

Acts 5:1-11

“With great power the apostles give their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all” (4:33).

“The most eloquent testimony to the reality of the resurrection is not an empty tomb or a well-orchestrated pageant on Easter Sunday but rather a group of people whose life together is so radically different, so completely changed from the way the world builds community, that there can be no explanation other than that something decisive has happened in history” (William H. Willimon, *Acts*, Interpretation, 51).

The crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus changed everything—including the activities of daily life.

Concern for the poor and generosity in giving has always been a characteristic of the church.

Roman writer from the 3rd century Lucian wrote about the behavior of Christians in his day as it amazed him. He wrote about, “their absurd generosity and their sacrificial concern for others whom they didn’t even know by name.”

It didn’t and to the world it still doesn’t make sense that people are willing to give of themselves for others.

“The power which broke the bonds of death on Easter, shattered the divisions of speech at Pentecost, and empowered one who was lame now releases the tight grip of private property” (Willimon, *Acts*, 53).

Barnabas (son of encouragement) becomes a significant character in this early church.

Acts 9:26-27—he talks with Saul, became convinced of his sincerity and took him to meet the apostles

Acts 11:19-26—saw that God’s grace was being given to Jews and Gentiles—he gave his approval for the spread of the gospel among the Gentiles

Acts 13-15—missionary journey to the Gentiles—Paul, Barnabas, and John Mark

Luke describes Barnabas as “a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith” (11:24).

Ananias and Sapphira lied to the community and thus to God about their possessions. The problem was not with what they gave, but with what they held on to.

“The cost of not confronting our deceit over possessions is high—nothing less than the very death of our life together” (Willimon, *Acts*, 54).