

Lessons of the Early New Testament Church

Part 3-Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11) 10.1.17

6 Lessons from Ananias and Sapphira

Acts 5:1 (NIV) ¹ *Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. (see Acts 4:34-37 also)*

- Here we see two gifts given, one given for the right reason and one given for the wrong reason. Now there was a couple in the early church by the name of Ananias and Sapphira and they were obviously impressed with what Barnabas did and the praise they received, so they attempted to **replicate his actions**. Yet, **Barnabas gave expecting NOTHING in return, but Ananias gave expecting to get acknowledged!**
- **#1 It is a true blessing when you give and expect NOTHING in return!**
- Ananias and Sapphira gave because they wanted to impress the rest of the church.
- **Be careful who you try to IMPRESS, because God is the only one that matters.** (see Galatians 1:10 and Matthew 6:1)

Acts 5:2 (NIV) ² *With his wife's full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles' feet.*

- Often, if Satan wants to derail us, he will use money to do it to us. (see 1 Timothy 6:10)
- They wanted the recognition, but they wanted their money also.
- **Ananias and Sapphira wanted honor, but they weren't willing to do the HONORABLE thing.**
- **#2 If God wants your all, be careful what you KEEP back.**

Acts 5:3-4 (NIV) ³ *Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? ⁴ Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied just to human beings but to God."*

- **Ananias gave expecting to hear praise for his spectacular gift, but he was REBUKED instead.**
- **Not only was he rebuked, but Peter said that SATAN was at work here.**
- **Satan was trying to stop the church from growing AND PETER KNEW IT** and need to stop it before it got worse. (see Galatians 6:12)
- If Ananias and Sapphira would have sold their property and said they would give some, there would be no issues, **but their downfall was that they made it APPEAR that they gave it all.**
- **Ananias and Sapphira were not just guilty of simple miscalculation but of PREMEDITATED deception.**
- **#3 In order for the church to thrive, the church needs INTEGRITY.** (see Galatians 6:7)
- You may deceive man, but you cannot deceive God.

Acts 5:5 (NIV) ⁵ *When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died.*

- Peter was probably more surprised than anyone else when Ananias fell down dead.
- We might wonder why God was so harsh, but this is not the first time God dealt with someone right away. (Remember Uzzah (2 Samuel 6:1-7), Lot's wife (Genesis 19:17-26), the flood, Sodom and Gomorrah, and more)
- **#4 God is GRACIOUS, but if it is important that He teach a lesson, He will bring JUDGMENT.**
- For many Christians, their greatest fear is not in sinning, but in being **FOUND** out.

Acts 5:5-6 (NIV) *And great fear seized all who heard what had happened. ⁶ Then some young men came forward, wrapped up his body, and carried him out and buried him.*

- **If God had not intervened, Ananias and Sapphira would likely have become INFLUENTIAL people in the early church.**

Acts 5:7-10 (NIV) ⁷ *About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. ⁸ Peter asked her, "Tell me, is this the price you and Ananias got for the land?" "Yes," she said, "that is the price."⁹ Peter said to her, "How could you conspire to test the Spirit of the Lord? Listen! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also."¹⁰ At that moment she fell down at his feet and died. Then the young men came in and, finding her dead, carried her out and buried her beside her husband.*

- **#5 Even though Ananias and Sapphira were unified, unity is not always GOOD.**
- **We must make sure that we are unified for all the right reasons and actions.**
- **Notice, she fell down at Peter's feet, which is the same place where they should have laid the WHOLE price.**

Acts 5:11 (NIV) *Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events*

- **Notice #6 The FEAR of God will be part of any church that thrives.**
- If we don't fear God, revere Him and His commands, then we will have to fear His **WRATH**.
- How many warnings does God need to give us before we listen?

When the church is great – there is great unity, great example, and great integrity.

So what?

- **#1 Be careful because every time God wants to do something great, MORAL dangers will lurk in the background.**
- **#2 You and your MOTIVES will eventually come to light so make sure they are pure!** (see Hebrews 4:13) You might become an EXAMPLE to others in the future, so make sure it's for the right reasons.
- **#3 Fear God and keep His commands.**
- **Ecclesiastes 12:13-14** (NIV) *Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind. ¹⁴ For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.*