


The Challenges of Hospitality

Acts 5:1-11

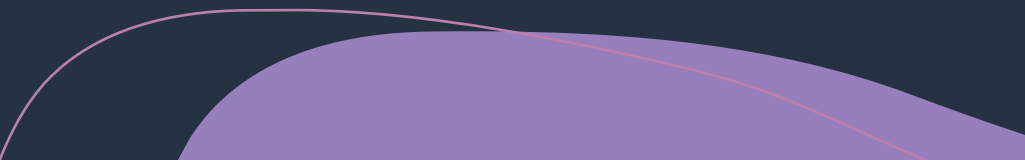


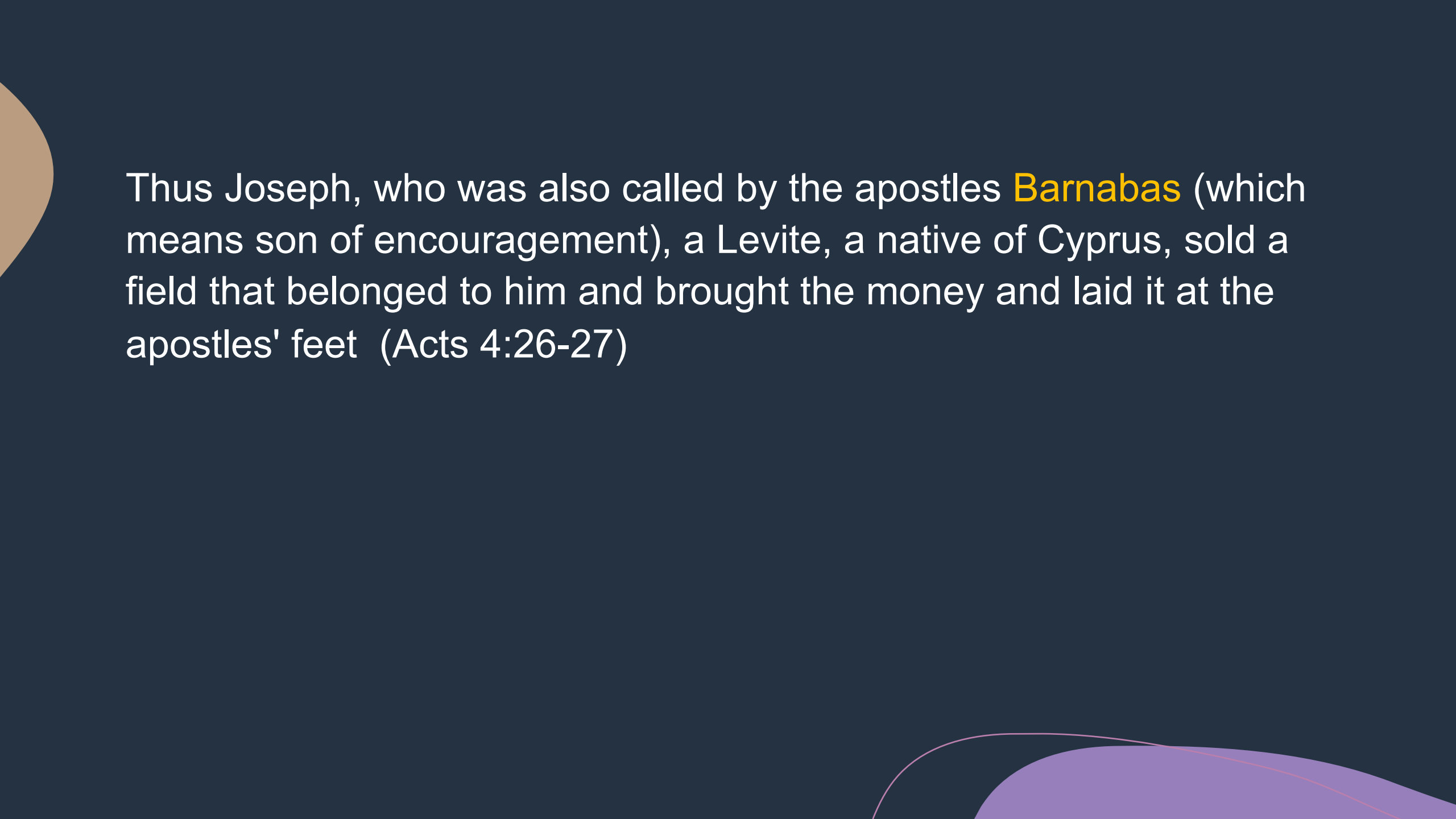


When they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness (Acts 4:31)


Now the full number of those who believed were of **one heart and soul**, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but **they had everything in common**

There was **not a needy person among them**, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need (Acts 4:32-35)



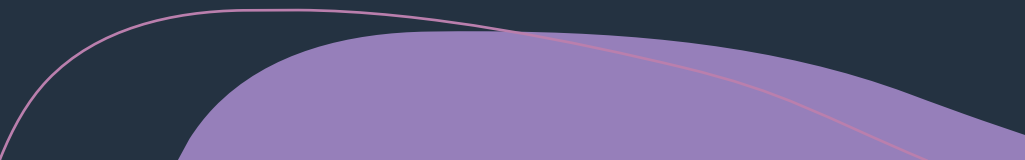


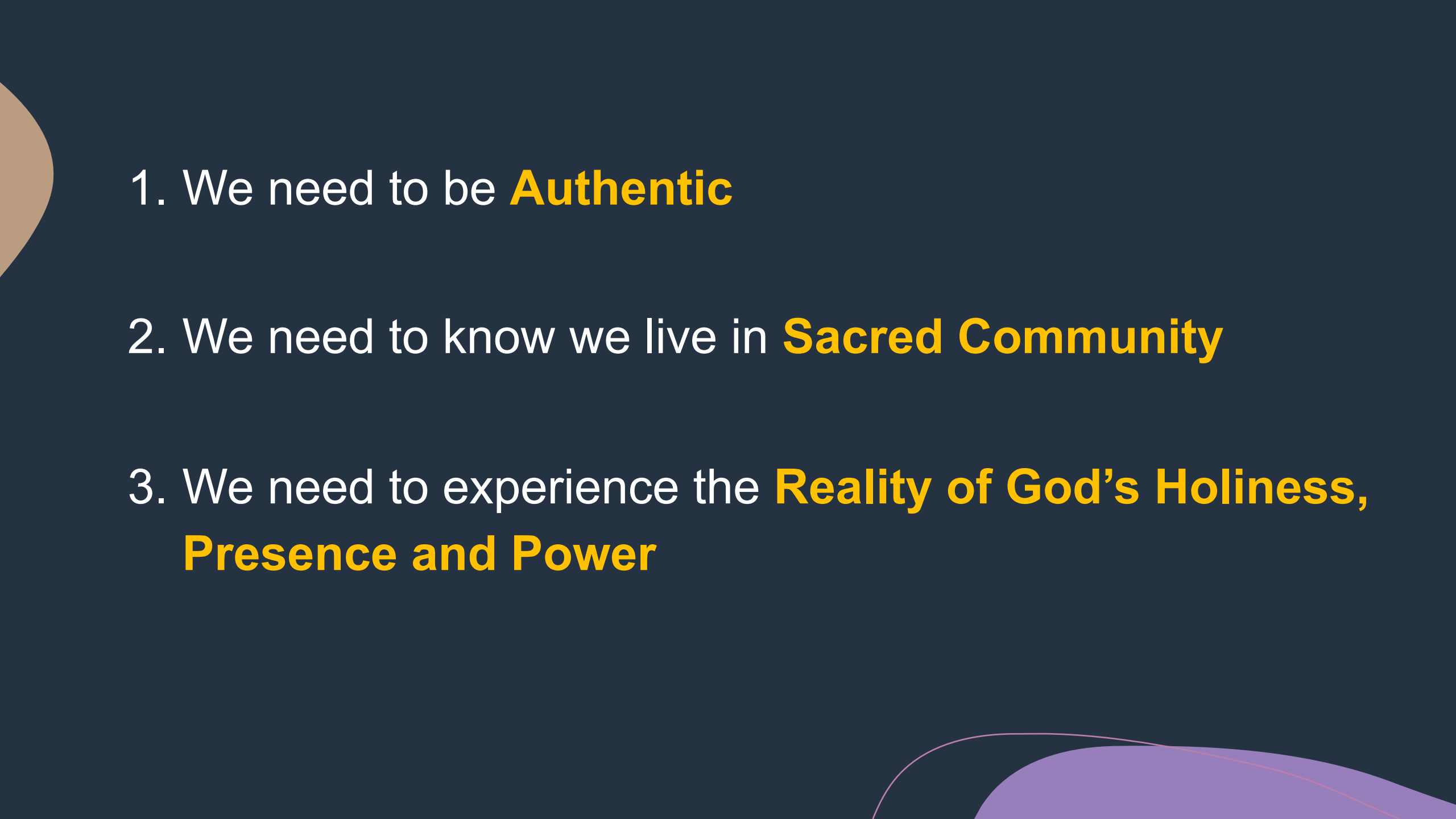
Thus Joseph, who was also called by the apostles **Barnabas** (which means son of encouragement), a Levite, a native of Cyprus, sold a field that belonged to him and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet (Acts 4:26-27)



But a man named **Ananias**, with his wife **Sapphira**, sold a piece of property, and with his wife's knowledge he **kept back for himself some of the proceeds** and brought only a part of it and laid it at the apostles' feet (Acts 5:1-2)

But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal?" (Acts 5:3-4a)



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1. We need to be **Authentic**
 2. We need to know we live in **Sacred Community**
 3. We need to experience the **Reality of God's Holiness, Presence and Power**

Be Authentic

True hospitality is not just about the outward act of giving or sharing – it's also about the heart behind our actions

Their names contradicted their natures:

Ananias means God is gracious, Sapphira means beautiful

“Half the misery in the world comes from trying to look, instead of trying to be, what one is not.” *George Macdonald*

Be Authentic

To be authentic is to be genuine and requires integrity in our relationships with God and one another

Hospitality requires authenticity and genuine generosity

“Fears arise when we focus more on what people think of us than on what God desires for us. We want people to think well of us; we don’t want to look inferior or inadequate to others.” *Robert Gallagher*

We live in **Sacred Community**

This episode happened at the very beginning of the early church

This was the new community in which the Living God had come to dwell through his Spirit

Lying to this sacred community and the apostles was effectively lying to God – **“You have not lied to man but to God”** (Acts 5:4)

We live in **Sacred Community**

“As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:4-5)

“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light” (1 Peter 2:9)

We live in **Sacred Community**

“Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbour, for we are members one of another”
(Ephesians 4:25)

God is an all-consuming fire – his holiness in the life of the community is not safe, warm and fuzzy

Are we taking seriously what it means to be a sacred community of God's people in whom the Holy Spirit dwells?

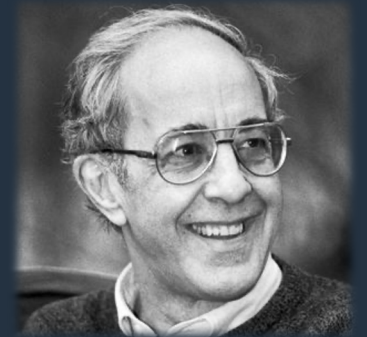
God's Holiness, Presence & Power

“And great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard of these things” (Acts 5:11)

“Many signs and wonders were regularly done among the people by the hand of the apostles” (Acts 5:12)

“More than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women” (Acts 5:14)

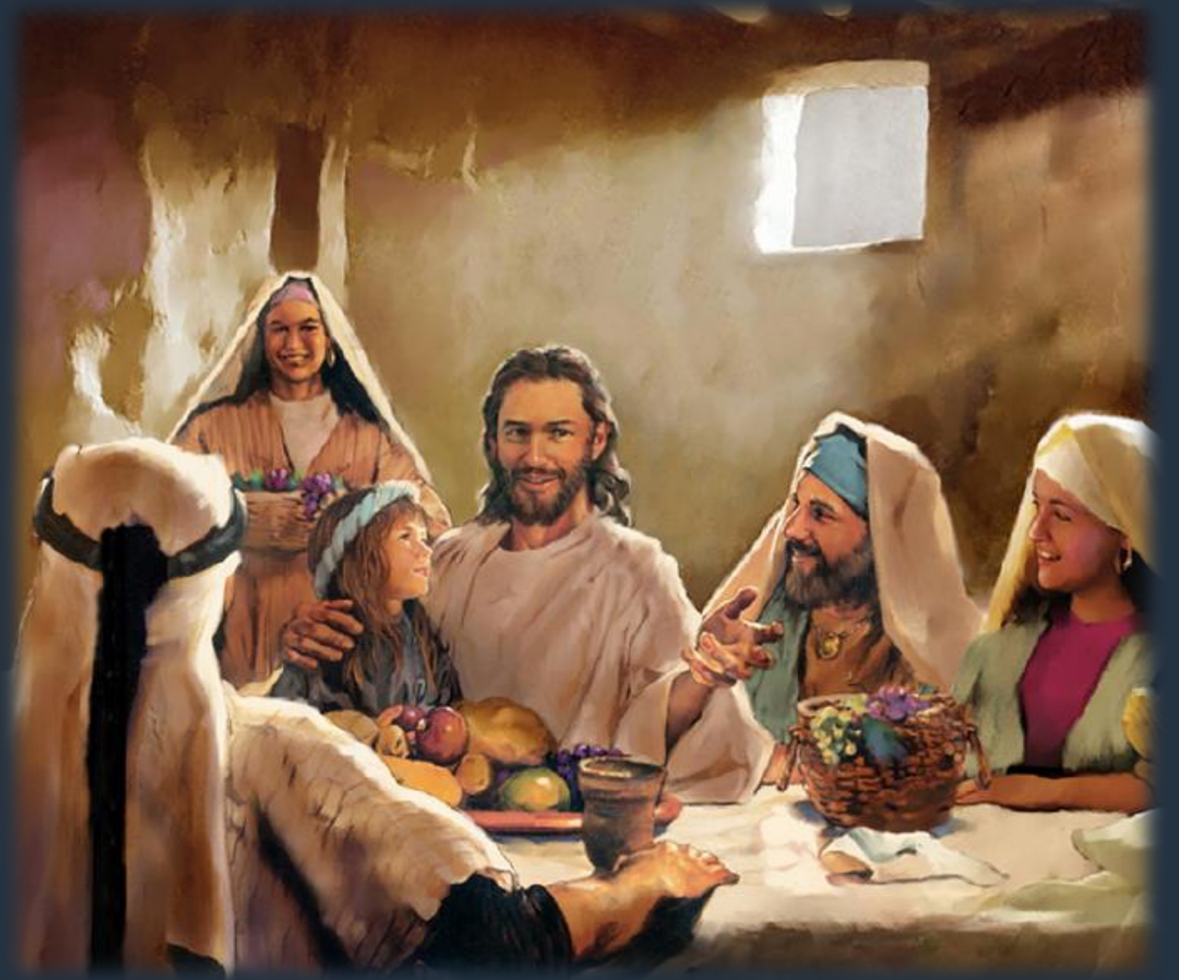
Hospitality - the creation of a free space where the stranger can enter and become a friend instead of an enemy



Henri Nouwen

In our world full of strangers, estranged from their own past, culture, and country, from their neighbours, friends, and family, from their deepest self and their God, we witness a **painful search for a hospitable place** where life can be lived without fear and where community can be found

The movement from hostility to hospitality is hard and full of difficulties. But still that is **our vocation**: to convert the *hostis* into a *hospes*, the **enemy** into a **guest**, and to create the free and fearless space where brotherhood and sisterhood can be formed and fully experienced



Seasons of Life

Open Doors, Open Hearts

Welcome
please
Come In

Features:

— Building A Cell Without Walls
Dover Celebrates Christmas
Remembering Joseph Chean's Commission to SJSM
When Open Doors Lead to Open Hearts
Championing Hospitality in SJSM
Hospitality Bonds

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Life in
Hope

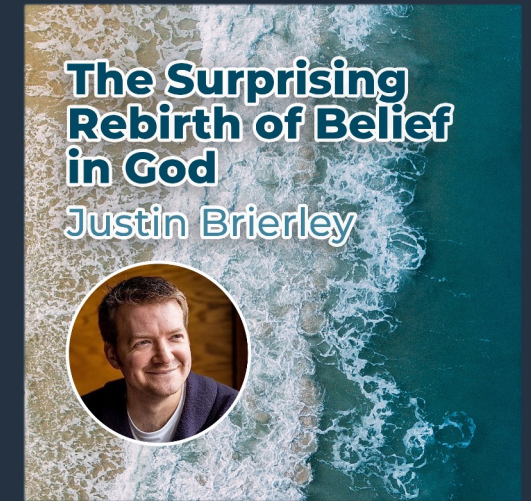
Dover Celebrates Christmas!

Join us at our carnival on
23 Dec 2023 at SJSM Village

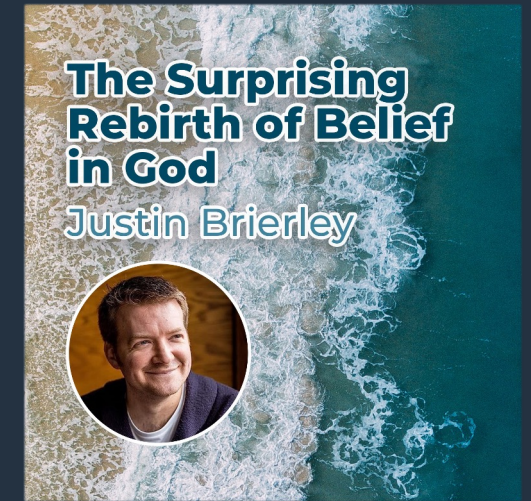


“I am not religious, so it is not my place to dictate to Christians what they should and should not believe. Still, if someone has a faith worth following, I feel that their beliefs should make me feel uncomfortable for not doing so. If they share 90 percent of my lifestyle and values, then there is nothing especially inspiring about them. Instead of making me want to become more like them, it looks very much as if they want to become more like me.”

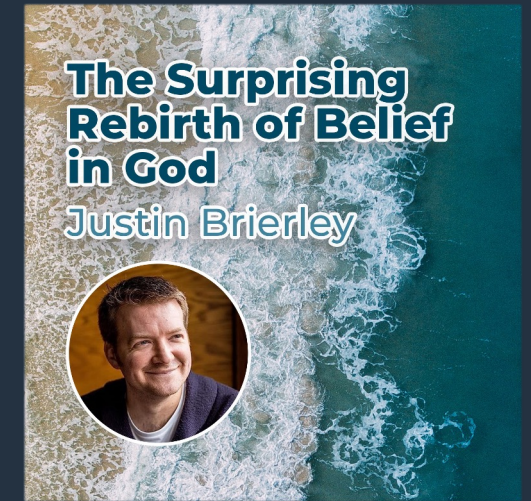
Ben Sixsmith



Churches need to be places of **capacious community**... ready to embrace the walking wounded and make space for those at the beginning of their journey... Places where we take seriously the experiences and stories of people who are different from each other... Perhaps the greatest witness the church can offer society is that, even when we disagree, we can still love each other. **‘By this everyone will know you are my disciples, if you have love for one another,’** said Jesus (John 13:35)



Holiness and unity are both important, and we are often guilty of sacrificing one in favour of the other. However, the church is supposed to be a place where we work out how to bring them together.



This may sound miraculous. Fortunately, Christians believe that a miracle has occurred. The forgiveness of our sins through the death and resurrection of Jesus, the Son of God. Modelling our lives and relationships after him means that we are called to be a **constantly grace-filled, constantly forgiving, constantly loving community**.

- ❖ Be **Authentic**
- ❖ Know we live in **Sacred Community**
- ❖ Experience the **Reality of God's Holiness, Presence and Power**