

General Topics :: what would need to happen...**what would need to happen... - posted by MaryJane, on: 2014/7/22 9:54**

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.” Acts 2:42-47 (NIV).

I was thinking and reading on these verses. How do our churches today even come close to reflect this kind of fellowship? Do they? Does the church today function as the Body with CHRIST as the head?

Wondering what would need to change in how things are done to see this kind of example lived and walked out today.

God bless
maryjane

Re: what would need to happen... - posted by Sidewalk (), on: 2014/7/22 12:27

This was a sweet and lovely description of people trying out pure communism. From each according to his ability, to each according to his need.

What could be better than this?

Ah, but we must read further, and see the sweet old couple who joined in to the fun, Ananias and Saphira. They thought it was a great new day, and so wanted to be a part of it- they sold their stuff and turned over the proceeds as they happily took their place in the little flock.

Well, almost. They did what normal people do, hedging their bet. They left themselves a little way out in case things went south, retaining a little stash for an emergency. They knew they lived in a world of corruption.

Had they admitted this in the beginning, they might have lived. And as human nature revealed itself, the social experiment was unlikely to be a long term success. It had made no provision for the greed of the flesh.

Alas, this model did not continue despite the dramatic event of the deaths of the old couple. Social systems always need to accommodate human greed, Christian or otherwise. Paul went on in his letters to say things "if a man will not work, neither let him eat," and that leaders should provide for their own households.

He also reminded the churches that he had come to them as a working man, providing for his own needs by means of the tent-making. The communist model disappeared quickly from the New Testament narrative, and I don't believe it has ever worked well in history. The American experiment as Jamestown was further proof that it doesn't work among fallen men.

This is why I so appreciate free market capitalism, as it has a beautiful answer to human greed- competition! As a businessman, I must provide my customers and associates something beyond the goods I sell, loving integrity. If they don't like my quality, my prices, my attitude- they can go elsewhere! Either I pound my greed into submission, or they will!

Think of the way we have "marketed" Christianity. It is no wonder so many in the world have rejected the religious mess we have thrown at them.

When I was in High School I was hanging with a kid who was morally rotten but we found ways to have fun together. I o

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nly went to church on Sundays. This boy's older sister got pregnant and the father threw her over, leaving her to raise her little boy alone. Meanwhile, Mormons came to her door and she became a Mormon.

One day I asked her why she had done such a thing and these words came from her mouth, "Because I never met a Christian who lived like one."

Sting! I knew immediately that she did not even know what she had said to me, it was like Balaam's donkey speaking words beyond a realm of possible understanding. I was that "Christian" who did not live like one. The Holy Spirit has used that day and those words to fix in me a constant reminder that the only "Christ" some people might ever see- is me.

Whew, I didn't plan on going into all that, but it is my personal perspective coming from that verse which has also caused me to meditate deeply over the years.

I long for the Kingdom, for the release from the competitive nature of human living, for full and complete trust to be everyone's interactive currency, for unrestrained giving to be normal, for love to abound. But for now we groan with the rest of creation, longing to be released from the bondage to decay into the glorious liberty of the Children of God.

Maranatha!

Re: what would need to happen... - posted by MaryJane, on: 2014/7/22 12:35

So I came across this and just really felt the LORD in this heart and attitude being shared. Those early believers were like a family, they loved the LORD and one another...

God bless
maryjane

(from a teaching on Act 2:42-47) Do you know that these were baby Christians? These weren't fifteen-year-old Christians that had finally learned how to let go of their lives and to love and care for each other like a family. These were baby Christians. This is the Word of Jesus to new believers even, that you let go of your lives and merge your lives together as One. The Bible speaks of contending as one man for the faith and being of one accord. It speaks of being of one heart, one soul, and one mind and no one saying to another part of the body, "I have no need of you" (1 Cor. 12:21). The Scriptures speak of a Christian as one who has lost his life into the Life of Jesus and into the life of the Body of Jesus. It's clear that if we're disconnected from the Head who is Christ, then we die. But it holds equally true that if we disconnect any part of the body and throw it over to the side, the body dies. That's because my arm needs my shoulder, my heart and my lungs. My fingers are in need of my hand and my hands help my feet, my head, my ears and my eyes. They are all connected. What if all the parts of your body were only connected to your head? That would be very ugly! And very useless, right? Jesus designed us as a body to be, as the Bible says, "Joined and knit together by every supporting ligament" (Col. 2:19). The Bible says we are all supposed to be interconnected to each other and together connected to the Head.

In a practical way, that means, "Be called alongside one another daily, warn one another daily, admonish one another daily, encourage one another daily, as long as it's called today" (Hebrews 3:13). If you won't do that, you will be hardened and deceived by sin. That means that I could never be spiritual enough or read my Bible enough or pray enough that I don't need you. I will be hardened and deceived by sin, if I think I can have my own relationship with God and I don't need your gifts, insights, and wisdom. I'll be hardened and deceived if I say, "I don't need you to help me see the weeds that need to be pulled in my life. I don't need that. I pray so much. I'm so spiritual, and I have a Bible college degree, and I, I, I, me, me, me." That is not the message of the Scriptures. Jesus says we will have a hundred mothers, brothers, sisters, fathers, lands and possessions. He desires and even demands that we be intertwined on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday, everyday. Jesus desires that I help you fix your house or take care of your yard. And you help me go shopping and we work together to fix a meal. I sacrifice myself to come and help you on your job when you get a little bit behind. It's not, "Well, that's your job." No, that's our job.

If it were your child, you would help them, right? If your child is sick, you stay up all night cradling them. If your child is having difficulties, even when he gets older, with his marriage or with his job, a parent is always there to help, right? So it shall be in the House of God, the Family of God. When our hearts and minds are conformed to the Word of God and the ways of God, we won't want to attend church ever again. You can't attend your child. You can't attend your family. You can be together with your family, but you can't attend your family because they're a part of you! And when your family is all in one place, that's a wonderful thing, but that kind of time is

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snâ€™t what your life centers around. Having a meeting in your living room doesnâ€™t define your family. That would make it an orphanage, not a family.

Being family is when you rise up, sit down and walk along the way, sharing the grace, the love and the thoughts of God together. As family, we encourage each other when weâ€™re sad, and we bear each otherâ€™s burdens (Galatians 6:2). We confess sins one to another so that we might be healed (James 5:16). All these things are what the Scriptures have always taught, but very few Christians in the world do these things, even though they talk about them. They might know where the Bible verse is, but when was the last time they confessed their sins to another brother or sister with tears, and asked for prayer? When was the last time they â€œbore a burdenâ€ that was more than an announcement at the church building? Have they instead been with them, involved in their life, and seen their need firsthand? They were at their house and saw the bare cabinets, and it broke their heart. So they sneak away, buy groceries, and make sure, as the Bible says, â€œThere were no needy persons among themâ€ (Acts 4:34). That means that whatever we have together, somehow we find a way to make sure, to the best of our ability, everyoneâ€™s needs are met at least as well as mine are. Maybe my needs arenâ€™t met very well, and I donâ€™t have a lot of extra resources, but no one that I love and care for who is a part of the Family of God will be needier than I am. In the Family of Godâ€™a hundred mothers, brothers, sistersâ€™I wonâ€™t let that happen. I might be needy, but I will never let anyone be needier than I am. Would you let your child be hungrier than you are? NO! We would never do that! We would never eat and then allow our child to be hungrier than we are. A good parent would never do that. It would be a deranged, insane, self-centered, evil parent that would let his child be hungrier than he or she is. And so it is in the Family of God.