

BECOMING THE CHURCH



THE OPEN-HANDED CHURCH

Acts 4:32–35 | October 25, 2026 | Pastor Dave Anderson

SERMON SUMMARY

Pastor Dave opens with a question most churches avoid: if someone read your bank statement, what would the numbers say you worship? He names a discipleship crisis hiding in plain sight. After the kingdom of God, money and possessions are among Jesus' most frequent subjects, and yet we can go whole seasons without an honest word about them. American culture trains us from the cradle that what we have is ours, earned and defended, so we treat the bank account like a foxhole. A closed fist feels like strength, responsibility, even wisdom, but by its very shape it cannot receive anything more. In Acts 4 the Jerusalem church was under its first real persecution and financially precarious, and that is exactly when they stopped calling their possessions their own. There was no command, no pledge card, no campaign. Luke says God's grace was so powerfully at work in them that no one among them was in need. Grace came first and generosity followed. Paul makes the same case to wealthy Corinth, pointing not to rich donors but to the crushingly poor Macedonian churches who begged for the privilege of giving, and then to Jesus, who was rich and became poor so that we could become rich. Dave names what the fist is really gripping: fear. Guilt can open a wallet for one Sunday, but only grace can open a heart for a lifetime. So he ends not with a challenge but at the table, where empty hands receive before they give.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 Pastor Dave started with the bank statement question. If the numbers themselves could talk, what would yours say you actually worship? You don't have to share figures, just what the pattern reveals.
- 2 A closed fist feels like strength, responsibility, even wisdom. Where in your life does gripping tightly feel most like simple good sense?
- 3 The Jerusalem church gave radically during its first real persecution, when it had the least security to spare. What makes it harder to open your hands when things already feel uncertain?
- 4 Grace came first and generosity came second. Their open hands were the result of God's favor, not the cause of it. Where are you still trying to earn something God has already given you?
- 5 Dave said the fist is really gripping fear: the medical bill, the layoff, the retirement account that will not stretch. Which of those fears has the strongest hold on you right now?
- 6 **This week:** Dave ended at the table rather than with a challenge, because open hands receive God's grace and God's grace opens our hands to give. Before you decide anything about giving, spend time this week naming what you have already received. Then pick one specific way your hands could open toward a person or a need you already know about, and tell this group what it is.

Last Week's Challenge Update:

Last Sunday Pastor Dave asked us to pray several times a day, "Holy Spirit, lead me, show me who you want me to love and where you want me to go. I will say yes," then to listen for the quiet nudge and obey it. Start today by telling the group what you heard and what you did about it.