Pastor Jim Jackson, 11/8/26
THE CHURCH, Pt. 5—A Family Disciplined
Acts 4:32-5:14

The church was filled with <u>UNITY</u>

After Jesus' ascended into heaven, the Holy Spirit brought tremendous unity and love between Christians in the new faith community. By the gospel and Spirit-created life change, strangers were made family, believers became the 'body' and 'Bride' of Christ and they were made into a spiritual 'house' where the Spirit dwelt (John 1:12; Rom. 12:5; Eph. 2:19-22; 5:25-27). *God's great desire is that His Family, Body, Bride, and House stay unified and healthy!* Sacrificial service between forgiven sinners who were now brothers and sisters in Christ was by God's design. Acknowledging God had been gracious to them, they saw the needs of others and stepped in to help their Family (Gal. 6:10). *A natural outcome of receiving the love of God in the heart is serving with the love of God in the hand!*

Ananias and Sapphira were filled with <u>DISUNITY</u>

As one of the signs of love and unity is generosity, believers like Barnabas saw a need and filled it—even if that meant selling what they didn't need to help those with a need. Into this beautiful unity, Ananias and Sapphira, who may have been church leaders, decided to be deceptive about their giving. While the quantity of their giving wasn't the problem, the quality of their hearts was. *God doesn't always judge rebellion immediately, but just make sure He doesn't have to!* As unbelievers can't 'lie to the Holy Spirit,' they were true believers influenced by Satan. As Satan hates God and His Family, his main tactic is to deceive, distort, disunify, and destroy it (John 8:44; 13:2; 1 Pet. 5:8). Sensing they lied, Peter pronounces judgement, and the Holy Spirit put them to death (1 Cor. 11:27-32). Judgment starts with the house of God, which should be an example of unity and purity. *God deletes and destroys those who threaten the unity of His body and Bride* (1 Cor. 3:16, 17; 1 Pet. 4:17).

People were filled with the fear of <u>GOD</u>

The death of the Christians created 'great fear' in the church and in the public. God protected church unity by immediate, severe discipline getting *everyone's* attention! But, instead of this stopping and hindering church growth, it *increased* it both in number and purity—addition by subtraction. *God will always protect and provide for His Bride, both for His glory and their good!*