

Church Part 1: The Challenge Erik Petrik | August 8, 2021

The **RECAP** of “The Church Part 2”? The Portrait

I. How important is the local church?

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 just to human beings but to God."

When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened. Then some 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 conspire to test the Spirit of the Lord? Listen! 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. **(Acts 5:1-11)**

II. How secure is the local church?

On this mountain the Lord Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine—the best of meats and the finest of wines. On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations; he will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove his people's disgrace from all the earth. The Lord has spoken. In that day they will say, "Surely this is our God; we trusted in him, and he saved us. This is the Lord, we trusted in him; let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation." **(Isaiah 25:6-9)**

1. A vision of when
2. A vision of who

3. A vision of **how**
4. A vision of **hope**

III. (five reasons) Why the church is a challenge? Luke 4:16-30

16 He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, **17** and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

18 "The Spirit of the Lord is on me,

because he has anointed me

to proclaim good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners

and recovery of sight for the blind,

to set the oppressed free,

19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."^a

20 Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. **21** He began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

22 All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips. "Isn't this Joseph's son?" they asked.

23 Jesus said to them, "Surely you will quote this proverb to me: 'Physician, heal yourself!' And you will tell me, 'Do here in your hometown what we have heard that you did in Capernaum.'"

24 "Truly I tell you," he continued, "no prophet is accepted in his hometown. **25** I assure you that there were many widows in Israel in Elijah's time, when the sky was shut for three and a half years and there was a severe famine throughout the land. **26** Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a **widow in Zarephath** in the region of Sidon. **27** And there were many in

Israel with leprosy¹ in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed—only **Naaman the Syrian.**”

28 All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this.**29** They got up, drove him out of the town, and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him off the cliff.**30** But he walked right through the crowd and went on his way.

First reason why it's tough:

1. The church is local

He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.” All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips. “Isn't this Joseph's son?” they asked. (**Luke 4:16-22**)

2. The church is predictable

Do you know how predictable you are?

Northeastern college of Science:

“Human behavior is 93 percent predictable, a group of leading Northeastern University network scientists recently found. Distinguished Professor of Physics and his team studied the mobility patterns of anonymous cell-phone users and concluded that, despite the common perception that our actions are random and unpredictable, human mobility follows surprisingly regular patterns. The team's research is published in the current issue of Science magazine.

“Spontaneous individuals are largely absent from the population. Despite the significant differences in travel patterns, we found that most people are equally predictable,” said Barabási, who is also director of Northeastern's world-leading **Center for Complex Network Research**. “The predictability represents the probability we can foresee an individual's future whereabouts in the next hour based on his or her previous trajectory.”

- a. We are slow to hear/understand... "wait, what? Isn't this Joseph's son?"
- b. We are set in our ways.

The point: are you willing to say, "yes, i'm predictable"?

Ok, here's the rub

THE ISSUE: Not what he says but who he claims to be.

"How can such a common person make such a claim?"

Jesus said to them, "Surely you will quote this proverb to me: 'Physician, heal yourself!' And you will tell me, 'Do here in your hometown what we have heard that you did in Capernaum.'" "Truly I tell you," he continued, "no prophet is accepted in his hometown. I assure you that there were many widows in Israel in Elijah's time, when the sky was shut for three and a half years and there was a severe famine throughout the land. Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to **a widow in Zarephath** in the region of Sidon. And there were many in Israel with leprosy^[a] in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed—only **Naaman the Syrian**." All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this. They got up, drove him out of the town, and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him off the cliff. But he walked right through the crowd and went on his way. **(Luke 4:23-30)**

3. The church requires a new way **seeing**
4. The church requires a change of **heart**
5. The church has a challenging **mission**

V. Final Question: Will you push or applaud?