channel of toward others.
2. This week we continue our sermon series, “Essential Church,” by looking at the radical generosity of the early church and a startling contrasting episode in Acts 4:32-5:16. Whether on your own or with others, begin your study in prayer, asking God to speak to you, and then read that passage aloud.
3. When you read Acts 4:32-35, what stands out to you most about the way this early group of Jesus followers is living?

4. While this passage echoes Acts 2:42-47, it also fulfills Moses’ description of new covenant community life in Deuteronomy 15:4, which says: “However, there need be no poor people among you, for in the land the Lord your God is giving you to possess as your inheritance, he will richly bless you.” What does this tell us about what is happening in this early community following Jesus?
5. The story of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5:1-11 is a startling contrast. If it’s true that the early Christians are living in new covenant fulfillment, what would you say is happening here? What seems to be the problem with Ananias and Sapphira in relation to God, the community, and themselves?
6. Is there anything that grips us today that might be just as weighty as what is happening in the story of Ananias and Sapphira?
7. With verses 12-16, this passage returns to powerful stories of how God is at work in and around in the early community. What captures your imagination here?
8. What is one thing God speaking to you personally through this week’s study? If you are with a small group, discuss that with one another and then pray about what you shared. If you are on your own, write it down, pray about it, and consider sharing your thoughts with someone this week.

DIG DEEPER:

Exploring Faith

- What do you wrestle with about generosity and motivations for generosity (especially in the church!)? Who might you discuss this topic with during this coming week?

Growing in Faith

- Commit Acts 4:32 or 2 Corinthians 8:9 to memory. Reflect on that verse this week.
- Many times we think of financial generosity for God and God’s kingdom as what we squeeze into what’s left over from our bills and financial commitments. What might it look like to create a budget that starts with a tithe (10%) to support the work of God in the church or ministries of your choice?

Centered in Faith

- What is a specific way you will “ramp up” your generosity this month? What time or resources will you commit to sacrificially seeing the type of generous community life God desires for His people?
- Consider exploring a further resource, such as *The Treasure Principle* by Randy Alcorn.