



WEEKLY STUDY

The Marks of a Movement - Week Four

The early church was an undeniable movement of God. Even those who found it threatening could see the bold, inspiring, miraculous nature of the church. Luke included a second description of the church in Acts 4. It seems to build upon the description at the end of chapter 2. You will know you are in this same movement of God when you witness and participate in extravagant generosity!

Please note our prayer focus for the week in the box below. Join us in seeing what God will do as we unite in prayer.

Peace of Christ,
Pastor Mark Youngman

If you are studying with your Providence Small Group or Discipleship Group, you can share from your own daily reflections and consider the Group Discussion questions below. If you would like to get connected visit prov.church/smallgroups.

Prayer Focus:

- Pray for our mission team heading to Belize this week. They will be sharing the same Vacation Bible School our kids experienced in June—including a family celebration on the last day. May the church in Tennessee and the church in Belize learn to Live it Out!

DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: ACTS 4.31-37 (NIV)

After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

³² All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. ³³ With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all ³⁴ that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales ³⁵ and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need.

³⁶ Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means "son of encouragement"), ³⁷ sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet.

- Recall the prayer for boldness of speech and for signs and wonders the believers had just prayed in [Acts 4.29-30](#). They experienced a quick and undeniable response. They were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly! Oftentimes God's response to our prayers seems less immediate and we might even miss the correlation between our prayers and God's movement. When have you seen a swift response to prayer? What disciplines might help you to give God credit even when there seems to have been a delay?
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- **Prayer Prompt: And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. (Ephesians 6.18)**
- *God, keep my heart tuned into your response to the prayers I lift up to you. Open my eyes to your faithful activity to empower me as a disciple. Amen.*

TUESDAY: PSALM 46.1-3 (NIV)

*God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble.*

² *Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,*

³ *though its waters roar and foam
and the mountains quake with their surging.*

- Sometimes it seems as if the ground beneath our feet is trembling. Sometimes it actually is! The early church experienced the shaking of the place where they were meeting. Alarm is our natural response to losing our equilibrium. God promises to be our refuge in moments of uncertainty. As the Psalmist wrote: the earth may give way, but we will not fear! Name a time when you were so shook by the circumstances around you that you knew you were in trouble. If you are not still in the middle of that time, what got you through?
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- **Prayer Prompt: Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe,²⁹ for our “God is a consuming fire.” (Hebrews 12.28)**
 - *God, you are my refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Draw me into the security of your embrace that I might not live in fear. Amen.*

WEDNESDAY: PHILIPPIANS 4.18-19 (NIV)

I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God.¹⁹ And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.

- The movement of the early church was marked by extravagant generosity. Believers were taking care of one another with beautiful, selfless, giving. One man sold a field and gave the proceeds to the work of the early church. Where do you witness extravagant generosity in the church today? How are you being called to live into this mark of the movement?
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- **Prayer Prompt: Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.⁸ And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. (2 Corinthians 9.7-8)**
- *Generous God, you have given me everything I need in the sacrificial gift of your Son Jesus. Give me a cheerful heart and an open-handedness just as you meet all my needs. Amen.*

THURSDAY: EPHESIANS 4.4-6 (NIV)

There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called;⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism;⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

- In Sunday's message, Rachel pointed out that, “We live in a world where all the believers being one in heart and mind feels almost out of reach. But we believe as we grow as disciples and we learn to live through the power of the Holy Spirit, that our unity as believers will grow.” Unity is one of the superpowers of the church today. When we stand side by side with people who are different from us but who share a focus on Jesus, we witness something that the world can't easily compute. How is the unity of the church on display in and through your life today?
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- **Prayer Prompt: I pray ...that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. (John 17.20-21)**
 - *Lord God, may your Son's prayer for his disciples be answered again, here and now, in our time. May the world come to believe through the witness of your church. Amen.*

FRIDAY: ACTS 13.2-3 (NIV)

While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."³ So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

- We run into the character of Barnabus frequently in the book of Acts. This man whom Luke introduced us to in Acts 4 became a key part of the movement. The first thing we saw him do? Sell a field and give all of the money to the church (Acts 4.36-37). That cheerful act of giving did something to his heart that prepared him to be named among the apostles. When has an act of faithful generosity led you to feel more useful and deeply ingrained in the things of God?
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- **Prayer Prompt: We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. (2 Corinthians 5.20)**
- *Lord God, I want to carry the mark of generosity that we see in Barnabas. In your perfect will, I yield to your calling. Amen.*

SATURDAY: ACTS 4.25 (NIV)

You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David:

*"Why do the nations rage
and the peoples plot in vain?
²⁶ The kings of the earth rise up
and the rulers band together
against the Lord
and against his anointed one.*

- The believers prayed this prayer in last week's passage. In it, they referred to David as a servant. The same word was used to describe Jesus. When we look at the early church, they were identified by a different word denoting that they were an even lower level of servant. We come from a long line of servants! How is the language of "servant" helpful for us as we live as the church today? In what ways is that language difficult?
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- **Prayer Prompt: You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. (Galatians 5.13)**
- *God, free me from self-centeredness and ego that I might serve my brothers and sisters well. Amen.*

GROUP DISCUSSION

Take time to share personal reflections from your study and prayer this week, then spend some time discussing the various marks of the movement shared in Sunday's sermon.

1. Extravagant Generosity:

2. Unity:

3. Filled with the Holy Spirit:

- Where do you see these marks of a movement present in your small group?
- In what ways are you challenged to carry those marks with even more boldness?
- What is God calling you to?