

Slide 1: Title
Lying to the Spirit
Acts 4:32-5:11

Slide 2:
Acts 4:32-5:11 (ESV)

Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need. Thus Joseph, who was also called by the apostles Barnabas (which means son of encouragement), a Levite, a native of Cyprus, sold a field that belonged to him and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

Slide 3:

But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, and with his wife's knowledge he kept back for himself some of the proceeds and brought only a part of it and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man but to God." When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and breathed his last. And great fear came upon all who heard of it. The young men rose and wrapped him up and carried him out and buried him.

Slide 4:

After an interval of about three hours his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. And Peter said to her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for so much." And she said, "Yes, for so much." But Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out." Immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. When the young men came in they found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. And great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard of these things.

Slide 5:

This event was so important because God needed to move the structure from being a primarily external to a primarily internal one.

Slide 6:

- I. The Beauty of Covenant Community
- II. The Poison in a Covenant Community
- III. The Hope of Covenant Community

Slide 7:

The Beauty
Terrible News colliding with Great News = Good News

Slide 8:

What is NOT happening in the community:

- 1) The Church is not opposed to private ownership of goods
- 2) The Church was not proposing a form of communistic equality
- 3) The Church was not making any mandatory stipulations among it's members

Slide 9:

"There was not a needy person among them"

Slide 10:

"...no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own..."

Slide 11:

The Poison

"Bar" = "son of"

"Nabi" = "genuine, prophet, encourager"

Ananias and Sapphira also want spiritual recognition

Slide 12:

"he kept back for himself" = "nophizo" = steal from God

Only other time it is used is in Joshua 7 (Story of Achan)

Slide 13:

This sin is obviously fatal to the Church.

God's wrath is not a cranky explosion of emotion on a "bad" day. It is a settled, surgical opposition to the cancer which is eating out the center of His bride, the Church, for whom He died.

Slide 14:

Why is this young church so beautiful and powerful?

"great grace was upon them all"

Slide 15:

The poison was pretending to be people they were not, because only in brutal self-honesty is grace available.

Slide 16:

Performance is NEVER an impediment to God's grace, but in personal deception it is ALWAYS.

Slide 17:

A Christian is always saved because a Christian, by God's grace perseveres to the end.

Slide 18:

"Hell begins with a grumbling mood, always complaining, always blaming others... but you are still distinct from it. You may even criticize it in yourself and wish you could stop it. But there may come a day when you can no longer. Then there will be no you left to criticize the mood or even to enjoy it, but just the grumble itself, going on forever like a machine. It is not a question of God "sending us" to hell. In each of us there is something growing, which will BE hell unless it is nipped in the bud." C.S. Lewis

Slide 19:

The sin beneath the sin of Ananias and Sapphira is pride...their unwillingness to deal honestly with their evil hearts in a safe community created for that very purpose.

Slide 20:

The Hope

1) Jesus

Slide 21:

The Hope

2) Fear (Awe)

"And great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard of these things."

Slide 22:

Is it right to be afraid of God?

"It is the height of folly NOT to be afraid of God when there's every reason to be afraid of God"

John Murray

II. Group Discussion

1) Have someone read Acts 4:32-5:11. What are the thoughts about all of this: the church in chapter 4, and the church in chapter 5? What are your thoughts about the story of Ananias and Sapphira?

2) The Beauty of Community:

Is it possible to live in a community where people have possessions but do not consider them their own? What is the principle here that is not really a principle, but a way to look at life? How do we get there in this culture? Should we have the same mindset?

3) The Poison in a Community:

What is our power as a church? What are we communicating to the world as our hope?

How does "faking it" block the grace that we seek and need, and how the world experiences salvation? Why is this so dangerous to the church? What does God want the world to see from His church?

4) The Hope of a Community:

What did Jesus do? He did more than die and rise, right?

He was a certain type of human as well. He was a perfect man of integrity. He "performed" perfectly. How does His "performance" free us from our own desire to perform?

And how does fear help a community go deeper with God? Is fear always bad? How can it also be helpful to a community of grace?

5) Prayer and Praise.