

The believers share

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Central Newspaper Services

ACTS 2: 43-47; 4:32-35

Today's lesson has an even greater meaning after the recent disaster of hurricane Katrina. Our country's Gulf Coast has been devastated. We, as Christians, have a great opportunity to share our possessions and our Gospel with the people of the Gulf Coast.

As I watched the news reports of the many people in New Orleans walk around dazed and not knowing what to do next, my heart was broken for their circumstance. All I could think about was how fast can we get the help there that they need.

Then the predators came on the scene and took advantage of these horrible circumstances. The devil always shows up at the most opportune times. But just as God empowered His new Church in Jerusalem to do mighty things, He will do the same for His Church today if we will let Him lead us.

EMPOWERED CHURCH

Acts 2: 43-47

"And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles" Acts 2:43.

The people in Jerusalem had just realized that they had rejected and murdered the Messiah. Just imagine how afraid they were.

But the apostles had a message, and to prove their message was from God, they were able to do miracles. Many people believed and were baptized. These new church members were sometimes even rejected by their families for their new belief. They had no place to go and often no job in order to survive. But God had a way for them.

"And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need" Acts 2: 44,45.

These verses have sometimes been used as a basis for communal groups and certain cults. That idea misses the point. The fact that the earliest Christians had all things in common indicates that they shared

their possessions even as far as to sell property in order to give as everyone has need.

The early Christians loved each other so much that they were willing to sell their property in order to help others in need. Also these early Christians were so excited about their newfound faith that they could not stay apart from one another.

"And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple. And breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart" Acts 2: 46.

They met in the temple, because there were so many, about 3,000, and even took meals together at different houses and there fellowshiped. Do you still enjoy the fellowship of other Christians?

These early Christians were so excited that they couldn't wait to be together again. "Praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" Acts 2:47.

I remember a time when some of our church members would come to our house to sing praises and have desert after a church service. This was such a special time of fellowship and warms my heart just to think of it. This type of oneness empowers a church even today.

SUCCESSFUL CHURCH

Acts 4: 32-35

"And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common" Acts 4: 32.

The unity that these early Christians possessed was nothing short of remarkable. True love is something that flows naturally when a person is in the right relationship with God. And that love is reflected in that person's relationship with everyone else.

When every member of a church is in the right relationship with God, that church has a unity that cannot be undermined by Satan.

"And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the

Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all" Acts 4:33.

Great Christians watch out for the needs of others, but their primary mission is to spread the gospel of the Lord Jesus. A church that is in unity is taking every opportunity to help those in need and doing it in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Many Christians today miss out on an important way of glorifying God when they believe that the government will always step in to help. Have we as Christians lost our power to witness because we allow the government to do the ministry that God commissioned Christians to do?

Just because we pay our taxes does not excuse us from helping fellow

Christians in need and those who do not know

Jesus and doing it in order to show that Jesus loves them through us.

Lesson based on International Sunday School Lesson.

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The Carpenter's Tools Lottery or the Lord?
I'm sure you Carolinians have heard the news by now...THE NC STATE SENATE PASSED THE LOTTERY. Did you hear this part? That Mr. Basnight reconvened the Senate as soon he was aware that two key Republican Senators would be absent. Senator Brown is on his honeymoon, and Senator Garwood is hospitalized. Key conservative voices were not present. Gambling is now acceptable in North Carolina. Gambling is destructive. It is addictive. It robs families and especially children from the provision that is needed when parents will spend money on this vice. Oh...and as I write this I can hear that Christian who says this..."I buy one ticket. That's just a dollar." Well that's just one way that you teach your children to investigate gambling and open the door on something that can be destructive financially. Take your dollar and give it to missions in your local church. Support that which God has ordained and placed His blessing upon. I rarely use my column to take a stand on an issue, but I must proclaim to you today that I am opposed to any plan that can bring down families. I have heard the great stories of how the lottery will improve education in States. I lived in Florida where less than 2% of all lottery funds were received by the schools. Millions of dollars are received in the lottery. Oh and by the way, statistics tell us that you are 7% more likely get struck by lightning than you are to win the lottery. So what will it be for you? Will you teach your kids that the lottery is something that you should try, or will you show them that the godly way is as Jesus said, "Give and it shall be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap...." Luke 6:38. I've tried God's plan. It works! What will it be for you? The Lottery or the Lord?
By Joy & Wallace C. Phillips

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SERVICES/ACTIVITIES

Piney Grove Church.
Annual Women's Day will be observed on Sept. 11, at 2 p.m. at Piney Grove AME Zion Church located on Sandy Ridge Road in Tyner. The speaker for this occasion will be Minister Gloria Beasley, associate minister of Saunders Grove Missionary Baptist

Harvest Christian Fellowship Church will hold a Grandparents Day celebration on Sunday, Sept. 11 at 11 a.m. for information, call 331-7008 or 334-9799.
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Weather forecasters have predicted a very active hurricane season. If you own a generator. Please remember these Albemarle EMC tips in case of an outage.
- Always follow the manufacturer's instructions. They advise you to never plug a generator into a household outlet or other home wiring.
- Use an extension cord to plug lights and appliances directly into the generator.
- Be sure the extension cord is the proper size to carry the electric load.
- Never overload a generator. Use it only when necessary and only for essential equipment.
- Never run a generator inside a building or home. Generators must have proper ventilation and airflow around them.
- Always keep children away from generators.
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