MegaPoints:

**1. The Holy Spirit causes radical generosity.**

A healthy understanding of the Holy Spirit is that He is the cause of our salvation. He causes our *conversion* (John 3: 8), and He causes our *sanctification,* growth in holiness, obedience, and Christlikeness (Ezekiel 36:26, Rom. 8:28,9). Therefore we must believe that we are being made radically generous.

**2. There are ample resources within our church to take care of all the needs within our church**. There was not a needy person in the early church. Wow! As they pooled their resources, everyone was properly taken care of. We may have issues with the welfare system in our country, but until the church does it’s job how can we criticize the government?

3. **Selfishness with our resources compromises the power of our community.** The story of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5) is related to the story of Achan in Joshua 7:10-26. In both cases, selfishness with “devoted things” caused the church to fall into a period of powerlessness. Everything we have is “devoted” to God. Selfishness with any part of our Time, Talent, and Treasure is an affront to God and an impediment to our mission.

4. **Our example for generosity is Jesus.** Jesus is God’s great demonstration of radical generosity. Romans 8:31 states: If “he who did not spare his own son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?” God’s generosity in our salvation should cause radical generosity among us.

“A Powerful Witness…Is Radically Generous”

Texts: Acts 2:42-47 Pastor Jay Cave BPCC 02/22/15

Sermon Notes:

For Your Consideration

In our series “A Powerful Witness,” we are examining the characteristics of the early church that made for such explosive growth. The early church 1) experienced the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8); 2) they were of “one accord,” unified in their purpose (Acts 2:1); 3) they were able to speak boldly about Jesus (Acts 4:13,31). Today we introduce a fourth concept: ***the early church was radically generous.***

In our two texts today we see that the early church was *“together and had all things in common…they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all as any had need” (Acts 2:44,45),* and they *“had everything in common…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 alt the apostles feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need “ (Acts 4:32-35).*

Often, people have wondered whether the first followers of Jesus were “communists.” The answer is “no” because possessions were shared voluntarily. One commentator writes: “In the earliest church, people of means and power liquidated their goods for the sake of the less powerful “from time to time” ([Acts 4:34](http://biblia.com/bible/nrsv/Acts%204.34)) as anyone “had need” ([Acts 2:45](http://biblia.com/bible/nrsv/Acts%202.45); [4:35](http://biblia.com/bible/nrsv/Acts%204.35)). This describes a kind of radical availability as the normal status of each person’s possessions. That is, the resources—material, political, social, or practical—of any member of the community were put at the constant disposal of the Christian community, even while individual members continued to oversee their

particular resources. Rather than systematically prescribing the distribution of wealth in such a way as to ensure flat equality, the earliest church accepted the reality of economic disequilibrium, but practiced a radical generosity whereby goods properly existed for the benefit of the whole, not the individual. This form of generosity is, in many ways, more challenging than a rigid system of rules. It calls for ongoing responsiveness, mutual involvement in the lives of community members, and a continual willingness to hold possessions loosely, valuing the relationships within the community more than the (false) security of possessions.“

I love the way the above writer describes the culture of the early church. They had ongoing responsiveness to the needs of each other. They were consistently, voluntarily, radically generous. And notice that this radical generosity was connected to their power. Vs. 33 states that “with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all.“

Imagine for a moment what our church might look like if we all voluntarily combined our resources. Wow! It certainly would make the news: “Diverse Church on Southside Saint Pete Has Everything in Common.” I bet we would take a little more interest in each other. I am sure we would grow closer. Perhaps this is a bit naïve for us to consider. However me must wonder if the powerlessness of 21st century church is in some way connected to our refusal to share. (over)