

THE ENEMY OF UNITY



ACTS 4:32-5:11

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When I was a kid growing up, I can remember my dad telling the story of Lottie Moon over and over, on the occasions when a mission team was leaving the church. You probably know the story of Lottie Moon. She was a missionary to China. She had a desire to go and tell about Jesus. She would say that she could not go unless there were others to hold the rope. What she was referencing were people who would go down into wells. To do so, one would tie a rope around his waist so that people on the topside could pull him out if something happened. She used that imagery to say she would be going into the well of China but I need you who are back home to hold the rope. You can pull me out. You can encourage me. You will be a part of my trip by praying for me. I will only go if you will hold the rope.

We have adopted that practice at Hardin by wearing a rope bracelet. Every mission team that goes out, we commit to those who go that we will hold the rope. Last week we held the rope for a team going to Nicaragua. This week we will hold the rope for those going to Arizona. Next week a second team will be going to Nicaragua. We held the rope for Tyler who has returned from Malawi. We have been holding the rope. The reason I love those weeks we hold the rope is I look at the rope bracelet constantly and remember to pray for those who are abroad, those going and proclaiming the gospel. We pray together as we look at our hold-the-rope bracelets.

I have come to realize that it is not just a prayer bracelet. It has become a unity bracelet. I hear people tell stories of seeing others in the community wearing the same bracelet, not realizing they went to Hardin. Since we have three services on Sunday morning, you may not have met someone attending a different service than you. We see other people who are a part of this church, part of the bride of Christ. When we wear the hold-the-rope bracelets in the community, we see other people who are unified in their love for Jesus and cooperating in His mission to get the gospel to all people. Hold-the-rope bracelets become unity bracelets. When you see someone with a bracelet on, you know something. You know that you are together. We are family. We are in this. We have one heart, one soul, and are together collectively praying and seeking God's goodness for the nations.

Great Unity

In Acts chapter 4, we will see a church that had great unity. They were a church that truly sought unity. Their unity led to great generosity. We will see all the great things this church experienced. They were a unified church. We will also see that wherever unity happens, the enemy is always nearby. There is a great enemy of unity. His name is Satan. He does not love unity. In this chapter, we will see the great enemy of unity.

Acts 4:32:

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.

Note this first picture that Luke gives us of this early church. He has explained the early church to us several times. We have seen that they were unified. They were loving one another. We have seen earlier that Peter did a miracle that resulted in his arrest. There was persecution happening. There were forces coming to tear the church apart. We will see in the story that if Satan can't tear the church apart by forces from the outside, he will try to destroy it from the inside. Although the church is unified, in the midst of that unity, Satan will work in the hearts of a couple to try to cause disunity, to try to do things, not for the love of others, but love of self.

First, we will see how the church actually behaved. This was a church that had been filled with the Holy Spirit. We have seen that the Holy Spirit had fallen on the church. They had believed in the Lord Jesus. They had the Holy Spirit living inside them and the Holy Spirit had changed things. They were devoted to teaching. They were devoted to fellowship. They were devoted to the mission. Day by day, the Lord was adding to their numbers, those who were being saved. They were collectively on mission together. The Holy Spirit was moving among them.

Let's see what Luke said about them, "Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul..." There were about five thousand people at this point, and we know that the more people there are the more difficult it is to get everyone on the same page. But notice that Luke doesn't say of all of those who believe, the 20%, the core people, had one heart and one soul, and the other 80% are just showing up, listening, and going home. No, Luke does not say that. He said the full number, every person that believed, the full five thousand, were the core. They were all sharing the same heart and the same soul. What is that speaking of? It is speaking of great unity. They were a unified people. They were a unified family.

What are their hearts for? What are their souls for? I think it is obvious at this point. They shared the same heart because they had the same love.

They were loving the Lord Jesus. They were seeing His resurrection from the dead, which meant He is the Messiah. It meant the Kingdom is here. So, they were loving Jesus. They were following Jesus through the Spirit. They were sharing one heart in loving Jesus more than anything. And, they also had the same soul. They were giving themselves to the same things – their desires, passion, and pursuits. They didn't just love Jesus; they loved the mission. Their love was being used by Jesus to reach more and more people for the sake of the gospel. This early church had great unity. They shared one soul and one heart. They are loving Jesus and pursuing His mission together. That is who these people are. That was the beauty of this early church.

I want to ask this one simple question. Do we at Hardin Baptist Church have this kind of unity? Do we as a people share one heart and one soul? Is that a description of our church? If someone followed us around and watched our behavior with one another, how we care for one another, our relationships with those in our community, would they see we are of one heart and one soul, that we are loving Jesus and pursuing His mission together? Would they say that is who we are? That was the beauty of this early church. There are evidences that we are getting a few things right. Some of you attend our business meetings, which we call family meetings. Last Sunday night we voted on some things. We had a discussion on what direction we thought God was leading our church. We voted on new staff personnel. The vote was unanimous. Everyone voted together. This is a picture of unity. I am in seminary and I have heard some stories of crazy business meetings. You may have been part of some crazy business meetings with fighting and yelling.

In Acts, we get a snapshot of unity, love, one soul, and one heart – that they are all in it together, all going in the same direction together, and they have love for each other. Now we don't get this perfect at Hardin, but I just want to ask the question – are we as a people truly of one heart and one soul? Under that, we should ask a personal question. Do I share the heart and soul of this church? Do I share my heart and soul with the people here? Do I love Jesus? Am I committed to the mission? Do I love the people here?

One thing COVID did is remind us of the truth we told ourselves, but maybe didn't really believe. Church is not a place. For about nine months, we did not have a place. The place was our houses. The church is not a place but a people. The church is us. The church is the family. The church is us together. There was a recommitment to the realization that the church is the family. In Acts, we see this snapshot where they are not concerned about a place but a people. They are concerned about each other. In their otherness, they are sharing one soul and one heart. They are loving the same things and going together in the same things.

Great Generosity

Notice, in verse 32 what happens because of their great unity:

...and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common.

Their great unity led to great generosity. The early church began to see that the things they owned were not actually their own. It was a daunting moment they had. Because of the Kingdom, because Christ is here, the mission is here. Because we have the church, we have this new faith family. We will see as we read through this text that the people would sell their things in order to meet the needs of others in the community of faith. The things they owned were not their own. Yes, they owned them. However, they were not just for themselves. Instead, they were to be used for God's glory and the good of others. When someone had a need, they would meet that need, even at the sacrifice of themselves. Things that belonged to them would be shared. This was not done under compulsion. The apostles were not making them do this. They did not command them to do this. Instead, because of their love for Jesus, because of their unity, the people looked around and saw needs within the body. They sold their things to meet the needs of others, voluntarily selling their things so that the needs of others would be met. This is a beautiful picture of how unity leads to great generosity. We will see great unity and great generosity also leads to great power and great grace.

Great Power

Acts 4:33:

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

We are seeing a church that had great unity that led to great generosity. Then Luke said they had great power. This church was unified and loving each other as family and was taking care of other's needs. There was power accompanying the apostles. Great power was coming with the preaching of the gospel. Miracles were working. Things were happening, stemming from this unity and generosity. The Lord was working in their midst to proclaim the gospel to more and more people.

Great Grace

I have chewed on this little phrase all week long. Not only did the apostles have great power as they proclaimed the resurrection, they also had great grace upon them all. Let's pause for a moment. Look at your Bibles and consider this. Great grace was upon them all. Great grace! This is the only place in Scripture where grace is called great. We are a church that loves grace. We are grace people. We believe God loves us only because of His grace and mercy. Christ on the cross is why God loves me. I am saved by grace through faith. It is a grace thing. Any good from God comes through His grace. We are a grace people. We love the grace of God. Even better than grace is great grace, mega grace! That is what the people in the church experienced. That is what I want for us as a church. I want us to experience, not just grace, not just God's favor and His enabling power, which is what God's grace is to us, but great grace – God's great power, God's great enabling, God's great mercy. I want us to experience that great grace as a people. I desire that great grace to come not to just a few of us, but to all of us. That is what this church in Acts experienced. This great grace stemmed from their great unity and great generosity, and these lead to great power and great grace. Great grace!

Needs Voluntarily Fulfilled

Acts 4:34:

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 needs.

Luke digs in on what this great generosity looked like. There was not a needy person among them. We are talking about five thousand people, and Luke said there was not a needy person among them. That is a huge statement about this early church. This was the first century. There would not have been a lot of middle class. There would have been a lot of rich and a lot of poor. There would have been a lot of needy people. We saw a few weeks ago there was a lame beggar. There were a lot of beggars in the first century. There were a lot of people with a lot of needs. There were a lot of people trying to scratch out a living, just trying to have enough bread. There were servants and slaves. This was not a century in time where there were no needs. Everyone had needs. But according to Luke, for the early church there was not a needy person among them. Five thousand people and there was not a needy person among them. How did they pull this off? Why was there not a needy person in a culture where there were a lot of needs? This happened because of great generosity. It was through the generosity of other people in the family. Those who owned land and houses sold because the body of Christ had needs. They saw within the body there were people with needs. People needed bread. People needed food. People needed medical attention. Those having possessions of value sold a portion so that the needs of others would be met. There, then, were no needy among them.

We see their great generosity. The giving was not from compulsion. The apostles did not stand up and command those who owned things to sell because of the needs of others. The apostles were not forcing anyone to do this. They were not calling for anyone to do this. People within the body stepped up because they recognized a need and wanted to meet it. They were voluntarily sacrificing some of their belongings to meet the needs of others. Where does this generosity come from? This was a Holy Spirit church, a unified church that loved each other and shared the soul of one

another. When they saw someone who shared their heart and their soul and was hurting, they were led to take care of that need.

When you read the Bible, you will encounter scripture that is prescriptive and other that is descriptive. Prescriptive means we have to do this. Descriptive is simply relating what happened. I believe this is descriptive text telling us what happened when the Holy Spirit came. People willingly sold from what they had to give to the needy. There were no needy people.

How does this translate into our lives? How does this translate down to Hardin Baptist Church? What are the practical applications? This snapshot shows us as members of this church, unified, and sharing our hearts and our souls. We should have a genuine care to meet the needs of others. One of the primary ways this happens is through the act of giving. At the end of our services, we remind you that if you want to give, you can do so online or by dropping your offering into one of the buckets as you leave the sanctuary. We think it is very gospel centered. Because God has been generous to us, we want to be generous toward each other so that the needs of our body can be taken care of.

As a leader of the church, I am able to witness the beauty of needs being met. I get to see needs met weekly. Needs come to us as a team. It may be a small need. It may be a big need. A need means someone in the body is hurting. We can meet those needs because of your faithful giving. Just this week we got a message from someone who went through a difficult time a couple weeks ago, an unexpected tragedy. They couldn't do the next thing God was calling them to do. They brought their need to the team and we were able to meet it because of your giving. You are participating in giving that not only goes to delivering the gospel to all nations but meets the needs of our body and our community. You guys faithfully, weekly, meet the needs of one another through the act of giving.

One application we will see from this morning is do you participate in the giving? This is spoken to the members, those who have bought in, joined, and said I belong to you. Do you participate in the act of giving? It seems

that when the Holy Spirit fills a church, they want to give to meet the needs of one another.

I want us to notice how these people saw their possessions. How did this early church see their possessions? I think this is what they saw. What they owned was not their own. That was the switch that happened when they got the gospel and entered into the Kingdom. They realized what they owned was not their own. They had houses, fields, and businesses. They owned things. God is not against ownership. It is extremely biblical to own things. When you own something, however, you realize it is not just your own. It is a gift from God to be shared, to help when needs arise. It is not an idol to be hoarded. When you think about your stuff, is it a gift from God to steward over and use for His glory and the good of others, and yes, for your enjoyment? Or, is the stuff you have an idol that you hoard because life is just about you? In this early church was a people who recognized what they owned was not their own. They were selling things, diminishing their own wealth to help in the needs of other people within the body of Christ. We see great unity and great generosity and great grace.

Gospel Generosity

Luke gives an example of someone we should emulate, someone who does it right. He, also, shows us someone who does not do it right. You have probably heard of the couple, Ananias and Sapphira. They are the ones we do not emulate. Then there is Barnabas, who we will look to as an example of what gospel generosity really looks like. Luke will give us a 'thus' and a 'but.' The 'thus' is Barnabas. 'Thus,' do this – be like Barnabas. 'But' is Ananias and Sapphira – don't do that. We will see they are not gospel generous. They are selfishly generous. We will see that makes all the difference.

Acts 4:36-37:

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.

Barnabas owned the field. It was his. But he saw a need. He decided, because of a need in the body of Christ, to sell his piece of land so that he could give generously and the needs of the body could be taken care of. Nobody forced him to do this. It was a voluntary act from his heart. He was filled with the Spirit. He wanted to give to help those within the body who had needs.

As I read this, I had this thought. I wonder what Barnabas' son said. Barnabas is set up as an example. He sold a field, gave the proceeds to the apostles, and instructed them to use it as the church needed. There were people in the church with needs that should be met. What did his son think? If I were his son, I might say...*Wait a minute! Let's think about this. You are going to do what? You are going to sell the field? I thought we had decided that I would get the field and my sister would get the house! I have even told my sweetheart we would build our house on that field. That field is my inheritance. Dad, you don't have a lot. That field is to come to me. What do you mean that you are going to sell the field? That field is my security. It is my inheritance...*This was not just the father selling a piece of land. He was selling off part of his estate that would be inherited. He was selling off part of his legacy. I can imagine the son was somewhat disappointed. Barnabas would have told his son not to worry about his legacy – God has it covered – what we are concerned about now is a need within the body. With a generous heart, Barnabas sold a piece of land to give to meet the needs of the church. This is a beautiful picture of what was happening. Luke zeroed in on a specific person. Barnabas stepped up. He sold a possession to take care of needs in the church. This is the 'thus.' Thus, be like Barnabas. Don't just hoard your stuff. Think about yourself as someone who can participate in helping out within the body of Christ.

Selfish Generosity

Now Luke gives us a 'but.' We will see a couple that you should not emulate. This is a couple that does not do it right.

Acts 5:1-2:

But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, and with his wife's knowledge he kept back for himself some of the proceeds and brought only a part of it and laid it at the apostles' feet.

Luke has already given us a hint. They sold a piece of land and brought money to the apostles. They brought some money, gave some money, but lied about the whole thing. There was a conspiracy going on. Ananias and Sapphira were conspiring together to do an evil act. It would be caught. It will be seen very clearly as we walk through the text. They did not give with generous hearts. They gave with selfish motives. They saw how Barnabas was spoken of when he gave. Ananias and Sapphira say what if we do the same thing, but what if we only gave a little, lied about it, and say we gave it all? What will they say about us? As the story plays out, we will see they were not in it to be generous to others. They were in it to build up their status and name in the community. They wanted to be seen. They wanted the glory to be given to them rather than glory be given to God. We will see this is a big deal when it comes to the Lord.

Acts 5:3:

But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land?"

Ananias thought his plan was great. He would bring a bag of cash and give it to Peter. Peter would applaud them. The church would applaud them. They would bring them before everyone at the next gathering and laud them for what they had done, sold a piece of property and gave everything to the Lord. The church would want to praise them. They would want them to have the best seat in the house. They were expecting to climb the ladder through their gift. But Peter called it out at the beginning. He asked them, "Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?" Where have we heard the phrase, Satan has filled your heart, before? This reminds us of another man who loved money. This was Judas who betrayed the Lord for thirty pieces of silver. He was in charge of the money for the apostles. He wasn't in it for Jesus. He was in it for himself, for his

own glory. Satan filled his heart to betray the Lord. He filled the hearts of Ananias and Sapphira to betray the people, the church.

The Great Enemy's Influence

We started this sermon by saying where unity abounds the enemy is always nearby. We see this here. The church was unified. They were generous and they were giving. Satan hates a church that is unified and generous. The enemy hates a church that is full of great grace. For the first time Satan is introduced in Acts. We are reminded we have a great enemy, Satan. Peter asked Ananias why he allowed Satan to influence his thinking, his heart, so that he did this thing, not for the sake of the church but for himself. Ananias sought his own glory instead of giving what actually belonged to the Lord.

Peter accused Ananias of lying to the Holy Spirit. He knew Ananias was lying. Peter knew Ananias was claiming to have brought all the money from the sale because he wanted credit for his big donation. Instead, Peter knew he was lying. He was pretending. His actions were not coming from his heart but only from his hand. His motivation was for the church to give him applause and glory. It was not to help in the needs of the church. Peter asked why he was doing this. You did not have to give anything. This was your own voluntary act. Notice how Peter argued the point in the last part of verse 3. He said, "...to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land?" Peter continues in verse 4.

Acts 5:4

While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own?

Peter was saying that this was your property. You did not owe this to the church. It did not belong to the church. It was yours. You could have kept it. No one made you do this. Your act was voluntary.

Peter continues:

And after it was sold was it not at your disposal?

You could have told us that you were only giving half of the proceeds of the sale to the church. You could have told us that and everything would have been fine. You could even have said I am only giving 10% or just 5%. That, too, would have been fine. The problem was that you told us that you were giving the full price. We will see this when the wife is interviewed. It was a lie from the beginning. It was not about meeting the needs of others but elevation of themselves so that others would see.

Then Peter declared:

You have not lied to man but to God.

You have not just lied to us, the church. The worst thing was they had lied to God. Peter first told them they had lied to the Holy Spirit. Now he said they had lied to God. As a footnote on the deity of the Holy Spirit, we see very clearly that the apostles saw the Holy Spirit as God, just as Jesus is God. As Christians, we worship God, a triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Spirit is not a force sort of out there. The Spirit is the third person of the triune God who is fully God, just as Jesus and the Father are fully God. When lying to the Holy Spirit, they were lying to none other than God.

God Kills Ananias and Sapphira

Acts 4:5:

When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and breathed his last. And great fear came upon all who heard of it. The young men rose and wrapped him and carried him out and buried him.

Ananias died. God killed him. Peter tells us that fear fell upon them all. He could have left that out. We know that! When people start dying in church, everybody wakes up. The teenagers who were nodding off take notice... *What do I need to do? I'll sing now. I am locked in. Shall I take notes? I'll do it! They're dying! OK, we are locked in...* When people start dying, people start paying attention. This is real. This is not just some

made up thing that we are all pretending. God is real and is He is the great judge who takes sin seriously.

Acts 5:7-8:

After an interval of about three hours his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. And Peter said to her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for so much." And she said, "Yes, for so much."

Do you see the lie? She lied about how much they sold the land for. You are saying you sold it for 100K and you gave 100K. But really, you sold it for 200K. You kept 100K for yourself. That was the lie, how much they sold the land for and how much they gave. Their motivation was not about generosity but about their selfish desire to be noticed by the community of faith. They wanted glory. Barnabas got it. They wanted it. They contrived to get it. In doing so, they would lie to God and the people so that they could be made known.

Acts 5:9a:

But Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord?"

Peter said you agreed with your husband to test the Spirit of the Lord. In testing of the Lord, my memory goes back to the Exodus, the wilderness journey. The Israelites constantly were testing the Lord. Instead of trusting Him, they tested Him. They sinned against Him. In the new church, people were doing exactly the same thing. It was as if Ananias and Sapphira were still in the wilderness. They were not trusting the Lord. They were not believing in the good things of God.

5:9b-11:

Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out." Immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. When the young men came in they found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside

her husband. And great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard of these things.

Ananias came in and lied about the money. God struck him down because he was lying to God. He was trying to make himself someone he was not. The wife, Sapphira, came in and also lied. She claimed one thing but the truth was different. She was caught in the lie as well. God struck her down as well. Great fear came upon them all.

There is something that shocks me about this story. This is not a story from the Old Testament. If we had read this story from the Old Testament, we would we get it. God has done it again. Someone has messed up and he is done. We get it. There was no grace – it is all law – that is the Old Testament. But in the New Testament, God has changed His mind. In the New Testament, God winks at sin. Do whatever you want. Live life as you want. God is OK. He is just big and happy now and wants you to have a good, happy life. God is over that whole holiness thing and sin being a big deal. Just do what you want. Then here, in the very beginning of the church, we see two people struck dead by God for lying to Him. So, we are like...Is this Acts or Deuteronomy I am reading?

This is the New Testament. What does that tell us? This is telling us that God has not changed. God is still holy, holy, holy. God's view toward sin has not changed. What has changed is there has been the ultimate sacrifice, Jesus on the cross. Those of us who believe have got grace, great grace. We are swimming in great grace, but don't spurn the grace of God. Don't believe that because of the cross and the resurrection that you can do whatever you want because God does not care about sin anymore. To see how much God still cares about sin, look at the cross. God's Son died because of sin and because God is holy, holy, holy. In our text, we see that God takes sin very seriously. How seriously? Two people were carried off and buried because of their lies to God.

Great Fear of God

At that moment, a great fear came upon all in church. They had great grace. They had great unity and generosity. They had great power. Now they had great fear. They remembered that God is God and they were not.

Most of us think the fear of God is a bad thing. Now all the people are scared of God. That can't be good. When you read the Bible, you will see that fear of the Lord is a good thing. Proverbs tells us that fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. You can't be wise unless you fear the Lord. Fear of the Lord pulls us into the right path for life. It is believing that God created the world, not me. His word governs the world, not my thoughts, my heart, or my desires. We are to go to the word and see what God says. If God's Word contradicts my thoughts, my heart, or my desires, I will, in fear of the Lord, realize that God knows best. Fear, then, will pull me into the right path for my life. It is not like being scared of our earthly father that would cause us to run away. It is like the reverence you would have for a really good father. If you have a really good father, you know what this is like. It is the reverence, the respect, that causes you to listen to your dad because he knows best. He can also wear me out. He is pulling me into the right life. That is what the fear of the Lord does. It pulls us into the right path of life.

The church was unified. They had one heart and one soul. Because of their great unity, they had a great enemy. Satan hates unity and generosity and loves selfishness and division.

When we walk through the text like we did, we may wonder what we are to take home. In the next few minutes, we will look at six things we can take home. These are six key thoughts I think we learned.

1. Unity and generosity flow from a Spirit filled church.

When the church is filled with the Holy Spirit, unity and generosity are experienced. The text said they shared the same heart and the same soul. Do you share the same heart and soul with us? Are you unified with us? Have you been filled with the Spirit and now you are experiencing a church that is filled with the Spirit? Can you say that you desperately want to belong to a church that is filled with the Spirit bringing unity and generosity? That is what the Spirit brings. When the Spirit fills the church, unity and generosity come from it.

2. Unified churches experience great power and great grace.

We see this. The church in Acts had great power and great grace. They were proclaiming the gospel and they had five thousand people who were backing up the gospel. That came with a lot of power and with God's grace. Grace came upon them all. They didn't have just a little grace; they had great grace, mega grace. I want Hardin to not just have grace, but that we have great grace.

3. Where unity abounds, Satan seeks to divide.

This is truth. When you put on a prayer bracelet, you are not putting it on just to remind you to pray. You are putting on a bracelet that signifies to all the forces of darkness that you are part of something bigger than you. There is someone who hates that bracelet. The great enemy hates our unity. The more unified we are, the more love and soul we share, the more Satan seeks to attack. You have ill thoughts about a member of this body. You think evil of someone in this community. You feel evil toward a brother or sister. That is not just you. We wrestle not with flesh and blood but against principalities in spiritual warfare. Fight the right battle. When you recognize that thought go to work in your heart, go to that brother or sister and make amends. We are to be a church that is unified. When we are unified, just know that the enemy will be nearby. Know that. Make a plan for it. Satan will be coming the more unified we get as a group of people.

4. Motives matter.

A man and a couple did exactly the same thing. They both sold and they both gave. It wasn't about how much they give but why they gave. One gave to be generous. The others gave to be built up and to be recognized for how much they gave. But they lied in the process. Their motivation was wrong. Your motivation actually matters. Did you come and gather this morning to be seen by someone? Or, was it because you love the family, you love the Lord, you want to hear the Word of God then go under the Word of God, and you want to sing praises to the Lord? Why did you come? Why did you give? Why do you read the Word and share? The why matters. God cares about our motive. He cares not only about what we do but why we do them. We have seen this in our text so clearly.

5. The Holy Spirit is God.

Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Holy Spirit. That was lying to God.

6. Don't lie to God.

This is quite obvious. I shouldn't have to tell you this. You probably already knew this. Just in case you missed it, the last application from this sermon is don't lie to God. It isn't going to work. You might think He will not know. Really? He knows everything, whether in your brain or in your heart. He is like a big X-ray machine. You can't hide anything from God. So, why do we lie to God, as if He is not going to find out? The truth is God knows, and probably everyone else will find out. Everyone found out about Ananias and Sapphira. They all went to their gravesides. We lie and think we can hide it but there is no hiding of our lies. God knows, and soon everyone else will too. Don't lie to the Lord. Be honest and transparent. Do things for the right motivation.

As we are sent out this morning, take a prayer bracelet. Yes, we want you to pray for Arizona this week. Pray for our team there. Every time you look at your bracelet, pray for Arizona. Next week we will get a bracelet and we will pray for Nicaragua. We will pray for the team that is away from us. This week, however, don't think of this as just a prayer bracelet. It is also a unity bracelet. As you pray for those who have gone out from us to share the gospel, also think about those who have remained here. As you look down at the bracelet, pray for our unity, that we would be one heart and one soul. Great power, great grace, great unity, great generosity, and great fear would be upon us so that the community and the world can see gospel evidences in our lives.

As you glance down at your bracelet, pray for Arizona but also pray for yourself. Pray that you will stay away from the schemes of the evil one. Where there is unity, the enemy is always nearby. Pray against him, our enemy. Pray that you will remain one heart and one soul with us. Pray for us that we will be one soul and one heart and truly glorify the Lord.