

GRACIOUS, GENEROUS AND HYPOCRITICAL HEARTS

Acts 4:32-5:11

(Not entirely original with me)

Introduction: As there are weeds and tares that look like wheat and grow alongside wheat, and there are goats mixed in with lambs, so there is a mixture among Church members starting with the very first Church assembly. There were those who were gracious, those who were generous and then there were some who were hypocrites. They acted like Christians, fellowshiped with Christians, joined in the services as every other Christian, but they were not sincere, true in their hearts for they professed one thing but acted in another. Remember Ananias and Sapphira?

I. BELIEVING HEARTS ARE GRACIOUS HEARTS

1. True faith really changes people.
 - No longer selfish, self-centered, self-seeking, self-serving.
 - Changed to a grateful, thoughtful, generous, serving person.
 - True faith is not as concerned with the things of the world as it is with things which are to come and are eternal.
 - True faith seeks the kingdom of God and His righteousness.
 - True faith produces an attitude of grace in one's heart.
2. True faith unites the people of God.
 - All of God's people are truly ONE in Christ.
 - All of God's people are one family, a family of sinners saved by grace.
 - All of God's people are devoted to one cause and that is the Kingdom of God.
 - All of God's people seek one thing and that is the will of God.
 - All of God's people have one primary goal and that is the glory of God.
3. True faith makes people more generous with what they have.
 - Their love for one another places no value on personal property, wealth or advantage.
 - People with true faith do not look upon their own possessions as theirs only.
 - People with true faith look upon their own property as everyone's property.
4. Those with true faith realize that everything one has belongs to God and has been entrusted to use as stewards in God's House.
 - Those with true faith are responsible to use what they have wisely for the advancement of God's Kingdom, furtherance of the Gospel, comfort for God's people and to glorify His name.
5. True faith causes God's people to prefer each other over themselves.
 - People with true faith will sell what they have and give to their brothers and sisters in need.
6. True faith causes people to give free, voluntary sacrifices of love.
 - They are not told how, when, what to give.
 - When there is a need, they will give what they have.
 - Those of true faith who are in need, will take/receive only what they need.

II. BELIEVING HEARTS ARE GENEROUS HEARTS

1. An example of a generous heart is the man Barnabas.
 - He removed himself from worldly habits and attitudes.
2. Barnabas was a peaceful man, who comforted and encouraged others.
 - He was generous, therefore an example of true Christian charity.
 - He was a man of a good reputation, who had the love and respect of God's people.
3. Barnabas saw a need in the Church and he sold property and gave it to the Church to be used for those brothers and sisters who were in need not expecting or wanting any recognition.

III. HYPOCRITICAL HEARTS ARE SELFISH HEARTS

1. There were among the early Church, a couple of members who were not of a true heart.
 - They (Ananias and Sapphira) saw what Barnabas did and how much recognition he got and they became jealous.
 - They conspired, planned, agreed to lie to God and to the Church and sold property and gave a gift to the Church, wanting recognition.
2. Ananias and Sapphira gave a large amount of money to the Church, maybe more than what Barnabas had given and on the surface it looked like a wonderful thing what they did.
 - They had sold the property for such and such amount.
 - They agreed to give only so much of the total sale price but leave the impression that what they gave was what the property total value was sold for.
3. They pretended to give all.
 - They had not been asked to give anything.
 - They gave in a hypocritical manner, a sham, a show, a lie.
 - They gave as an act of greed, not of grace and love.
 - They wanted to gain the applause, the recognition of others.
4. Such giving was a lie and disgusting to God.

CONCLUSION:

1. There are those among Church members today who are indeed gracious and have generous hearts.
2. Sadly, there are those among Church members today who are like Ananias and Sapphira who are selfish and pretenders who want attention for themselves and others to think of them in ways that they are no where like.
3. Barnabas is an example of how every true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ should act and attitude one should have.
4. Why Do YOU do what you do in YOUR Church? For the benefit of others, for the Lord Jesus or for yourself and the attention you want?

