

Acts 5:1-14

Purity and Power

Throughout the history of the church we have seen that Purity and power go hand in hand!

A) Times of Purity – the Church is the most powerful

B) Church history also shows that when the church becomes morally corrupt its power and influence is weakened.

C) We see that even today in the modern day church

1) One of the reasons that a lot of people don't take the church seriously is –

D) the corruption scandals – weakened our witness

1) Weakened our influence in the world!

E) Purity in our lives individually and in the Church corporately has to be taken seriously

1) We see an example of that in our text tonight

Heard of the saying: if you can't beat em – join em

A) Well in our study today we are going to see a time in the early church where – Satan attempts to do just that.

B) Recap to set the scene:

- Ch.1 – Waiting
- Ch.2 Outpouring
- Ch.3 1st Miracle
- Ch.4 1st opposition

C) Remember what the early church did? – THEY PRAYED!

1) Not for God to take away the persecution but to give them boldness!

D) The Persecution made them stronger spiritually

1) And it also strengthened their Unity –

32 Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. 33 And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all.

34 Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold

them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, 35 and laid them at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need.

36 And Joses, who was also named Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated Son of Encouragement), a Levite of the country of Cyprus, 37 having land, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

Now no doubt people were praising Barnabas – what an awesome guy amazing thing he did.

A) At that time another couple in the Church named Ananias/ his wife Sapphira – want in on the action.

But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession. 2 And he kept back part of the proceeds, his wife also being aware of it, and brought a certain part and laid it at the apostles' feet.

{Now the implication here is this- Ananias is implying that he is giving the whole amount 3 But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? 4 While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? { In other words – no one is forcing you to give any of this

Why have you conceived this thing in your heart?

You have not lied to men but to God." { Side note: V. 3 Satan has filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit –

End of v. 4 You have not lied to men but to God – PROOF TEXT FOR THE TRINITY

Peter is referring to the Holy Spirit as God –

5 Then Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and breathed his last. {HE DIED – FALLS OVER DEAD! - So great fear came upon all those who heard these things. {I would think so

6 And the young men arose and wrapped him up, carried him out, and buried him.

7 Now it was about three hours later when his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. 8 And Peter answered her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for so much?" She said, "Yes, for so much."

9 Then Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at

the door, and they will carry you out.” 10 Then immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. And the young men came in and found her dead, and carrying her out, buried her by her husband. 11 So **great fear** came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things.

So here we see the first internal attack of the enemy! As we consider this story –

5 Principles of how purity relates to power

#1 Satan will always try to find a way into the church:

A)Up to this point the opposition has all been from the outside, but here Satan is trying to corrupt the church – from the inside.

B)Now in V.3 Peter says to Ananias why have you allowed Satan to fill your heart.....

1)I don’t think that necessarily means that Ananias was aware that this was Satan – or that he was in cahoots with the Devil

C)That he made a secret pact with the Devil

Paul teaches us in Ephesians 6 that our enemy the Devil – throws fiery darts at us.

A)Not talking real Fiery darts – he also says our battle is not with flesh and blood – not earthly in other words

B)The Fiery darts of the wicked one are thoughts that he places in our minds.

1)Thoughts of lust – or bitterness – greed – jealousy or in this case – thoughts of lying

C)Ananias no doubt got a thought – You don’t have to give all the proceeds –

1)keep part of it for yourself – rainy day

D)So tell them you sold it for this much and give that!

Motivation of Ananias and Sapphira was to get RECOGNITION

A)The motivation of Satan was to get this couple who lacked integrity into a position of prominence in the early Church

B)Jesus said – **A little bit of leaven – leavens or fills the whole lump**

1)This is what Satan no doubt is hoping for. He can weaken the church from within –

C)Because his first attempt to do so from without only made the church stronger –

1) more focused – and more centered.

D)So Satan is trying to infiltrate through compromise

Now Jesus revealed that this would be the case!

A)Parable of the wheat and the tares

Matthew 13:24,25 “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; ²⁵ but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way.

And His disciples came to Him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field.”

³⁷ He answered and said to them: “He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. ³⁸ The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one. ³⁹ **The enemy who sowed them is the devil-**

Matthew 13:36-38

Paul warned the Elders of the Church in Ephesus

For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. ³⁰ Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. ³¹ Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.”

Acts 20:29-31

Savage wolves – Sheep from Wolves ? Wolves eat Sheep – take advantage of sheep.

Now Ananias and Sapphira are not wolves but they are being influenced – indirectly by Satan

A)God reveals to Peter that they were lying and God strikes them dead!

B)Brings up the question – why so harsh?

C)The Principle of first Precedent- In the history of God’s people– Whenever God is doing a new thing –

1)He often reacts in a severe judgment in order to set a high standard –

C) He often reacts in a severe judgment in order to send a message to that generation and future generations

1) Holiness is important – the fear of the Lord is important

D) Examples – OT – Nadab and Abihu – strange fire – Lev 10

New thing: The Tabernacle was just built – first sacrifices – God

Book of Joshua 7– New Land – Achan

A) 2 Samuel 6 David transporting the Ark
New King – beginning of a new Covenant – Davidic

B) New Cart Uzzah touches and dies – well –

1) David was trying to do the right thing the wrong way – bring the Ark back

C) But he ignores the instructions that God – laid out in scripture for how the Ark was to be transported.

D) John 4 Worship God in spirit and in truth

1) In sincerity but also through the Word!

Here in Acts 5 the church is new – new work – a new covenant- God is sending a strong message.

A) Now aren't you glad that God doesn't still do this? – Churches would all be a lot smaller.

B) But understand this- even though the Lord doesn't respond in this way anymore –

1) it doesn't mean that – the standard isn't the same

God doesn't like sin in the church.

C) He doesn't like sin or our lives!

⁷ Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. ⁸ For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.”

Galatians 6:7-8

Numbers 32:23 – YOUR SIN WILL FIND YOU OUT!

So #1 Satan is trying to infiltrate the church from the inside

#2 Blatant Sin must never be tolerated in the church – it must be dealt with swiftly and divisively –

A) The reason – I say – Blatant sin is – WE ALL SIN

B) the last thing we want is the church to be full of sin sniffers

1) Where - Everyone has their magnifying glasses out looking for dirt - That is the spirit of the Pharisees!

C) The beauty of the church is that we all know that we are broken – we are flawed –

1) that we are in a process of transformation
No one has arrived!

But the failures of our flesh and blatant sin and rebellion are two different things!

A) Blatant rebellion cannot be tolerated in our own lives – or in the church has a whole!

B) Once it is Known – it has to be dealt with

C) Church in Corinth situation – rebuked for their toleration

1) **Turn him over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh..... saved!**

D) I have had to do that – hard – no one likes that

1) But it is necessary – and often works – this guy repented

E) Then Paul had to rebuke the church for NOT welcoming him back

In this situation in Acts 5 Peter deals with it head on!

A) I have seen situations – because someone was popular or had a big position – Sin was ignored

B) Can't DO THAT - doesn't matter – Friend – relative – the integrity of the church is at stake!

C) When blatant compromise is going on – it cannot be tolerated

Hard thing in doing this:

A) I can judge someone's actions but I can't judge their motives –

B) Sometimes – I can't tell – when someone is lying – I wish the HS made it clear to me like he did to Peter – but he doesn't

C) So sometimes – you have to warn and say – Watching you – we are suspending you from service

D) Your sin is going to find you out – IT ALWAYS DOES

#2 Blatant Sin must never be tolerated in the church

#3 When sin is dealt with it – produces the fear of God in the church V.5 - So **great fear** came upon all those who heard these things. Again in V 11 So **great fear** came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things.

The Fear of the Lord is a good thing – we need more of that in the church today.

A) Now understand what I mean by the fear of the Lord – not a fear – clobber you!

B) Car is going to break down – breaks go out –
1) The God father – not the God who is your father

C) The fear of God is a reverence – respect

D) It is an utter dread of doing something that would break his heart!

1) The fear of the Lord is rooted in a deep love for the Lord

E) We love him because he first loved us

It is the reason why Paul prayed that our understanding and experiential understanding of the Love of God would grow!

A) The more we understand how greatly we are loved
By God – the more deeply we will love God

B) Love produces that reverence and respect
1) Utter dread of doing anything that would hurt him

C) Love is a great motivator – The Love of Christ compels me - His love for me –

1) And then my love for him

Because our understanding of God is so small our Fear of God is so weak!

A) The Church is way too casual in our approach to God!

B) Call God – the big guy or dude – we have no concept of his holiness –

1) How much he hates sin – THE CROSS

C) When the church knows that sin is not tolerated – causes a fear – a reverence

1) People taking their sin seriously

D) OR because we live in an area where there are so many churches

1) People look for ones that are lighter on sin

E) Advantage in Paul's day church hopping was not an option

#4 Purity results in power v.12

¹² And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon's Porch.

The Purity resulted in Power – many signs and wonders were done.

A) More miracles –

B) Also a deeper unity! – One accord

C) Purity puts people on the same page

Group of teenagers agree – not going to compromise – hold each other accountable

A) Unity – and there is a power

B) It becomes contagious

#5 purity results in respect from others V. 13- 14

¹³ Yet none of the rest dared join them, but the people esteemed them highly. ¹⁴ And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women,

The community of Christians had a marvelous reputation for integrity, and everybody knew it was a serious thing to be a follower of Jesus.

An Ananias and Sapphira incident would reduce the level of casual commitment.

Yet, the church kept growing. Though people knew it was a serious thing to be a Christian, the Spirit of God kept moving with power.

Increasingly added to the Lord: Idea is new believers were added:

A) Added to the Lord, not to a “church” or to a person or even to a movement, but to God Himself.

B) They were added in multitudes.

C) The mention of multitudes of both men and women is Luke’s way of reminding us that the cleansing of the church connected with Ananias and Sapphira did no lasting damage.