

And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, so that they even carried out the sick into the streets and laid them on cots and mats, that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on them.
(Acts 5:14-15)

I. Deception Among Us

- a. Describe the spiritual atmosphere of the early church? (Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-37)
- b. *But a man named Ananias (God is gracious), with Sapphira (beautiful). Satan seeks to corrupt if he cannot conquer! We have to remember to protect our minds against deception. (Eph 6:11-12)*
 1. Why? It was all show based on the desire to be perceived as better, more holy, more spiritual.
- c. God covets no man's money. If you do not give willingly and honestly God does not want it.
- d. Oil and water, the clean and the unclean...don't mix. Lying and truth do not mix.
- e. Satan could not silence the church so he moved on the inside to use people in the fellowship.
- f. This story is more about the Lord's personal judgement of *His* people than church discipline.

II. Lying Has Consequences

- a. *Sin has many tools, but a lie is the handle that fits them all.* –Oliver Wendell Holmes.
- b. The last words heard by Ananias, "You have lied to God". The beautiful Sapphira seals her fate with these words, "Yes that was the price".
- c. The sin was not in withholding the money, but in pretending to give it all.
- d. Lying generally involves deliberate falsehood, told with the intent of misleading or causing someone to believe error. Why do people lie? *To cover up, selfishness, habit, believe it to be easier*
- e. Lying to authority results in temporary penalties. Lying to God has eternal penalties.
- f. Lord, did you have to kill them? Why did God make an example Ananias and Sapphira?
- g. The Lord tends to judge sin severely at the beginning of a new period of salvation history.
 1. Other examples: Achan (Nadab and Abihu; Lev. 10:1-3; Joshua 7:11; 20-23;) *Holiness is required.*
- h. A great fear came upon the whole church....(v.11) refers to the believers in Jerusalem.

III. Miracles Lead Many to Believe (5:12-16)

- a. Signs (miracles) and wonders were given to authenticate the ministry and encouraged the people follow the leadership of the church.
- b. God's saving, healing and delivering power are still at work in the church.
- c. God's power (*dunamis*) among His people, the increase of believers, and the unity of the people are evidence the church was moving in God's will.

IV. Persecution and Opposition...When God is Smiling the Devil is frowning.

- a. Sadducees were filled with envy and ordered the arrest of the apostles.
- b. A heavenly messenger appears, releases the apostles and directs them to keep teaching.(vv.20,25)
- c. *We must obey God rather than men?* The apostle's mission. (v.29-32)
- d. Gamaliel gives counsel, *if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them...v.38-40*
- e. The apostles were beaten, but continued to preach and teach without ceasing.
- f. The enemy wants to disgrace, decrease and defeat the church. He will do it if we let him.

V. Thoughts and Considerations

- a. We need to make sure that we are not trying to *look* holy, instead of trying to *be* holy.
- b. The closer a person is to God, the more attention they must pay to glory and holiness.
- c. Satan is an enemy who never gives up. How do we counter deception?
- d. *God is a jealous God.* He is highly protective of His name, mission, and purpose that are working through His church. Today, do we see divine judgment, chastisement, and restoration?

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