

# Acts 4:23-37

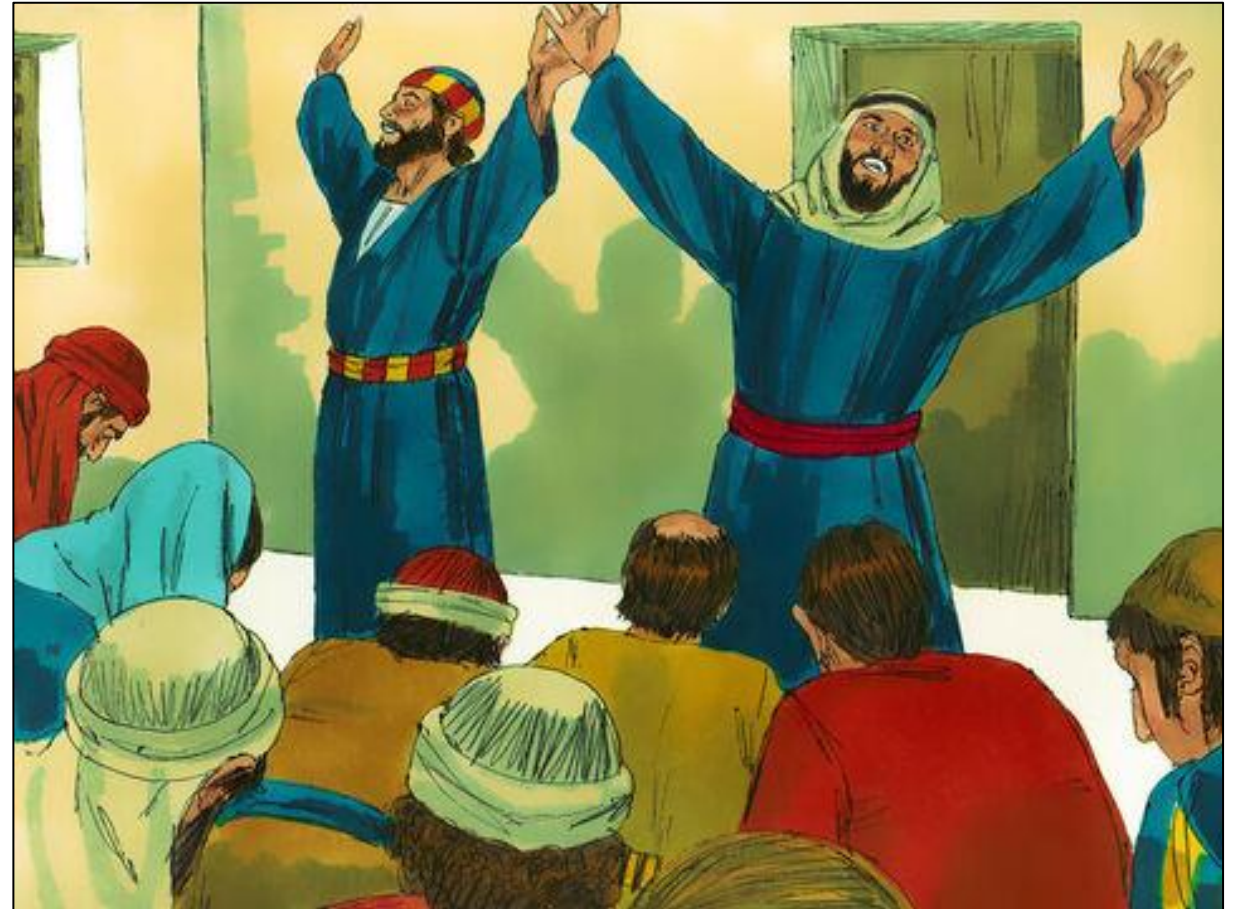
## Life in the Early Church



On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them.

They let the Lord's people know and shared what had happened.

It wasn't just simple interest-curiosity on the people's part.



# A Thankful Response

When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God.

Not panic/fear but united in prayer together

Did someone lead?



# Our Father IN HEAVEN

"Sovereign Lord," they said, "you made the heaven and the earth and the sea,  
and everything in them.

The Almighty creator  
- are you a creationist too?

God is in charge of all the details



# Inspiration of scriptures

You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant,  
our father David..

Just as God spoke creation into existence  
He also spoke and still speaks to his people

human vehicle



Divine source

## Encouragement from the Scripture

"`Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against his Anointed One. `"

He quotes Psalm 2 - they had read and learned it and knew how it applied to their situation

The authorities are opposing God and His Messiah

The message is 'they are bound to fail!' It is all "in vain".



# Everybody was involved

Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed.

The situation –  
Jewish & gentile authorities  
Jewish & gentile people were  
all involved.

The Target = the Messiah



Your holy **servant** (it's the same word as in v25)

# In the Plan

They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen.

The authorities thought they were in charge of what happened

A bigger plan at work  
- the Saviour saves by having died as our substitute

God over-rules even in human guilty behaviour.





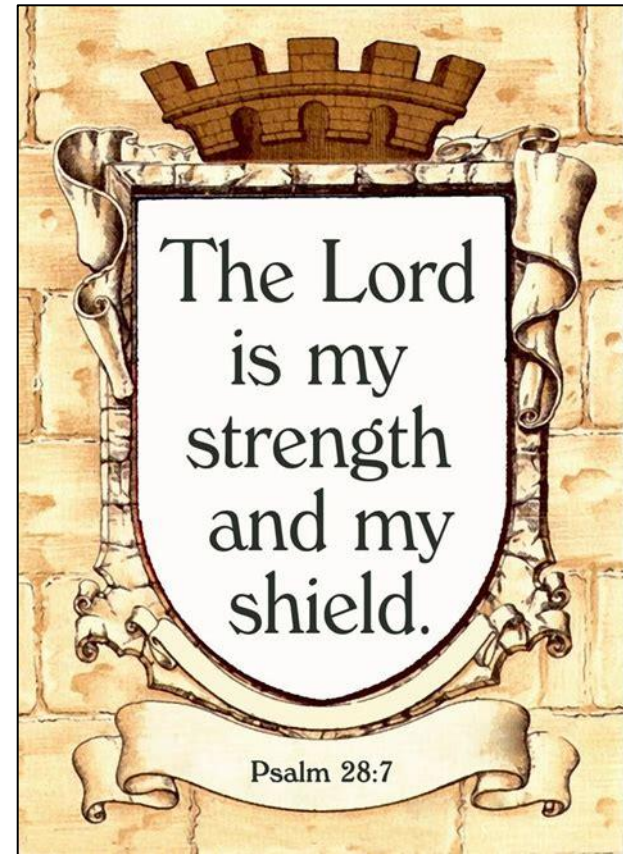
# Their Prayer Request

Now, Lord, consider their threats  
and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness.

Asking God to ....

See what our opponents are up to.  
Enable us to keep doing what you told us  
(and even better)

Not - 'wipe them out, Lord'  
but frustrate their plans to stop us



# The King to Show His Power !

Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus."



Do this to demonstrate the power of Jesus' mighty name as  
your appointed servant  
– the Messiah

## How God answers

After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken.



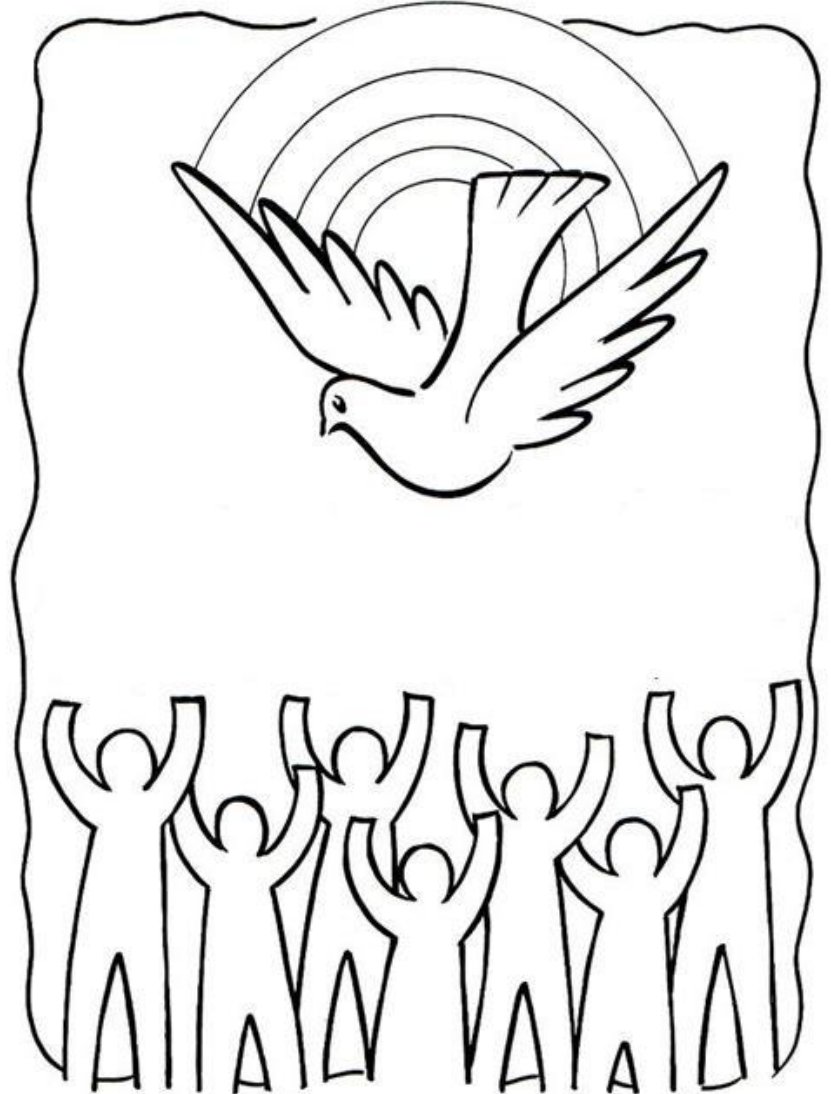
# More Holy Spirit Power

And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

The power of the Holy Spirit on them  
**Again** - there is more available!  
(no wind or fire this time)

## The Result

- boldness
- confidence in the Lord's help



# Living as God's children

All the believers were one in heart and mind.

These were exciting times. Nearly all were new believers.



United Heart (joy, praise, love)

United Mind (sharing the same purpose and vision)

# Caring-sharing

No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had.

Each one had moved from self-interest to caring about our brothers and sisters



This was willing (not forced!) It may also have been a feast time.

# Outreach

With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all.

The Lord was at work

The apostles preached the good news about Jesus AND the resurrection

They felt a sense of God's great favour  
Good days!



# A cross-section of the community

There were no needy persons among them.

There were - but they weren't

Cross-section of the community  
– haves and have-nots?





# The 'haves' liquidised their assets

For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them,

Were they expecting the Lord's immediate return?  
Or now possessions were not so important and they saw a need that they could help with.



# The Distribution Centre

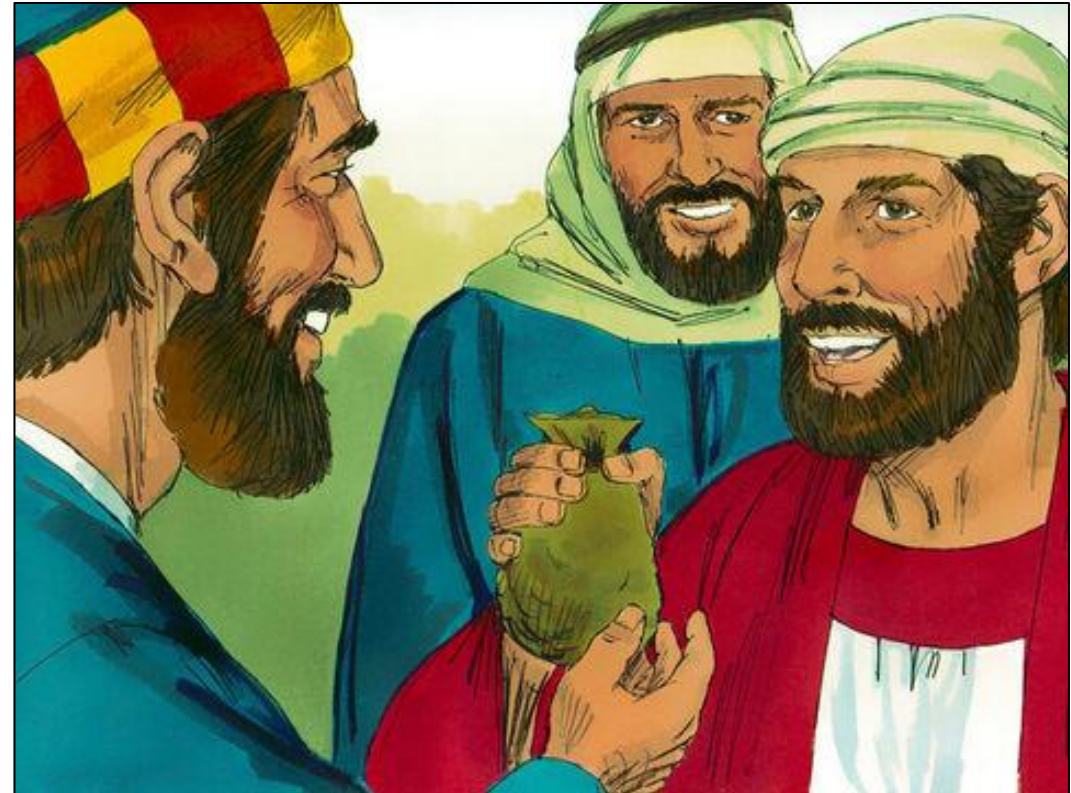
*They brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet,*

They handed over the responsibility to the leaders

It was manageable at this stage!

They offered it to the Lord and then gave the job to the apostles

Cf. The Macedonian churches ...



2 Corinthians 8:5 ... they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us.

# Needs met

and it was distributed to anyone as he had need.

Wise care – happy days with no one taking advantage

This was “targeted care”

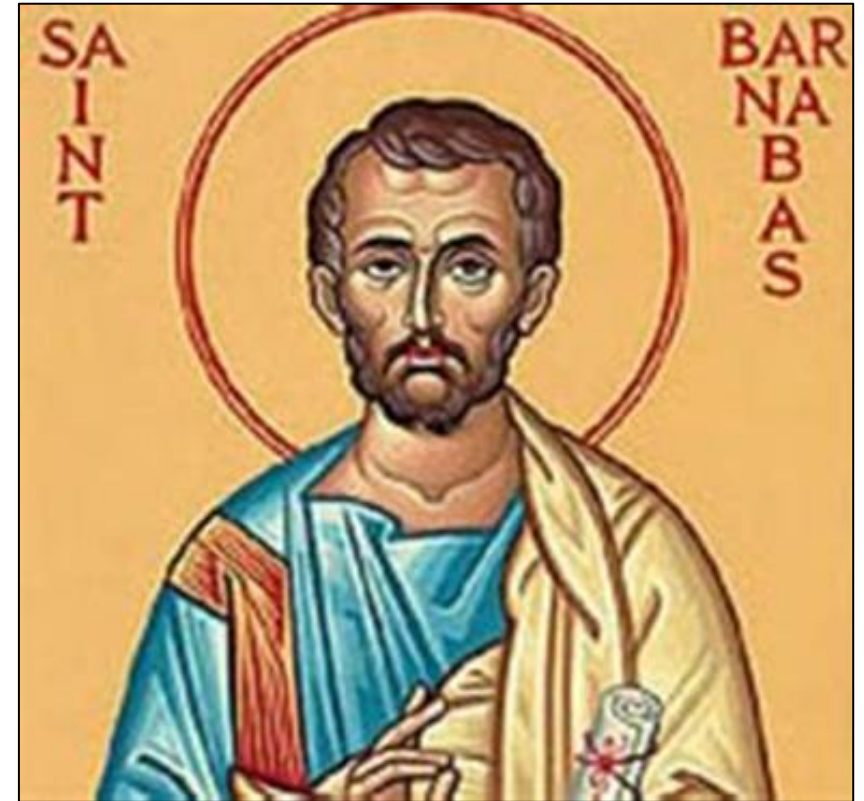


# Introducing Barnabas

**Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means Son of Encouragement), sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles` feet.**

How did he get his name - was it from this time or later?

A great gift of the Spirit



Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means Son of Encouragement), **sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles` feet.**

He provided financial help for care

Sale of land

– where it was we don't know



This was a good thing – but it also prepares us for the next sad turn of events in chapter 5

# The perfect church?

They were united in worship and service,  
A blessed people enjoying the blessing and presence of the Lord

This passage gives us a good  
model for us to follow in our very  
different times and circumstances

