

“Ananias and Sapphira”

Acts 5:1-11

At the beginning of the Church God's actions were manifested more severely in regards to judgement and more powerfully in regards to miracles. One reason for this might be discovered in looking back at Israel's 40 year desert wandering. Just as God's very presence camped with Israel in the pillar of fire and cloud, so the recent presence of the Lord Himself and the presence of the Holy Spirit and His Apostles doing amazing things ought to have been enough to cause His people to live in much fear. The more God manifests Himself in our lives the higher standards of accountability we are held to. Conversely, the more and more we think our meeting Him face to face is far off the lazier and lazier we tend to get spiritually. But if we knew we were meeting Jesus today and lived that way, how would our lives and actions and attitudes be different? **(see Luke 12:39-48)**

Three Things to Learn from Ananias and Sapphira's Account:

1. Their real sin was lying, not spending. (vs. 1-4, esp. vs. 3&4)

- A. Peter makes it clear that what they gave or didn't give was up to them. Giving to support the Church was, at the beginning, volitional (as it is today).

Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. - 2 Cor. 9:6-7

2. Their sin of lying was made worse by their motive.

- A. They wanted to appear Godly by doing this outward act of "righteousness."
- B. They wanted the Apostles to think highly of them as they did of Barnabas. (see 4:36-37)
 - I. They wanted to get on the radar screen at church.
- C. Beware of doing things in the church to be noticed by others. Check yourself that you never do acts of "righteousness" in order to gain popularity with the people or leadership.
 - I. Remember, this is evil. (not just not good)

"Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven." - Matt. 6:1 (Examples: Giving, Praying, Fasting.)

3. Their sin of lying for popularity was linked to Satan's influence in their lives. (vs. 3)

- A. Satan had "filled their hearts" (in Grk. "gained control") in this area of their lives.
 - I. The same Grk. verb is used in Eph. 5:18 "Be filled with the Spirit." **(see Eph. 5:15-21).**
- B. To be sure, Ananias and Sapphira were believers. They had weakened in certain areas of their lives and given Satan control or influence over those areas.
 - I. Can Satan get control over our lives just from lying? **(see Eph. 4:25-27)**
 - a.) Also anger, stealing, speaking, bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, slander and malice. (Eph. 4:25-32)
- C. Is there any area in my life where I've given Satan control to fill my heart?
 - I. With lies, anger, stealing, etc.?

What to do:

1. Repent and Confess. (1 Jn. 1:9)
2. Be Filled with the Spirit. (Eph. 5:18)
3. Be Careful how you walk. (...not as unwise but as wise, making the most of your time for the days are evil. Eph. 4:15-16)
4. Be afraid. (The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever. - Ps. 19:9) *There is sin leading to death for the Christian.*