

## **Selling Plurality Acts 4:34**

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The Way International

Take your Bibles tonight and turn to Acts chapter 4. It's either God's way or our way - the booklet entitled, *God's Way or Our Way*, Mrs. Fishbaugh, Dee, you would know or the church - The 20<sup>th</sup> Century - *First Century Church in the 20<sup>th</sup>*, it's either one of those two that deals primarily with Acts chapter 5 and chapter 4. Later on, after you find out what, after I get to teaching here which one it is, I'd like to know before the close of the service because I have written a *Study in Abundant Living* somewhat along the line of what I want to share with our people who are gathered here tonight.

First of all, I'd like to say that The Way Ministry represents an interdenominational, nonsectarian type of group, also many times people who have no denominational affiliation. We have men and women who belong to The Way Ministry (and when I say belong to The Way Ministry I simply mean they are men and women who attend fellowships of Bible research and teaching like this across the nation in the cities where we have people who meet weekly some who meet semi-monthly and some who meet monthly), they gather together and do one thing, and that is to fellowship around the Word to study the Word. Some of them use tapes that we send from Headquarters. Some of them use the booklets, *Studies in Abundant Living*. Some of them start through the syllabus with their group and start working from page one all through the foundational syllabus again. When I say people of The Way Ministry, I mean men and women of all walks of life, different backgrounds - some who have a church membership and they are very active in their church: they teach Sunday school, they work there. On the other hand, we have people who have no church affiliation whatsoever. When I say interdenominational and nonsectarian, that's what I mean: men and women who have a concern for the greatness and the accuracy of God's Word.

Now I doubt very much if it makes God much business, you know makes God much difference in the business of Christianity, whether you got a label on you or whether you haven't. You know the kind of label where it would say this brand or that brand. I think the quality must be determined what a man or woman has on the inside. It's like I teach in all of my classes to put the word "peach" on the outside of a can and have a pickle on the inside doesn't make it a peach of pickle. It may be a peach of a pickle on the inside, but changing it on the outside doesn't change it on the inside. Or to label a can horseradish and you put some of those hot pickles in - what do you call those that ... mmmmmmm, the ones that I like, they're so hot you drink a glass of water with each mouthful of pickle or something. What are those things? Hot peppers? Aw ... when doc and I are talking about hot peppers, we're talking about hot, hot, hot peppers. Now, just labelling that can of hot peppers, pickles will not change the heat on the inside.

So it is with the Word of God. I think all of us understand this. And the whole world as far as Christian people are concerned, denominational people, ought to understand it: that's it's

not the label on the outside that's important, but what do you have on the inside. Are you really born again of God's spirit, does Christ really live within? And if Christ lives within, and you are walking on the Word of God, then we can have fellowship like this. If Christ lives within, then you're a son of God this way and I'm a son of God this way even if we could never have any fellowship this way – on an horizontal plane. Because there are men and women born again of God's spirit whom you could not have fellowship with because, first of all they don't want to have it with you and yet they are God's children because of one thing, they are born again. Being born again of God's, they're sons of His, but they can't live with other sons and can't listen to them and can't be a part of what they're doing because they can't agree. Oh this shouldn't be hard to understand because naturally we are all sons of men, right? Sons and daughters of men, right? Okay, yet you can't get along on this earth either with your neighbors, you know, at times. One country can't get along with another country and yet those people down there eat and sleep and drink and breathe. They are people, too. Well, then why get excited to think well if you're a real Christian you ought to get along with everybody. That's impossible because they perhaps don't want to get along with you. If they don't want to get along with you, it's just like in the natural world, you could try to be a wonderful neighbor, but if the neighbor doesn't want to get along with you, what are you going to do about it?

Now, to get into this field in Acts where I want to teach tonight, I want to begin with the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter and with the 34<sup>th</sup> verse of this chapter because here we have the record in part of an operation within the early church. If we say that the church started on the Day of Pentecost, then we ought to search the Word to find out what it teaches regarding that early church, then we ought to pattern our lives accordingly.

In verse 33 it says:

**Acts 4:33,34a**

And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace [divine favor] was upon them all.  
Neither was there any among them that lacked:

In the early church as this body of believers grew, there was absolutely no one who lacked and yet this is not internationally true today. It's not even true nationally. So the early church must have done something. They must have operated a certain way which made it possible that no one in the body of believers lacked. The greatest thing that they had which was that which was given in the 33<sup>rd</sup> verse: they knew what they had in the resurrection, and they gave witness, witness of the power of the resurrection. If you understand the resurrection and everything in connection with it as the early apostles did, then this matter of the moving of the early church becomes much plainer.

In the same verse (34) it says:

**Acts 4:34b**

for as many as were possessors̄ of lands̄ or houses̄ sold them, and brought the prices̄ of the things̄ [plural] that were sold,

You notice the plural in here; that's the important thing: for as many as were possessors [plural], lands [plural], houses [plural] prices [plural], things [plural]. It is this matter that made it possible (as the plurality of these things became distributed properly) it made it possible for the first part of that verse to be recorded in the Word of God, "Neither was there any among them that lacked".

You know in Acts before we go any further, I want you to look at Acts 2:44:

**Acts 2:44**

And all that believed [And all that believed] were together, and had all things common;

Now back to Acts 4. In verse 32:

**Acts 4:32**

And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any *of them* that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.

Isn't that something? This matter of understanding that which is common has caused more end of trouble because first of all they don't accept it at all as common. In other words, the church has never taught anything is common for centuries because if they had to teach everything is common to – some of the denominations would have to give up oodles and oodles of property and money, and that's impossible to get them to do.

By the way, there's a tremendous report out just this week on the amount of material things, secular businesses, which are owned by religious denominations. It would flabbergast you. Something like 45 million dollars' worth of taxes is withheld from the government each year because of these religious institutions that own secular businesses, but they throw 'em in for their tax exempt. Just for your information, The Way Ministry is tax exempt on this building that you're sitting in and one acre of land out of the 150. That's all. And this building is only exempt, all the rest of the land we pay full taxation on. That's the way it ought to be, the way it ought to be.

Well, this matter of common – a small handful of people have tried through the years to teach that this meant when you had all things in common it was the same thing as what the communist stood for: that they had everything in a communistic form, that everything you had belonged to everybody else. That's a bunch of baloney. They're trying to make it that way today, but it's ... that's not what this is talking about. There are two words used for common in the Bible and we should make a note of this. The one is the word *koinos*. It's spelled k-o-i-n-o-s, k-o-i-n-o-s, *koinos*. This word common means: "pertaining equally to all". That's what you ought to write down regarding it, "pertaining equally to all," meaning: this is what all did; it was a common practice. Many times when you read this word *koinos* it means "common practice".

Take for instance in verse 32 of the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter:

**Acts 4:32b**

... ought of the things which he [had] possessed was his own; but they had all things [in] common [practice – pertaining equally to all].

In chapter 2, we read a little while ago, we read in verse 44:

**Acts 2:44**

And all that believed were together, and had all things [in] common [practice];

That's the meaning of the word *koinos*.

The other word is the word *dēmosis*, spelled d-ē (long e)-m-o-s-i-s, *dēmosis*. This word means: “the common people” or “the common people of a state”. Had God meant that they had a communistic form of government, it would have had to use this second word instead of *koinos*. First of all, it couldn't be communistic because the communistic attitude is all without God, nothing there about God. Therefore, that's out to begin with. We should have known that through the centuries. But, in the early church they – it was a common practice, everything common, it was a common practice that the people should be equally blessed, equally benefitted throughout the entire church body. It's the tremendousness of this truth (that's set here in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> chapter of Acts) that makes it so living and so real. It so cuts across most of our thinking today that it's almost impossible to teach this to anybody because the first thing people do when you teach here, they throw up their hands and they say, “Boy, if that, if that's it – not for me.” Well, we don't throw up our hands on other things on the Word of God, then why throw up our hands here? You make up your mind, finally, if God's Word is right or if it's wrong. If it's right, God can bless us when we obey it, right? If God's Word is right and we disobey it, will it break the Word? No, we just break ourselves upon it. One of the reasons why the church is so dead today is because it does not apply the principles that are set forth here in the Word of God. Until our people in The Way Ministry apply this principle, they will not see the blessing of God first on their own lives, then upon the lives of their families and upon the life of the ministry to which God has called us.

I remember the time when we began working this Word of God and light began to dawn on it: that as we got more and more light, we got less and less people because the background of this ministry has a great deal more in it than most of you people know today who have just come into this ministry in the last five or ten years because you can come into a beautiful auditorium like this. (By the way, we laid a new sidewalk for you this week. Did you notice it? Now it can snow because you can all get in with dry feet, clean feet and so forth. Well, Doc—he formed it up good, and Bob and he poured it and Rueben helped. We had a couple ladies to help and, boy, everybody worked to get 'er done. But, how'd I get on sidewalks, what were we talking about? Okay, what were we talking about, Thelma? Oh, yes ...) You see all of this, and you walk into a comfortable building that's air conditioned in summer and heated occasionally in winter and all of these other wonderful things we have here, and you say, "Boy, isn't this something?" But, in order to make available what's here tonight, there's some of us who have had to stand through thick and thin, through a lot of talk, a lot of persecution, a lot of bickering and a lot of laughing. At times we've had to take a stand when even our best friends moved away.

I remember the day when there were no more than two or three people would come to a Bible study on Wednesday or Thursday night in the week. I suppose today if we only had two or three people, we'd think the world came to an end. But, I remember those days, and here in the auditorium again tonight (I don't know if you people knew I was going to teach on this, that's why you all came, huh?), but here sit the Kupps from Convoy, Ohio; the Permins from Ft. Wayne, Indiana; the Ira Joneses from Van Wert, Ohio – three couples who have stuck with us down through the years. Boy, this is something. I don't know if you people realize how it blesses my heart on a Sunday night or any night of the week, when I'm teaching or something is open here at the headquarters to help everybody, and you see people like the Joneses, the Permins and the Kupps. They drive in here every Sunday night from Convoy, from Ft. Wayne, from Van Wert – almost every Sunday. (Once in a while Eldo has to take an evening off to go fishing and Herman has to do something; Joneses have to take a little trip out to fish. In the Jones family, Mrs. Jones fishes, Mr. Jones just drives the car. In the Kupp family it's the opposite,: Eldo drives the car, he does the fishing, and Grace just rides along.)

So, I could tell you lots about a lot of these people – but it's all good. Eldo just brought me a hunting knife tonight. (I lost the one he gave me last year, so he brought me a new one tonight.) Is it sharp? He said he got me a wet stone – it ought to be sharp because he sharpens knives over there in Convoy (among other things). He's worked at ... you work at Goodyear didn't you ... no not ... ah Harvester. (I get St. Mary's and Fort Wayne mixed.) But he's worked at Harvester for how many years? Thirty-six years, and when he started working there ... what'd they used to pay an hour down there, when you started? Fifty-two cents an hour, and he's been there thirty-six years and has a wonderful job. I think they like him, but they're going to retire him some of these times, then he, of course, he'll be able to come to The Way more often than he's even doing now.

But people like the Kupps and the Permins and the Joneses, when I teach here on Sunday night, many times the things that I teach they may have heard a dozen times. They may have been in on the first services when some of this stuff began to brew within my soul, and I used to teach this thing in Van Wert. As this ministry began to grow, the knowledge of God's Word began to grow in my heart, I shared it with people. Most of the people that I've shared it with – we still have wonderful friends, they have a good feeling towards you; they're thankful that they knew you and they're thankful for what's going on – but to stand with the ministry, except to be thankful (that's better than having [them] stand the other way, for which I'm grateful), they don't do anything concrete for the ministry, like these people do. Occasionally they come, but not systematically.

As I look back over the years, to think how this ministry really started, it began at a place that's almost impossible for people to realize. When they look at the ministry or they look at my life, here in the local community and every other place, they simply say, "Well, why didn't he stay where he was? Why didn't he stay in the denomination? Why didn't he move it? Can't a man work there?" There's a lot of answers and a lot of things to be discussed in that category. It began because of the hunger in my heart for a knowledge of God's Word. That's where it began. I had read commentaries upon commentaries. I had read books upon books, and yet I could not understand the Word; I couldn't put the Bible together. There were things that did not fit, and

what one person said about a certain verse of scripture another equally intelligent person contradicted what that person said.

When I went into the ministry in nineteen hundred and forty-one in Payne Ohio (and perhaps the finest people that we still have left from Payne, Ohio are Mr. and Mrs. Cleon White, who come here occasionally from Van Wert) Cleon White was the man who met us at the time when we first went to Payne, Ohio. We took that little church there, and it was in nineteen hundred and forty-one that we started out there. But, by nineteen hundred and forty-two I realized that the things that I had learned in the seminaries were wonderful (I enjoyed the mental gymnastics of the theological seminaries; I enjoyed the keenness of the theologians; I enjoyed all of these things), but what I learned there wasn't good in practice, it did not work with the people who had a need – for those people who came to church every Sunday: who bought the bricks in that place and who wouldn't go away if the devil himself preached there, they still hold on to the church, they came every Sunday anyway. I knew (I saw this the first year), they'd come no matter what you taught in that place; they'd come because they got their money in the bricks or in the boards or in the sidewalks, therefore they hold on to it no matter what's taught. But, the first year in my ministry I found out that when there was real need – not among that group, but among the others who occasionally came to the church or some who never "disgraced the place" (as they called it) with their presence – I couldn't help them. This began to bother me. Why was it that a man could go through four years of college and about five years of seminary (at that time), have a bachelor of arts, a bachelor of divinity, a masters of theology and all of my work finished for a PhD (with the exception of about seven credits) – being out there in the ministry and not being able to get the job done? I saw my farmers out there farm: they got the corn crop; they got the wheat; they got the oats, but inside of the church, I couldn't see any results. Oh, it was nice to have the chicken dinners and the little family affairs you go to, and the women's guild, that men's brotherhood, all of that, but no real results. I got sort of sick in my heart, and I began praying that God would show me how this Word was put together because all I did was what the average person still does: he just reads a verse of scripture, then reads a commentary on it and preaches what the commentary says. Or he gets an idea of what it means, but is never able to fit the scripture from Genesis to Revelation. I had read so many books and saw so much contradiction that it was impossible for me to be able to teach the Word.

I remember one meeting of the Evangelical and Reformed ministers in the early days of my ministry. (This is about six/seven months after I was in the ministry.) I was asked to speak to this group meeting up north. I spoke to them what I believed was the truth of God's Word, and that is that, "The least a Christian could do was to tithe," and being a young minister in the church – those ministers almost laughed me out of the meeting. They said, "Well, Wierwille, are you that stupid that you think that we, as Christian ministers, should still tithe?" I said, "Yes, don't you?" They said, "No, we don't tithe." One minister in that whole group tithed (and Anna Shwere you'd know who it was if I named him). He was in that meeting, only one, and he said, "Well, I've tithed ever since I've been a Christian." But, all the rest of them said, "No, we don't give our tithes." That shook me. It hurt me because I thought, certainly the ministers, if they were going to head up the congregation, would do as much or more than they would ask their people to do. That was shock number one, and it was a dandy. It didn't leave me – it left me numb and never got me back to my senses for about four weeks, I just couldn't imagine.

So, all of this stuff began to build. Finally, as I kept praying, I just said to the Father, "Father, teach me the Word. Teach me the Word." One night, something happened, which to me is the greatest thing I don't – I see only one experience that perhaps is greater than this in the Bible, and that's the Apostle Paul's experience on the road to Damascus. Outside of that, I see nothing in the Word that equals how God revealed Himself to me and talked to me and told me as plain as day that, "If I would study the Word, He would teach me the Word like He had not been able to teach it to anybody since the first generation." Of course, at that time I thought, "Now that's a dandy! Boy, if I learned this Word of God, everybody'll listen to me. The whole church will be blessed. My denomination will grow by leaps and bounds because we'll have the Word of God." I thought that was terrific! But, during the process of that revelation (and I can't tell it all to you because we're already closing off) I said, "Father, how will I know that this is You and that You'll really teach it to me?" (I had worked the Word in commentaries and the rest of it and I couldn't understand it, couldn't get it to fit.) It happened to be bright sunshine like today (like it's been today and yesterday – what we people refer to, I guess, as "Indian Summer," beautiful day). The sun was shining brightly; it was in the fall of the year – gorgeous! There wasn't a cloud in the sky, and just on the inside of me it seemed to say, "Well, just say to the Father, if it'll just snow, right now, you'll just know that this is God talking to you." But, you see I'd never had much experience with God talking to me. This business of Him saying to me, just as audibly as I'm speaking to you, that He'd teach me the Word if I'd teach it, sort of shook me. I'd been expecting to hear from heaven for a long time, but I hadn't heard that way before, you know. Ah, my ears were perhaps clogged up (since that time I've heard a lot of things from Him), but then I said, "Lord, if this is really true, I'd like to see it snow." I opened my eyes (must not have been over three seconds), and I was sitting in front of the window looking east. The sun was in the west, and there wasn't a cloud in the sky because I could see the whole area. I closed my eyes when God said to me that He would teach me the Word if I'd teach it. I said, "Lord, to know that this is true, I'd like to see it snow." And I opened my eyes and it was pitch, almost pitch black outside, and the snow was falling so thick, I have never seen it fall that thick since that day. I sat in that little office and I cried like a baby because I guess it was about my time to cry, because I'd grown up, but didn't know the Word.

From that day on, and He'd promised to teach me the Word, I have tried with all my heart, from time to time all along, to learn this Word. One of the reasons there are sections of the Word, perhaps, that I don't know is because I do too much cement pouring and a few other items that have to be done, that have to be taken care of. But, I am absolutely confident that there is no portion of God's Word that God would not teach me and unfold to me if I studied the Word to show myself approved unto Him by rightly dividing it.

That began the ministry that has cost me, sense-knowledge, more than anybody will ever realize except those of us who've gone through it. It gives you a whole set of new friends. It caused people, heads of my denomination through various times when I appeared teaching (like in India) even to write letters against me – that I was not a member of the denomination at all . . . and I'd been born in the lousy place. Isn't that something? I have them on file, you ought to see them, I've got a sheet this big [sic]. These are prices you pay. Then you say, well, why don't I reciprocate? Because, people, you can't fight and work the Word, too. You can't be fighting all the time and trying to defend yourself against the unbelievers because the unbelievers are many more than the believers. We've got only one job to do, as far as my life is concerned, and that's

to teach the Word. Whether anybody believes it or not, that's not my responsibility, but to teach it is my responsibility, because He said He'd teach me the Word if I would do one thing – teach it.

Now in order to teach it, I have to study the Word. When I study it, He shows it to me, then I can teach it. I think a lot of you people know great Bible students that are in here tonight, and we have among our people gathered here tonight, like almost every Sunday night, some of the finest Bible students in the world today. We have Bible students in here to whom no theologian in the entire world can hold a candle when it comes to the rightly dividing and the understanding of God's Word. I think every person in here knows that they can work the Word, and they do work it. They get wonderful light, and they contribute a great deal to The Way Ministry and the light that's taught out of The Way Ministry. But, when these people bring their light on the Word to me and I have the opportunity to hear it—it doesn't take me but one reading or one hearing and I can, usually, without working it too far, I can pick out the error or pick the good that they bring and fit it right in.

This is what God raised me to, and when He gave me that revelation (and that was a real phenomena or phenomenon) from that day on (this was in Payne, Ohio where this happened), light began to dawn. But, you can't learn the whole Word in one night. Therefore, you study the Word. You study it. I suppose I read Genesis chapter one through eleven a thousand times. I don't know how many times you've read it, but I imagine a thousand times is a low number that I have read Genesis, chapter one through eleven because I was taught that Genesis one through eleven had at least four or five different authors – you know, the J-P-D documents, this kind of stuff. I'd been taught all of this.

And so I'd read the Word; I'd read it. Then I'd work, start looking, start working and as we began working this Word of God, is when light began to dawn – wonderful things that God did for us. He brought men and women across our paths who came just at the right time to help us in our light: men who had gone so far, but no further, but, God brought these men, so that we could go further because these men brought light. Men like Rufus Mosely; men like E. Stanley Jones; men like Albert Cliff; men like Star Daley. God brought all of these men and others—many of them, across our pathways, just at the right time to add to this revelation and enable us to walk on the Word and understand it.

Perhaps the greatest one to move in the category of what I learned here in Acts four and five (to start the greatness of this thing) was a woman by the name of Rosalind Rinker. Some of you people will know her today because she was here in Lima, Ohio less than a year ago or a year and a half ago. She travels and works with a woman named Genie Price. Genie Price is quite an author, writes books that are published by Zondervan, if I remember correctly. Rosalind Rinker had been on the mission field in Korea, if I remember correctly (someplace out east – Korea doesn't sound right to me, I've forgotten now where she was). Where? Was it China? I think you're right. And a lady by the name of Aletta Yacob had come through from Africa and stopped on her way back to the United States in China. This woman, Aletta Yacob, had been filled with the spirit in Africa and had been operating manifestations of the spirit and things were booming. You know, light was dawning and people were getting saved and other things happening in Africa that were just beginning to swell. So, she stopped in China and had a series



of evangelistic meetings there and all she allowed to come (or all they allowed to come were the missionaries, their wives and their children), and they had oodles of conversions among the missionaries, their wives and their children. One of those women who got converted was Rosalind Rinker, who'd been on the mission field for sixteen years before. (By the way, Aletta Yacob left China, started back home and her ship was bombed in the Pacific. She lost her life.) Rosalind Rinker came back from the mission field, and I was doing a monthly piece of writing for a magazine out of Indiana. Remember the name of the magazine, in Butler, Indiana? I forget the title of the magazine. I used to be a regular contributing editor toward it, each week, each month. Pardon? No, it wasn't Christian Advocate. I forget the name of it. But anyways, it was the Higley Press at Butler, Indiana. It's still there by the way. Ah, pardon? No, that was Bloomfield. I was with that, too. That was Dr. Bloomfield. I was in Butler, Indiana at the Higley Press with my article and talking to the boss, Mr. Higley. When we walked back through the building, he introduced me to this woman, Rosalind Rinker. We got acquainted just in a brief period of time and somehow or other, it jelled within my heart to say to her, "Well, why don't you come over to our house and spend a week?" She said, "Well, I'll just do it." That was a surprise to me because the average person who had a depth of religion usually said to me, "Well, I'll pray about it." That was the usual attitude that I'd run into by this time. But, you know, if they had any depth of spirituality (like the boys that graduate from Moody, Wheaton and the rest of them), they would always say to me, "We've gotta take time out and pray about it." But, this woman had found something out there under Aletta Yacob. She had tapped something, and she knew that when somebody said to her do so-in-so, if the time was right, it was God's will for her to walk in. So I said to her, "Would you like to come for a week or so with us?" and she said, "Yes, I will." I said, "When will you come?" She said, I'll be there Saturday (or Sunday) – I forget which.

Lo and behold, here she came. You know what we did? When she came, I wanted her to speak to our church group, but she had no interest in that. She said, "I want to talk to you." We sat down in that same office where I'd had this revelation from the Lord, and she began dealing with me in the Word. "Boy," I thought to myself, "How can a woman have this much knowledge of the Word?" She told me she had learned all of this within the last six, seven months! She took me (that had been through all these colleges and seminaries and had almost my work for my doctors degree finished), she just takes me and winds me around her finger with the knowledge of God's Word. I didn't know any of God's Word compared to her. I'd quote her some theologian, and she said, "That don't mean anything to me. What does the Word say?" She pinned me down, and she took me into the Word and showed me that it was the Word that counted and not what a theologian said or what a man said, but what does the Word say? She kept backing me up against the wall – the whole week long, just night after night, day after day. That's all she did.

So, one evening, after everybody else had gone to bed, she and I went into the church and we knelt at the pulpit chairs up in front, and we prayed together. That was the second great night of my life. When, during the course of that week, she told me that God was showing her that He had something very special for me to do, and that I should teach the Word. I forget what this all is about, but it's on the flyleaf of our class on Power for Abundant Living. It is she who made that statement that's on that cover (you know that red-green-yellow thing that we give out for the classes on Power for Abundant Living). Her statement that she (this isn't the exact words but the

essence of it of what she said) is on that sheet and that greatness of God substantiating to her, what He had already told me, corroborated something in my heart. That just blessed my soul. This sent us on a quest, and, of course, one of the reasons I'm headed for this story in here tonight is because, she took me through this fourth chapter. She didn't understand it as fully as I understand it now, but she understood enough of the fourth and the fifth chapter of Acts that she made me sit up and pay attention and know that God's Word was more in here than what I was doing or asking my people to do.

But, in order to complete something here that God would have me to say now (was at many years later, along towards forty-six, forty-seven, forty-eight, forty-nine –those years when I was so hungry for God's Word), I used to run anyplace where there was knowledge on God's Word. If I heard of a meeting in Arkansas where they were having a meeting along the line of God's Word, I'd jump a plane or take a train to go there. I had a wonderful group of Elders in the church in Van Wert at that time. All I would do is call the head Elder and tell him, "I won't be there on Sunday, I've asked Reverend so-in-so to come." Many a time I did this on Thursday night or Friday of the week and tell him I wouldn't be there on Sunday morning. How would you have enjoyed to been a member of my congregation? You'd never know who your preacher might be next Sunday morning. I was off and running again.

There was a hunger in my heart and God, said He'd teach me the Word if I'd teach it, but I had to study; I had to work. Revelation begins (this is why I know this so well), revelation begins where the senses cease. What you can know by your senses, God expects you to know. He expects you to study the work that has already been worked out: men like Bullinger; men like Stevie Ginsberg; God expected me to work those men and countless others. But, He taught me how to get the error out when there was any, and out of that process He then taught me what was truth. When there was no way of knowing it, and I'd researched to my fullest ability, tried to find out, then, if there is no other way, He showed it to me by direct revelation. Time and time again He'd take the scripture and make it this big. I'm reading along in a verse and all at once there it is, two words this big, for instance. Well, you have to be stupid to miss it, you know.

I began running and, people, I literally ran all over. I finally started making some trips abroad. I was very much interested in missions, foreign mission. I started to make some trips to Central America to see for myself first hand just exactly what was happening on the mission field. When I got out to the mission field, I found it so surprisingly revolting to me that I couldn't tell it, I couldn't tell it. When I got back to the United States, I couldn't tell it, all I could do was show pretty pictures of the buildings and the nice banana plantations. But, they had no more light on the mission field than I had back in the states. Well, how could they have, we graduated from the same theological seminaries, came out of the same denomination. How could we have any more light there than I had back home? But, at that time I didn't know that.

So I began questing in all of these fields. Every time I quested, God showed me light – brought people around. That's why, as the Word began to move, when great truths (like today I teach the four crucified with Jesus), you know we got people in the class – nobody in the class believes it, when I start it, nobody. They've all seen the picture of two crucified with Jesus, nobody believes it unless one of The Way grads has been to them before the class, that's all. But, if they have never sat under the ministry that we represent or where our ministry has reached out,

they're shocked at this thing, they just don't believe it. Yet, within one half hour to forty-five minutes, every person in the class believes it, sometimes as high as eighteen different denominations, men and women of great difference in ages and mental ability, yet every one of them sees the truth of God's Word. They stand put on it.

I remember when I first taught this, when people heard about it, I got letters back – I was a heretic. Oh, and they said such nice things about me, all of this stuff: I was lying, I was trying to tear the Bible apart. Well, what would you do? All I did was kept on working. As I learned something, I would teach it. When I learned a little more of it, I'd teach it. That's how we grew. That's why this ministry is among us tonight ... not because, primarily of who I am, but because, primarily of what the Word represents in our day and our age. That's right. Therefore, when I knew the Word, I have never backed down on the Word of God ... never (that I could remember). If I did, somebody ought to boot me. I have stood up against my friends at times and said, "You are wrong, that's not what the Word says." I have seen people turn the other way and walk the other way, after I have told them this. But, I have never backed down on the Word. This is one reason why it has cost me so much because, at times, sense knowledge wise, it'd be a lot easier to back down on the Word than it is to say to someone, "This is God's Word."

Right in this section where we're dealing tonight, where we're going to be dealing as we get winding this thing up after a bit – right in here is where many people go the other way. It's just like Jesus, they didn't follow him any longer because something else happened. So it is here. The greatness of this ministry lay in the hearts of our people who mean business for God. If you're concerned about the accuracy of the Word, we have no axe to grind with any denomination or any group of people. We have only one Word, and that's the greatness of God's Word. Ladies and gentlemen, if we are heretics because we rightly divide the Word, I'd rather be a heretic with the Lord than be all right being dead wrong, or something. I don't know how we figured that one. That's right. I'd rather be right with the Lord than with the whole bunch of you in here tonight. I'm sure you'd rather be right with the Lord than with the whole bunch in here tonight.

The Word has to have the preeminence. That's why you people, some of you in here again tonight (like every Sunday night) come from distant places to be in here – travel, many of you hundreds of miles to be in here on a Sunday night for the teaching ministry. Some of you don't travel quite that far: New Bremen, New Knoxville, a few other places. You're close in, but some of the rest of them travel a lot farther. The thing that has to live is the greatness of the Word, and this has to continue to live within you, and you have to walk on it.

There are very few people who can stand the pressure of time. You maybe walk on the ministry one month and the second month something gets to you, then it's over with. If you stay a year, somebody ought to give you a medal. If you can stay two years, I don't know what you ought to have. But, if you can stay as long as the Kupps and the Permins and the Joneses and some of the rest of you, God must have something real special in store for you. That's all I can say because there's hardly anybody that can stick through the pressure of the thing. As all of you people know, once you start teaching the Word in your community, really setting down the Word of God as it's accurately written and making people say, "This is what the Word says, and not what you think or I think, or what Johnny Jumpup thinks, or Snowball Pete or Henry Boloko, but

this is what the Word says," the people are gonna say "Hey, what's the matter with you? That's not the way I've been taught." Huh, huh, huh! No difference how you've been taught, is it the accuracy of God's Word? When people come up with that argument, "Well that's not the way I've been taught?" Then you say to them, "Well, why don't you just still dress in the same old dress Great Grandma dressed in, then? Why don't you still farm the same way you farmed fifty years ago, if that's the way you've been brought up?" It's a wonderful thing how we can move ahead in everything else, but no person has a right to move on the Word of God ... you've got to stay within the confines. It must be a "trip" isn't it? It surely is a trip [a self-indulgent attitude or activity – 1960's informal word]. The greatest thing in the world, God's Word, we ought to walk on it. We ought to learn more tomorrow than we know tonight – day after that we ought to know more than we know tomorrow. We ought to keep growing in God's Word. One of the reasons this ministry stands yet today is because I have stood for the Word whenever the Word was known to me. It has been no disgrace to me at times to say, "I don't know the Word," but when I've known it, and I've stood on it. I have stayed put. That's why it lives. This ministry would die within one month's time if we didn't stand. Somebody's got to stand.

Now, this week when we go to Minnesota again to teach, you know what the problems will be. It will be like in all the scriptures: some believe; some said we'll hear you again; some disbelieve. So what? The right that we have to teach it and the right for our people to learn it, and then the people to stand, that's the greatness of it. Well, that's a little background. Father says, "That's it," so we go on.

In verse 34 it says:

**Acts 4:34a**

Neither was there any among them that lacked:

The word lacked relates itself to the word common in the practice part. They all practiced what this thing is talking about.

**Acts 4:34b**

for as many as were possessors [plural] of lands or houses sold them,

The greatness lays here that they sold their plurality, that which they did not need, they got rid of, they sold. They sold their plurality. It's a tremendous truth. It's a tremendous thing because right here is where Rosalind Rinker started pushing me. She pushed me not – she pushed me on the spiritual end of this thing, not on the material end, but she pushed me on my education and all this stuff which at that time was still a sore thumb with me. She said as many as are possessors of lands or houses, if you're a possessor of a tremendous knowledge of theological works, of books, of periodicals, of ability to write, ability to teach, ability to talk to men and women, what about getting rid of that plurality of that and coming right back to the Lord's Word? That's how she got to me, and she spiritualized it terribly, but it sure did the job at the time for me.

But it deals specifically with the material end. Those that were possessors of houses or lands sold their plurality, they kept what they needed. Everything else they sold. You try to

teach this among the Christians today and you've got something, generally speaking, because the Christians do not only want what they need, they want oodles and oodles of greed along with all the rest of the greed of the world. This is exactly what most education is doing today. Instead of educating people to be a servant, we're educating ourselves to try to make it easier, make an easier life for ourselves and to get things easier than anybody else. You've ever heard parents say, well, they didn't want their children to work as hard as they had to work? Who ever heard of a stupid statement like that? Why, I hope all of my kids have to work harder than I ever worked. I hope yours do, too, because mine are mean enough not having to work so hard or something. Nah, who ever heard that? Didn't hurt you any. You're here, you're eating, you're sleeping, you're breathing. You at least have some knowledge of God's Word, and if you worked hard to get there, why shouldn't your children work hard? This idea that they don't have to do anything ... you want to make it easy for them just sends them to the [indistinguishable], the prison sure, sends them into the world the marijuana's sold and all this other junk. Christians have to come back to the place that they believe the Word when it says God will supply our need. Then to have this need, anything beyond this we get rid of. Boy, this will help you a lot if you understand this because one or a number of groups among the religious groups teach that if you really walk with the Lord you sell everything you've got and give it to the Lord's work. That's not what the scripture teaches. The scripture teaches you sell your plurality, you sell your plurality. That's all. So these people sold their plurality.

And verse 35 says:

**Acts 4:35**

... [they] laid *them* down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.

There's the greatness of it. It was a common practice. That's what the word common means: that as these material things were laid in the hands or at the feet of the apostles (which simply means it was brought to them) the apostles, the rulers of the church, the heads of the church spiritually, they took this material matter and they saw to it that every man had what he needed in common practice. Now, need will vary, but this is how it was done. The same thing is true today. You say, well once I have taught you the Word of God, the only person you're obligated to is VP Wierwille because it says in the scripture that you should remember the man who taught you and support the man who taught you. It says it some place, Galatians or some place, I forget where. But, that's not all it says. It said in here that they took their plurality and brought it to the apostles, the heads of the church at that time in Jerusalem. Now, the plurality is not only in houses and lands, but the plurality is also in dollars and cents today, if the Word of God's right. And they laid it at the apostles' feet, then distribution was made unto every man as he had what? Need and there's the key ... need. And boy, if an apostle or a prophet or an evangelist walk by revelation, he always knows. He would always know. That's how the early church grew. First of all, the people materially did what they were supposed to. You talk about tithing, shoot, this is way above tithing, way above. See, tithing went out, as a law, it went out with the Day of Pentecost, but certainly as a Christian I wouldn't do less than the tithe, would I, under the law? No, not at all.

Now verse 36 is real interesting.

**Acts 4:36, 37**

And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, *and* of the country of Cyprus, Having land (singular), sold *it*, and brought the money, and laid *it* at the apostles' feet.

And then the people laugh at me and say, “Ha, ha, Wierwille you didn’t know what you’re talkin’ about. You said a little while ago they sold their plurality and brought it, but here it says there was one man who sold his singular, he sold his land and brought it, right?” Well they say, “Wierwille, you don’t know what you’re talking about.” These were some of the replies I got back when I originally wrote this stuff. Oh what’s the answer? The answer’s very simple if they could only read. Verse 36 gives you the key. This fella Barnabas was a what? Levite, a Levite. In the Old Testament, who are the Levites? They belong to the priestly family. The Levites were the priestly family ... and in the Old Testament, what does it say about the priestly family? They were not to own any lands or any property, but they were to live off of the tithe that the people brought in. But, what about this Levite? Ah? Right, he had put himself a little nest egg for old age, you know. Sure, get himself a little property out on the back 40 he had bought himself, and he owned this land and he was a Levite and he should not have what? Owned it. He had cheated the Lord, he had lied to the Lord and everything else and what had happened? Well, in Acts 2 they had the Day of Pentecost, they got a revival rolling in Acts 3 & 4 and this Levite got touched by the Lord, so to speak, spiritually and he cleaned up his life – something he should have done a long time before, he should never have owned any land to begin with, right? So, now when he gets saved, what does he do? He sells his singular, he sells his land, then he takes that money and brings it to the apostles’ feet. Isn’t that something. Well, that answers that one.

Now verse 37 ... 38, verse 5 should really be verse 38, chapter 5 [sic], but we’ll go right on. But, I think I should just say in here before we go on with verse 1 that since we’re going off the air in about a minute and a half or so, that I’ve enjoyed having you people join us tonight and I hope you’ll come to The Way Headquarters here on Sunday night. We start our services at 7 o’clock. We’re glad to have you any Sunday night. I’m sorry we have to stop right at the interesting part of this with you tonight, but we know if you come here to the headquarters you won’t miss out on anything. But, I’m glad to have had you join us by radio, but we’ll carry right on, and they’ll cut us out whenever the time comes. It’s been nice having you. Join us again next Sunday at the same time if you’d like to be a part of the service.

**Chapter 5, verse 1****Acts 5:1-3**

But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession,  
And kept back *part* of the price, his wife also being privy *to it* [she was his accomplice, she knew about it], and brought a certain part [brought a certain part of it], and laid *it* at the apostles' feet.

But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, ... to keep back *part* of the price of the land?

You see, what's involved here if you get the whole picture. As the early church began to move (believe God), this common practice among the believers was (the common practice) if you had a plurality you sold the plurality, but you kept the singular. That which you needed to live on, you kept. But it happened that there was a man, Barnabus, who had a singular, but he was a what? A Levite. Therefore, he said well, "I'll still clean up my life for having been out so long;" he sold the singular and brought it. But, a couple by the name of Ananias and Sapphira said, "Boy, everybody's bringing something, we've only got a singular possession. Now, if we'd sell our possession and bring all this – we laid this on the altar, wouldn't they say we're a wonderful family? Wouldn't they say we are great spiritual people if we just brought our possession?" That's what's involved here. So, Ananias and Sapphira brought their possession (singular – verse 1), and they acted like they brought it all. See, they acted like they brought it all, and they laid it at the apostles' feet.

Then Peter said something. He

**Acts 5:3a**

... said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost,

How did Peter know that of this great congregation (over 10,000 people and more) that this Ananias and Sapphira, who were bringing money here, were cheating the Lord or cheating somebody? Revelation: word of knowledge, word of knowledge - to keep back part of the price of the land. The reason I know that I know that he said that they brought it all because he said that he kept back what? Part of it. See it.

Now the next verse is a tremendous verse. It's real teaching.

**Acts 5:4a**

Whiles it remained [while you owned the possession – whiles it remained], was it not thine own [is that right]?

Why? Because only that which they needed they did what with? They kept it. Their plurality, they sold. Whiles it remained, while it was your possession, was it not your own? See, Peter never told them they had to give it, did he? He told him it was your own, you could do with it as you want to. You can fire it up, you can give to the government, file it under – do as you like, it's yours. Then he says, after it was sold, after it was sold it was still yours. Isn't that something.

**Acts 5:4b**

... why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto [who] God.

After he sold it, after he sold it he could have come to ole Pete and said, "Pete, just sold the farm. I'd like to give a hundred dollars. Sorry, Sapphira and I think we oughta do it." And

Peter would have said, “Well, praise the Lord. Wonderful.” But, ole Ananias came and Sapphira (they had agreed), they acted like they laid it all on the altar for the Lord, but they kept back part of it – hid it under the boards in the house or something. Peter gives that tremendous truth, while it remained, was it not yours and even after you sold it, it was still yours. He didn’t have to give a nickel of it because it was a possession, it was that which he needed. He could have kept it.

All these things happened to him because he lied like a trooper – didn’t tell the truth. Why? Verse 5:

**Acts 5:5**

And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost [it means he kicked the bucket]: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.

I guess so, right. Tremendous thing. Well, if the Lord did this today, we’d have lots of funerals.

**Acts 5:6-11**

And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried *him* out, and buried *him*.

And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in.

And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much.

Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband *are* at the door, and shall ... [bury] thee ...

Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying *her* forth, buried *her* by her husband.

And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.

Isn’t that something! Did the Lord kill them? What did I hear? Say it loud. That’s right. Nup. Then how did Peter know they were going to die? Revelation. Did Peter kill them? {No} But, by revelation he saw that they were going to die. There may have been others who walked in and did the same thing and by revelation he saw that they were not going to die at that time. But, these two died.

Now it doesn’t mean that just because you haven’t sold your houses, your lands or possessions and laid it at the apostles’ feet that therefore you’re going to die or that you did sell it and just kept back half of it [sic]. But, the greatness lays in the revelation here that Peter knew this was what was going to happen to them. People, when Rosalind Rinker applied this to me spiritually, she touched me very deeply because sense knowledge wise I had prepared myself for the teaching field in a theological seminary. I figured that I was pretty smart at this. I figured I had a very keen mind, a very logical mind, and I had a good education. I figured, boy, we could do something with this [indistinguishable]. When she started touching me on getting rid of my lands and houses, she spiritualized the whole thing, you know like the [indistinguishable] do many times, they just sit and spiritualize from here to heaven and back again and never handle



the Word of God at all doing it. But, she touched me deeply at this time, and God was speaking to me at that point because the thing that was blocking me all the time was: here I had this fine education; I knew all these theological works. I could quote you a dozen of them and as some of you people know I used to read two and three theological texts every week – did this for years. Dr. Blackwood at Princeton said I had the finest theological library of any student that had ever graduated from Princeton Theological Seminary – all this stuff. Then, to have a little woman come from China over wherever she came from (I am still not convinced that's where she's from, but it doesn't click on the inside and if it doesn't click or something or other, but anyway), to have a little woman come like this. Boy, for a woman to tell me this was something because I'm a man (sometimes I am) and, of course, through the years I've learned a lot more, but at that time I thought, boy some woman – and see, I thought at that time no woman was allowed to preach, no woman was allowed to stand in a pulpit, you know this kind of stuff I'd been trained on – only us men do the preaching, you know, that's from the pulpit. At home, well, we were taught this, too. Then to have ole Rosalind Rinker to take me apart on this thing was something, and for me to stand for it was something else. She showed that I had to get rid of my plurality, all of this, and have only one desire and that is to do the will of God. That shook me, and that really began a quest back in '42 I told you. In 1944 we moved to Van Wert, but one year before that I was preaching there off and on. I think it is in Van Wert, I know it is, where we met the Joneses and where the Permins came in. Herman I think you had just gotten out of the service or something, hadn't you? You just got married I know, but hadn't you just gotten out of service or – we met each other, you were in service, weren't you? How'd I lose track...