

May 23, 2010
Affirming Each Other's Ministry Gifts
Acts 4:32-37

Goals for today:

1. Understand the power that encouragement can have in a person's and church's life
2. Understand the need for affirmation in confirming our giftedness from God

Let's get into our text for today: **Acts Chapter 4**

1. vs. 32. What does it mean that the believers were *one in heart and mind*? Can you name times when you have especially felt this oneness? What suffers when that is missing? Why would you want to promote such an atmosphere at WCC? How can you help the believers of WCC be of *one heart and mind*?

2. vs. 33. How do we testify, like the apostles, to the resurrection of Jesus? Why is that resurrection the source of our grace? How would we know if God's grace was upon us? What kind of evidence would prove that grace was a part of us?

3. vs. 34-35. Are you willing to give so that there are no needy believers in this church? Does the word *needy* mean the same thing in every church? Who could you help this week? What does the team who went to Nashville this weekend have to do with kind of generosity? What is the governing motive for the generosity mentioned in this verse? Shall we require these acts of another person? **2Cor 9:6-8**.

4. vs. 36-37. Did Barnabas earn his nickname with his generous giving? How would Barnabas have gained such a reputation? Would anyone want to change your name to *Son (or Daughter) of Encouragement*? Why or why not? What kind of behaviors would help you earn such a nickname? Would you be interested in being thought of in that way?

5. James 3:3-6. How can you develop the discipline of your mouth so as to speak words of encouragement rather than words of criticism? Does that mean that criticism is a bad thing? Do you know someone who always seems to see only the difficulties? Do you know someone who always seems to see the sunshine even through the clouds? Which person would you rather have in your company? Why?

6. Ephesians 4:29-32. What would be the distinguishing marks of *unwholesome talk*? What kind of things would *grieve the Holy Spirit*? How easy is it to get rid of the things in this list? Are you known for your kindness, forgiveness, or your compassion? Who do you need to *build up* today?

7. Proverbs 16:23-24. Think about the impact of your words. How often do they help and heal or how often do they hurt?

What kinds of stories are usually broadcast on the evening news? Why?

Why do you think that what happened in the early church as reported in Acts 4:32-37 is not common in American churches today? What would it take to develop this kind of environment in our church?

When was the last time you accepted help from another when you had no way of helping yourself? How did it make you feel?

- Thankful
- Embarrassed
- Obligated
- Humbled
- Inspired
- Other_____

Often, there are folks who arrive here with some kind of need, and they often ask for money. How would **you** respond to these persons?

- Give some loose change
- Not give anything they could spend on booze or cigarettes
- Ask what they need it for
- Ask how much they need
- Tell them about Jesus without giving money
- Give them a gospel tract instead of money
- Suggest an agency to help them
- Don't answer the door or call
- Don't make eye contact
- Report them to the police

How does **James 1:19** give us advice about our words?

Can you give encouragement in ways other than using words?

What would you say to the others in this room to encourage them? What good thing do you see in each one that you can affirm? **Hebrews 10:24**. How do we do that?

How will you pray differently this week?