



## Sermon Series Notes

### “Grace Changes Everything” Part 2 (Acts 4:32-37)

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What makes Christianity a unifying concept? What Changed in the these peoples life that led in creating a community of giving and love? How did a group of 12 turn into a group 5000 turn into the dominant religion of Rome and represent half of the world’s religion current day.

“In 165, during the reign of Marcus Aurelius, a devastating epidemic swept through the Roman Empire. Some medical historians suspect that is was the first appearance of smallpox in the west. But whatever the actual disease, it was lethal. During the fifteen-year duration of the epidemic, from a quarter to a third of the empire’s population died from it, including Marcus Aurelius, in 180 in Vienna. Then in 251 a new and equally devastating epidemic again swept the empire hitting the rural areas as hard as the cities. This time is may have been measles. Both smallpox and measles can produce massive mortality rates when they strike a previously unexposed population”

Rodney Stark, The rise of Christianity, 73

Frequently in human history, crises produced by natural or social disasters have been translate into crises of Faith. Typically this occurs because the disaster places demands upon the prevailing religion that is appears unable to meet. This inability can occur at two levels. First, the religion may fail to provide a satisfactory explanation of the *why* the disaster occurred. Second the religion may seem to be unavailing against the disaster, which becomes truly critical when all nonreligious also prove inadequate-when the supernatural remains the only plausible source of help.

Rodney Stark, The rise of Christianity, 77

At the height of the second great epidemic around 260... Dionysius wrote a lengthy tribute to the heroic nursing efforts of local christians, many of whom lost their lives while caring for others.

most of our brothers Christians showed unbounded love and loyalty, never sparing themselves and thinking only of one another. Heedless of danger, they took charge of the sick, attending to the ir every need and ministering to them in Christ, and with them departed this life serenely happy; for they were infected by others wit the disease, drawing on themselves the sickness of their neighbors and cheerfully accepting their pains.

Rodney Stark, The rise of Christianity, 82

here Issues of doctrine must be addressed.... What was new was the notion that more than self-interested exchange relations were possible between humans and the supernatural. The Christian teaching that God loves those who love him was alien to pagan beliefs.... Equally alien to paganism was the notion that because God loves humanity, Christians cannot please God unless they *love one another*  
Rodney Stark, The rise of Christianity, 86

When the New Testament was new, these were the norms of the Christian communities. Tertullian claimed: 'It is our care of the helpless, our practice of loving kindness that brands us in the eyes of many of our opponents. "only look," they say,"look how they love one another!"  
Rodney Stark, The rise of Christianity, 86

## I. The Nature of the Christian Heart- One in Heart and Mind **V.32**

Ex. Think of an Orchestra, it is the one frequency that controls the sound of the orchestra. It is there ability to tune to certain frequency that makes them produce a sound that captures our feelings.

A. What is the Heart? It is more than the emotions. It is the control center of your being.

1. Hearts trust things -

Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;  
Proverbs 3:5

2. Hearts treasure things

21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.  
Matthew 6:21

3. The Heart is the Control Center of our being:

"The heart is the thing you most love, what the heart wants, the mind finds agreeable, the emotions find desirable and the will seems doable"

Tim Keller

(<http://resources.thegospelcoalition.org/library/life-and-prosperity-death-and-destruction>)

4. The Heart is the center of the New Covenant:

**26** I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh

Exodus 36:26

“This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time,” declares the LORD. “I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts.

Jeremiah 31:33

B. The Gospel is a matter of the heart: Faith and our Heart

**10** For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.

Romans 10:9

## II. The Nature of Christian Giving-

How do we help people in need? Either we go, or either we give? But to whom do we give our money and resources???

I saw an ad to help people in NEPAL through Facebook? How should we as Christians deliver funds to help the needs of people?

Why Give to the Churches? How can Churches help Churches?

- A. A Perspective of your Heart- The Heart of the believer Changed concerning their things **V.32**
- B. The Perspective of the community became clear- Needs became evident **V.34**
- C. Generosity was consistent, not a one time endeavor **V.34**
- D. Generosity was given to leadership to disperse amongst the needs of the Church? **V.35**
  - 1. Evaluate the needs of the individual
  - 2. Bring spiritual guidance through the hardship
  - 3. It represented the nature of the Church to the World-

## III. The Nature of Christian Leadership

Our American pride can prevent our Generous giving. We want to analyze how will our dollar be maximized, what are we getting from our funds. Not, How has my treasure influenced my giving.

- A. Leaders aren't perfect- This moment is a nice moment! BUT it would last- **ACTS 6**

In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food.

Acts 6:1

B. Paul calls the churches to assist in the famine in Jerusalem

Now about the collection for the Lord's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. **2** On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made. **3** Then, when I arrive, I will give letters of introduction to the men you approve and send them with your gift to Jerusalem.

I Corinthians 16

IV. The Nature of God's Presence- **V.31**

A. Mount Sinai-

**18** Mount Sinai was covered with smoke, because the LORD descended on it in fire. The smoke billowed up from it like smoke from a furnace, and the whole mountain[a] trembled violently.

Exodus 19:18

B. Isaiah -

**3** And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." **4** At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. **5** "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty."

Isaiah 6:3-5

C. Jesus Death- Speaks of God's punishment of sin

**50** And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. **51** At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split

Matthew 27:50-51

D. Jesus Resurrection- Speaks of God victory over sin

After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. **2** There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it

Matthew 28:1-2

E. The place was shaken but they were not

1. Jesus was Shaken to pieces so when God's presence comes into your life you will not be shaken

a. Fear of the Future

b. Guilt and Shame

2. Jesus took the Shaking of God's Presence so we can have the victory

F. Grace Changes Everything through the Gospel.