

All the believers were one in heart and soul. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus and much grace was upon them all. (Acts 4:32-33)

These words best reflect 'Fellowship' - the fourth pillar of the Jesus Youth movement which we know as: Christian life, a call to live the life of the Trinity in communion with one's brothers and sisters in Christ through mutual support, encouragement and gentle correction.

In brief let me now explain the opening Scripture:

One heart - This expression denotes 'tender union'. The believers felt alike, or were attached to the same things, and this preserved them from conflict.

One soul - This phrase also indicates 'close and tender union'. No expression could denote it more strikingly than to say of friends who have one soul. The Hebrews spoke of two friends as being "one man". Then, there can be no more powerful demonstration of union and love as when more than five thousand were suddenly drawn together that they had one soul. And this union they manifested in every possible way - in their conduct, in their prayers, and in their property. How different would have been the aspect of the Church if that union had continued to the present time!

The sharing heart of the early Church (vs 32) - *All the believers were one in heart and soul. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had:* Because of their unity, they regarded people more important than things.

They had all things in common: They recognised God's ownership of everything; it all belonged to God and His people.

All things in common: Was this an early form of communism? There is however a contrast between communism and koinonia which is used frequently in the New Testament. Communism says, 'What is yours is mine; I'll take it'. Koinonia says, 'What is mine is yours, I'll share it'.

The effective witness of the apostles (vs 33) - *With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus and much grace was upon them all.*

- a. With great power: This is both the result and the root of the attitude in the previous verse. Acts 4:32 clearly says that they were putting God first, people second and material things a distant third.
- b. Gave witness to the resurrection: Notice again the central place the resurrection of Jesus holds in the message of the first Christians. They preached a resurrected Jesus.
- c. Great grace was upon them all: Grace is God's favour, His smile from heaven, and it was upon them all. God's favour was evident everywhere.

Let me sum up with a story:

Two brothers farmed together. They lived in separate houses on the family farm, but met each day in the fields to work together. One brother married and had a large family. The other lived alone. Still, they divided the harvest from the fields equally.

One night the single brother thought, *“My brother is struggling to support a large family, but I get half of the harvest”*. With love in his heart, he gathered a box of things he had purchased from his earnings - items he knew would help his brother’s family. He planned to slip over to his brother’s shed, unload the basket there, and never say a word about it.

That same night, the married brother thought, *“My brother is alone. He doesn’t know the joys of a family”*. Out of love he decided to take over a basket with a quilt and homemade bread and preserves to “warm” his brother’s house. He planned to leave the items on his porch and never say a word.

As the brothers quietly made their way towards each other’s homes, they bumped into one another. They were forced to admit to what they were doing and there in the darkness, they cried and embraced, each man realising that his greatest wealth was a brother who respected, loved and shared with him.

What can we take home from this?

- The ways we relate to one another reveal something of the very nature of God - faithfulness, service, love, compassion...
- A recognition that we are all brothers and sisters in Christ as Jesus Youth and we are to emulate the same in our cells, small groups, prayer groups, service teams and friendship circles.
- Challenge ourselves to live as the Apostles did and help make Jesus Youth the ideal family of Christ.

While concluding I quote ***“It’s good to be a Christian and know it, but it is better to be a Christian and show it”!***

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