

Acts 5:1-16 Hypocrisy in God's Church?

Intro: Today is super bowl Sunday - I read this week that tickets for the Super Bowl are running \$5,000 dollars - and that is the cheap seats

A) Club seats and premium seats are going for \$23K

B) Now imagine - the stadium is packed with all these people who have shelled out big bucks to go to the game

C) Imagine both teams are suited up on the sidelines - and the whistle blows for the opening kick -

1) and the teams just stand there - no one takes the field

D) How disappointing would that be - Outrage - riots - heavy fines

Sometimes I think that might be the Lord's perception of many in his church.

A) On the sidelines - all suited up - ready and equipped for action but we never get in the game

B) I used this analogy before - but what we are doing here today when we gather for church is not the game - this is the Huddle

C) The game is **living for Jesus in our broken world** - that is the focus of our series in the book of Acts

1) What does it mean for us to be the church in this broken world

Looking at the example of the early church

A) The growth of the early church was incredible... and defied any and all explanation:

B) A small group of unqualified people with no money, no power, and no influence

1) turned the world upside down - and changed the course of history.

C) They had only two weapons in their arsenal: they were completely **devoted to the message of the gospel**,

1) and they were **filled with the Holy Spirit**.

D) Pastor Aaron pointed out in our Study last week V.33 **And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.**

Great Power literally, "mega-power."

A) The root for the Greek word translated "power" is the origin of our English word *dynamite*. - *Dunamis*

B) They gave witness - think courtroom - testified - to the **resurrection of the Lord Jesus.**"

C) Then notice v.33 what it says next and **Great Grace** was upon them

1) **God's favor was upon them**

We have seen in our study in the book of Acts that church was marked by a great Unity/ Generosity

A) They were a sharing church - heart to help those in need -

B) people were selling land and bringing the money to help those in need.

1) No one was like - hey that is my car or my house - **mi casa u casas**

C) Everything was common—their properties; their possessions; their toothbrushes...☺
(Jest joking, it probably had limits).

The gospel had loosened their grip on their stuff and tightened their grip on each other.

A) That's always what happens when the gospel gets ahold of someone. Your hold on your stuff loosens

B) One of our Core Values here at CV - **Blessed to be a blessing**

C) Jesus has blessed us so much and we want to share that blessing with others through acts of Generosity and service

1) That was what was happening in the early church

D) So God was moving Great Power, Great Grace - Great Joy as many coming to faith in Jesus -

1) **Outside opposition** from the enemy wasn't slowing the church down at all

So Satan is going to switch his approach

A) Instead of external opposition - he is going to try for an internal attack

B) That is what we see in Our text today in Chapter 5

C) Context - I want to begin reading in V. 33 of chapter 4

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. **God is doing great things**

But (signals a Dramatic change in the story everything is going great!) - 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

A) So Ananias and Sapphira are following the lead of Barnabas - decide to do the same thing - but with one caveat

B) They decided that they were going to keep back part of the money for themselves - 1) but tell the church they were giving everything.

C) Note this: No one was pressing this couple to sell their land - 1) and no one was expecting them to give all the proceeds or really anything for that matter.

D) But they come up with this scheme to deceive the church.

In the midst of God moving in Great Power and great grace - resulting in great Joy -

A) We see AN ATTEMPT at a great deception

B) This couple decides to blatantly deceive the church leaders - in their giving

How many of you have ever had this statement uttered to you. I am not interested in coming to your church - the church is full of _____

A) True there are Hypocrites in the church

B) We see here that this is not a new problem. Ananias and Sapphira were a part of the church 1) They were there for the worship gatherings and weekly studies - they took part in communion

C) But they turned out to be Hypocrites

What is a Hypocrite? What it is not.

A) A Hypocrite is not someone who is genuinely trying to live for Jesus - and follow Jesus who sometimes stumbles

B) Who fails at times in their walk to get it right - or who sometimes gives into their flesh - 1) that is called being Human

C) Told you before - No one here at CV as arrived 1) we are all broken pp who are in the process of being transformed redeemer

D) All of us are still a work in progress - 1) Justification is the miracle of the moment but Sanctification is the process..... a lifetime

E) So a Hypocrite is NOT someone who is genuinely trying to live for Jesus who sometimes stumbles

The word Hypocrite comes from the Greek word Hypocritus - = to wear a mask -

A) Actors - pretending to be who they were not

B) Sad mask - happy mask = two faced - that is a hypocrite

C) Words that describe Hypocrisy - duplicitous- someone who intentionally misleads others - 1) that is what is happening here

D) Deceitful / Disloyal are other words that describe - Hypocrisy

E) So Ananias and Sapphira are being Hypocrites - but God is going to expose them to protect his church

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? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.”

There are several quick things to point out in this text

A)First Peter is given a word of Knowledge by the Holy Spirit - **Spiritual gift - knowledge he wouldn't have**

B)Peter says - Satan has filled your heart- that doesn't mean they were possessed by the Devil
1)The statement is used in contrast to what we read in ch.4:31 they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.

C)When the Bible talks about being filled with the Holy Spirit it doesn't mean that a person **loses all control of their facilities**

D)Paul the apostle makes it very clear in his writings that we can still **resist the spirit** -
1)or we can choose to be **led by the spirit**

So when we read here that Satan himself has filled their hearts -

A)The idea is this was Satan trying to influence their thoughts and actions

B)Paul in Ephesians 6 talking about the Spiritual battle - mentions the fiery darts of the wicked one
1)**THOUGHTS**

C)Satan plants the thought in their minds - you don't have to give all of the proceeds - just give part -
1)**but tell them it was all.**

The 3rd thing to note: Peter says why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit - V.3

A)Then in V.4 makes this statement - You have not lied to men but to God -

B)thus proof text for the trinity - HS is God.

C)What happens next is Ominous

5 Then Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and breathed his last. So great fear came upon all those who heard these things. 6 And the young men arose and wrapped him up, carried him out, and buried him.- **WOW!!! /Slain in the spirit**

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.”
SHE IS LYING TOO-

Ladies, what is she supposed to do?

A)Is she supposed to be a good wife and submit to her husband?

B)Ladies, ask yourself: what would you have done?

1)Your Husband comes up with this plan to deceive and misrepresent yourselves

C)What would you do?

1)**NOTE: Submission never means following your husband into sin.**

D)And if you do follow your husband into sin even under the banner of submission -

1)you will like Sapphira have to answer to God for your own actions

E)So Sapphira lies as well.

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.- **THEN WE read again V.11** ¹¹ So great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things

Imagine -UKRAINE GIVING ANALOGY

THIS story that prompts two Questions from us

- Why did Ananias and Sapphira do what they did?
- Was God's judgment too Severe?

Why did Ananias and Sapphira do what they did?

A)Their lies were symptomatic of a much deeper problem.

B)They love money and they love the praise of people,

1)so the tell a lie so they can keep their money and get the praise of people.

So Motivation of Ananias and Saphira was to get RECOGNITION

A) They want to be held in higher esteem in the eyes of the church

B) We can do that at times, try to make ourselves seem more spiritual or generous in the eyes of others

C) WE stretch the truth for recognition and esteem

But note this too. Remember Satan is the mastermind of this scheme - what is his motivation?

A) What is his goal?

B) Satan is trying to get this couple who lacked integrity into a position of **prominence in the early Church**

See Satan knows that what Jesus said about Leaven is true - A little bit of leaven – leavens or fills the whole lump

A) Leaven is likened to sin in the Bible - a little bit of sin can spread through the whole church

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

C) Because his first attempt to weaken the church from outside opposition only made the church stronger –

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

“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. **Matthew 13:24, 25**

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

B) So what is happening here is merely the fulfillment of what Jesus said would happen -

Satan is trying to sow some tares amongst the wheat

A) By Appealing to Ananias and Sapphira’s love of money and desire **for prominence and recognition in the church.**

Brings up the question: Was God’s judgment too severe?

A) Many people today would think that - they would find this story in the Bible offensive.

B) The first thing we need to realize is that in the history of God’s people
1) whenever God is doing a new thing.

C) He often institutes a severe judgment in order to set a high standard

D) He wants his people to know that He is Holy and He takes sin and compromise seriously

So there is a Principle in scripture known AS the Principle of first precedent

A) Here is the idea: When something new was happening or God was doing something new -

B) He would often institute a serious Judgment in order to send a message to that generation

C) And future generations

D) The message: Sin is a serious matter to God

Examples: OT Leviticus 10 the Tabernacle has just been built - first sacrifices are being offered

A) Nadab and Abihu - the sons of Aaron the High Priest - bring strange fire -

B) drunk trying to carry out the priestly duties
God strikes them dead!

D) Warning to all the other priest - don’t take this lightly - Holy calling

Later on in the story of the People of Israel - Now being led by Joshua - enter the promise land.

A) New Chapter in the life of God’s people - entering a new land -

B)First battle Jericho - take no plunder - Achan does - next battle Ai - podunk village - defeated

1)Sin in the Camp

C)Achan and his family are put to death

2 Samuel 6 David transporting the Ark

A)New King – beginning of a new Covenant – Davidic

B)Transfer on New Cart - like the Philistines - Uzzah touches and dies –**David gets upset** - why?

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

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

Here in Acts 5 the church is new – new work – a new covenant- God is sending a strong message. - Don't lie to me

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

B)God would do something one time to send a message for all times

1)**Don't LIE TO ME - I don't take sin lightly -**

So the question really is not why did God Kill Ananias and Sapphira -

A)The real question is why does he allow any of us to live

B)We have all had our moments where we were more concerned about our money

1)and the praise of men - Than we are about God

C)He doesn't strike us Dead!!! Praise God

But Sometimes we who are living in this age of grace - can be way too casual about sin -

A) "oh God will forgive me!"

B)Stories like this one remind us that God is Holy

1)**He hates sin - because he knows what it does to people**

⁷Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. ⁸For 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

Here is the mistake we often make: We forget how longsuffering God is

A)We compromise and nothing happens - so we deceive ourselves into thinking - **Not a big deal - God doesn't care**

B)Or even - I think I got away with that one. – Ecclesiastes 8 - speaks to that mentality

11 Because the sentence against an evil work is **not executed speedily**, therefore the heart of the sons of men is **fully set in them to do evil**. 12 Though a sinner does evil a hundred *times*, and his **days are prolonged**, (nothing happens) yet I surely know that it will be well with those who fear God, who fear before Him. 13 But it will not be well with the wicked; nor will he prolong *his* days, *which are* as a shadow, because he does **not fear before God**. (Ecclesiastes 8:11-13).

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

Lessons: #1 We can lie to others, but we cannot lie to God!

A)The Holy Spirit knows your thoughts as if they were being played through **a loudspeaker or being displayed on a screen**.

B)The Holy Spirit would tell Denise about our kids

C)Question are you lying to the Holy Spirit? **Are you pretending to be more spiritual than you are?**

1)Are you playing the hypocrite?

D)I don't know your heart - the person next to you doesn't - Spouse might not -

1)but GOD SEES YOUR HEART

E)He wants us to love him and be surrendered to him with all our hearts

#2 When sin is dealt with it – produces a healthy fear of God in the church V.5,11 - So great fear came upon all those who heard these things.

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 -

A healthy fear of God is a catalyst for true Worship!

A)Think of a massive storm - Windy raining hard - you are by the beach waves are huge and the sea is rough - **Ominous right -**

B)You would not want to be out in the middle of that on a boat or worse yet a surf board -

1)so there is a reverence and a respect - a healthy fear of a stormy ocean

C)But at the same time there is a wonderful peace when you can watch that from the quietness of a house

D)With the fire place on and a cup of Joe in your hand - Wow look at that - that is Awesome!!!!

E)a great definition of the fear of God - **Awe mixed with Intimacy!**

The Bible says it is a fearful thing to fall into the hand of the living God

A)It all depends upon your relationship to him -

B)Unbeliever or someone playing the Hypocrite - SCARY

C)But FOLLOWER OF JESUS - no- **I will uphold you with my righteous right hand -**

1)Comforting in other words

D)Our God is a consuming fire - Again Ominous - scary - if you are on the wrong side of that statement

1)Unbeliever you will be judged - what did you do with Jesus

2)Hypocrite you will be exposed

E)But if you are a follower of Jesus God is not wanting to BURN YOU UP -

1)he is wanting to warm you up - to burn bright in your heart and life

#3 Purity results in power v.12-16

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. 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, ¹⁵ so that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them. ¹⁶ Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed.

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

A)More miracles - healings - incredible/ more of God comes after God purifies the church

B)Our problem is we want the power - the miracles the move of God without the purity.

C)Doesn't work that way:

Desire for Revival? God bring Revival - Is God saying will you purify yourselves

A)Purity and consecration results in power and an outpouring

B)One of the reasons God - would call his people in the OT to purify themselves - consecrate

1)Before he was going to show up

C)Are we willing to be purified by the Lord?

#4 Purity results in respect from others V. 13

¹³ Yet none of the rest dared join them, but the people esteemed them highly.

A)None of the rest dared join them -but believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes

B)What is this saying: The news of what happened to Ananias and Sapphira spread and it had a way of weeding out the casual follower

C)Others who were playing the Hypocrite - bowed out

1)You could see how this would have that affect -

There was such a heart of love and Purity - and integrity amongst the followers of Jesus -

A)They were esteemed highly by others - These are good people who can be trusted.

B)Unbelievers are Less interested in the hype and the show of church - looking for something real

C) People who are Authentic and Genuine
- (even if I don't agree with their beliefs)
1) I respect and admire the way that they live

D) Our work place is better because they are here

Is Our city better because Calvary Vista is here!!!!
If the church ceased to exist - would the city miss us?

A) If you moved out of your neighborhood - would your neighbors care

B) We live in a day and age where the church has two black eyes -

1) Every week a new Scandal - Pastor leader or parishioner - sinful behavior

How do we combat that?

A) It happens when the people in your circle of influence see you living an authentic life for Jesus

B) When you fail - you own it - don't make excuses for it - own it

C) Just maybe that will have a contagious effect on our world