

Ananias and Sapphira Acts 5:1-11

Today we encounter a situation when the Church of Jesus Christ was just getting started. This is the first problem in connection with willful sin in the Church that is recorded in the Book of Acts. This is important – it's not like the Church has been in existence for a few years and you've read of a bunch of dumb stuff that people have done. *This is the first sin recorded in the book of Acts within the Church.*

God's reaction to this sin will give you an idea of what God thinks of sin.

Acts 5 begins with the word "but". This is a contrast. As it turns out, what we have here is a contrast of opposites. On one side you have Barnabas, who was deeply devoted to the glory of God. On the other side, you have Ananias and Sapphira who were deeply devoted to the glory of self. Barnabas is a good example. Ananias and Sapphira are bad examples.

Another way to look at it is this: Acts 4 & 5 give us a contrast between the grace-filled life and the self-filled life. We will all struggle here. Your natural inclination leans toward self. Your orientation toward self needs to decrease so that your orientation toward Jesus can increase. The contrast of Barnabas and Ananias and Sapphira teaches us this:

God's servants should be pleased when people applaud Jesus rather than themselves.

The teaching of this passage will cover five important spiritual truths:

1. The Holy Spirit is God.

Acts 5:3 – lie to the HS

Acts 5:4 – you have not lied to men but to God

We are driven to the inescapable conclusion that the HS is God.

Because the Holy Spirit is both God and a person, He can be offended, grieved and sinned against.

2. God is holy.

God is fearsome in His holiness. A proper understanding of the holiness of God keeps us humble and dependent.

A Biblical understanding of the holiness of God will serve as a deterrent to personal sin. Watch how this comes out: >Acts 5:5, 5:11. This fear is your friend.

3. People are sinners.

Notice in this story that Ananias and Sapphira were not in desperate need. Not under compulsion. The evil is not driven by circumstances or external pressure. The evil comes from within.

4. We are accountable to God.

Ananias and Sapphira thought they could fool people. They failed to recognize their ultimate accountability was to God.

5. We need the gospel.

Because God is holy ...

Because we are sinful ...

Because we are accountable ...

Our need for the gospel is urgent.

Home Group Discussion Questions:

1. What was one take away for you from last week's teaching on Ecclesiastes by Pastor Tyler?
2. What did you find particularly challenging in this week's passage in Acts 5?
3. You may have heard Pastor Karl say something like this:

Here's a common problem in the Church: Most Christians are willing to say they are servants of God but not many Christians will tolerate being treated like a servant. Too many Christians value being praised by people more than they value being praised by God.

- Do you struggle with this? How you are growing through this?

4. Do you have a high commitment to truth-telling? Do you require truthfulness of your kids? Why does God respond so strongly to lying? Does it matter if our culture is not deeply committed to truthfulness?
5. Do you think it's possible to see God's holiness as fearsome and not be afraid to draw near to Him? Can we enjoy a close personal relationship with God and fear His holiness at the same time?
6. How will the story of Ananias and Sapphira make a difference in your life?

Family Discipleship

Read this story as a family and discuss the questions below. Be sure to read the Barnabas story so your family can see the natural contrast as intended. The entire story is Acts 4:32-5:11.

- What are some consequences for not telling the truth? (not usually death 😊)
- Why do we sometimes lie? Can we fool God?
- Does God lie?
- Who was Barnabas trying to please?
- Who were Ananias and Sapphira trying to please?
- What are some things we do to please God?
- What are some things we do to please others or ourselves?