

▼ The Spirit Jump-Starts The Church - Part 11

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• Read the Passage: Acts 4:32-37

All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need.

Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means Son of Encouragement), sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet.

• Read the Passage: Acts 5:1-11

Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. With his wife's full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles' feet.

Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied to men but to God."

When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened. Then the young men came forward, wrapped up his body, and carried him out and buried him.

About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. Peter asked her, "Tell me, is this the price you and Ananias got for the land?" "Yes," she said, "that is the price."

Peter said to her, "How could you agree to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also."

At that moment she fell down at his feet and died. Then the young men came in and, finding her dead, carried her out and buried her beside her husband. Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events.

• Read the Passage: Acts 5:12-16

The apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders among the people. And all the believers used to meet together in Solomon's Colonnade. No one else dared join them, even though they were highly regarded by the people. Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number. As a result, people brought the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and mats so that at least Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by. Crowds gathered also from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those tormented by evil spirits, and all of them were healed.

• Read the Passage: Acts 5:17-42

Then the high priest and all his associates, who were members of the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy. They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail. But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail and brought them out. "Go, stand in the temple courts," he said, "and tell the people the full message of this new life."

At daybreak they entered the temple courts, as they had been told, and began to teach the people.

When the high priest and his associates arrived, they called together the Sanhedrin — the full assembly of the elders of Israel — and sent to the jail for the apostles. But on arriving at the jail, the officers did not find them there. So they went back and reported, “We found the jail securely locked, with the guards standing at the doors; but when we opened them, we found no one inside.” On hearing this report, the captain of the temple guard and the chief priests were puzzled, wondering what would come of this.

Then someone came and said, “Look! The men you put in jail are standing in the temple courts teaching the people.” At that, the captain went with his officers and brought the apostles. They did not use force, because they feared that the people would stone them.

Having brought the apostles, they made them appear before the Sanhedrin to be questioned by the high priest. “We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name,” he said. “Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man’s blood.”

Peter and the other apostles replied: “We must obey God rather than men! The God of our fathers raised Jesus from the dead — whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel. We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.”

When they heard this, they were furious and wanted to put them to death. But a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, who was honored by all the people, stood up in the Sanhedrin and ordered that the men be put outside for a little while. Then he addressed them: “Men of Israel, consider carefully what you intend to do to these men. Some time ago Theudas appeared, claiming to be somebody, and about four hundred men rallied to him. He was killed, all his followers were dispersed, and it all came to nothing. After him, Judas the Galilean appeared in the days of the census and led a band of people in revolt. He too was killed, and all his followers were scattered. Therefore, in the present case I advise you: Leave these men alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God.”

His speech persuaded them. They called the apostles in and had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name. Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ.

▶ **Study the Passage**

• **Discover the Overall Exegetical Idea**

▼ **Determine Sermon’s Purpose (what listeners should do)**

- Understand the continuing flow of events in Acts 2-5.
- Understand the role of divine judgment in the early days of the church.
- Understand the elements of the Good News.
- Recognize and imitate the faithfulness of the apostles in the face of persecution.
- Recognize and imitate the way the apostles and the rest of the believers spoke about Jesus.

▶ **Decide How to Accomplish This Purpose**

▼ **Understand the continuing flow of events in Acts 2 - 5.**

- Acts 4:32-37 is an overview. Acts 5 provides detail.
- Ananias and Sapphira are judged for their attempt to misrepresent their generosity.
- God continues to add to the church.
- The apostles continue their ministry of teaching and healing.
- The authority have the apostles arrested and imprisoned, but the Lord intervenes.
- The apostles are miraculously released yet, in obedience to God, return to the “scene of the crime” to teach the people.
- The apostles continue to testify to Jesus’ status as the resurrected messiah. They ultimately let the apostles go free.
- The apostles are grateful for the opportunity to represent Jesus despite persecution.

▼ **Understand the role of divine judgment in the early days of the church.**

- The Holy Spirit puts Ananias and Sapphira in check!

▼ Earlier examples of divine judgment under the old covenant:

- Exodus 32 - The golden Calf
- Leviticus 10 - Nadab and Abihu
- Numbers 11 - Plague after complaining and eating quail.
- Numbers 12 - Miriam punished with temporary leprosy.
- Numbers 14 - The Lord consigns the people to 40 years in the wilderness after they refuse to enter the promised land.
- Numbers 15 - The Sabbath-Breaker put to death.
- Numbers 16 - Korah, Dathan, and Abiram

▼ What’s the solution of the problem of hypocrisy like that of Ananias and Sapphira?

- The Holy Spirit does not often perform acts of judgment like this.
- Think of the other behaviors by Christians that embarrass the church and embarrass us.
- The only solution is to make disciples!

▼ **Understand the elements of the Good News.**

- Peter and the apostles testify to the resurrection of Jesus.
- Peter and the apostles reiterate that the leaders and people had caused Jesus’ crucifixion.
- God has exalted Jesus to his right hand as Prince and Savior to give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel.

- The apostles continue teaching and proclaiming that the Christ is Jesus. - See Psalm 2.
Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the LORD and against his Anointed One. "Let us break their chains," they say, "and throw off their fetters." The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them. Then he rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath, saying, "I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill."

I will proclaim the decree of the LORD: He said to me, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession. You will rule them with an iron scepter; you will dash them to pieces like pottery." Therefore, you kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and you be destroyed in your way, for his wrath can flare up in a moment. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

- **Recognize and imitate the faithfulness of the apostles in the face of persecution.**
- ▼ **Recognize and imitate the way the apostles and the rest of the believers spoke about Jesus.**

- ▼ Note the references to Jesus:

- ▼ Acts 2

- ▼ Acts 2:22-40

- Jesus did miracles, signs, and wonders.
- Jesus was crucified.
- Jesus was raised from the dead.
- Jesus was exalted to God's right hand.
- Jesus is Lord and Christ.
- Followers should be baptized in Jesus' name.
- Jesus pours out the Holy Spirit on his followers.
- By following Jesus, we save ourselves from this corrupt generation.

- ▼ Acts 3

- ▼ Acts 3:6

- Healing is proclaimed in Jesus name.

- ▼ Acts 3:13-15

- The Jews disowned Jesus and asked to have a murderer released in his stead.
- God raised Jesus from the dead.

- ▼ Acts 3:16

- Jesus' name heals.

- ▼ Acts 3:17-26

- Christ's suffering was foretold by the prophets.

- Repenting will result in wiping out sins and time of refreshing from the Lord.
 - Jesus must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore all things.
 - God sent Jesus to turn them from their wicked ways.
- ▼ Acts 4
 - ▼ Acts 4:2
 - Jesus validates the resurrection of the dead.
 - ▼ Acts 4:8-12
 - Jesus was crucified because of the Jews.
 - God raised Jesus from the dead.
 - Jesus is the only name through which people can be saved.
 - ▼ Acts 4:13
 - The apostles made an impression because they had been with Jesus.
 - ▼ Acts 4:18-20
 - The apostles can't help but talk about Jesus.
 - ▼ Acts 4:27-31
 - Herod, Pilate, the Gentiles and the people of Israel in Jerusalem conspired against Jesus.
 - The apostles asked God to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders in Jesus' name.
 - ▼ Acts 4:32-33
 - The apostles testified to the resurrection of Jesus.
 - ▼ Acts 5
 - ▼ Acts 5:19-20
 - "Tell the people all about this new life" - angels aren't authorized to do this - only people.
 - ▼ Acts 5:27-28
 - The Apostles were holding the Sanhedrin accountable for "this man's blood".
 - ▼ Acts 5:28-31
 - The God of "our ancestors) (i.e. the God of Israel) raised Jesus from the dead.
 - They (the Sanhedrin) had crucified him.
 - God exalted Jesus to his right hand as Prince and Saviour to bring Israel to repentance.
 - The Holy Spirit is given to those who obey Jesus.
 - ▼ Acts 5:40-42

- The apostles rejoice at being counted worthy to suffer disgrace for the name of Jesus.
- The apostles continue teaching and proclaiming everywhere that the Christ is Jesus. - See Psalm 2.

Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the LORD and against his Anointed One. "Let us break their chains," they say, "and throw off their fetters." The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them. Then he rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath, saying, "I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill."

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- The apostles proclaimed the name of Jesus despite persecution.
- The apostles rejoiced that they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name.
- Note that in Acts 5 "going to heaven" is not mentioned as part of the gospel message!
- Learn to imitate what the apostles and other believers actually said about Jesus.

▼ **Followup**

▼ **Discussion Questions**

- What precisely did the Apostles tell people about Jesus in Acts 5? What was their audience's background?
- How does this compare with what they said in Acts 2-4?
- When was the last time you spoke about Jesus with someone you didn't know as a believer? What did you say?
- Have you ever gotten in trouble for speaking about Jesus? What happened? Did you rejoice like the Apostles did?

▶ **Discipleship / Skills Development**