

III. The Judicial Consequences: Acts 5:5-11- Death

Recap: Main point-“The sin unto death is tied to stealing God’s glory, presumptuous sin, and rejection of the Holy Spirit’s calling,” JRG.

Ironside, Lectures on Acts, p. 132- *“If the Spirit of God were working that way today, what a lot of work there would be for the undertaker.”*

Ironside goes on to further say that these two people are not so different than most of us today. Wow!

Where Ananias and Sapphira saved? That’s the big question. You may not have even asked yourself that. It is my belief that they were. I think this is a case of the sin unto death, even though they were young believers. To lie to the Holy Spirit is blasphemy. To reject the drawing or correction of the Holy Spirit is serious. I am grateful that the Lord Jesus stands between God’s wrath and me.

Matt 12:30-32

30 "He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters. 31 And so I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. 32 Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

NIV

Ps 19:13

13 Keep back thy servant also from **presumptuous sins**; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the **great transgression**.

KJV

Prov 14:12

12 There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of **death**.

KJV

1 John 5:16-17

16 If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. **There is a sin unto death**: I do not say that he shall pray for it. 17 All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.

KJV

Verse 5 – The Soul that Sinneth – It Will Die

Holy Spirit has a sense of humor – **“and great fear seized all the people.”** I guess it did. Note verse 13. People were cautious about joining the group. Now that’s a holy church. Would it not be different that people were afraid to join WBC because the standard of holiness was so high? Wow!

Ironside says, “We are told That great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things. Oh, we too have heard them. God grant that great fear will come upon us all. Fear of what? Fear that we shall dishonor the spirit of God by pretending to be what we are not, by pretending to be genuinely devoted when we are full of hypocrisy and unreality.”

Illustration: Boice tells the story of a sermon that he heard preached by Donald Gray Barnhouse. It was entitled, **“Men Whom God Struck Dead.”** It included the story of Ananias and Sapphira but also of others in the Bible who lost their lives due to sin. It included the Old Testament story of Nadab and Abihu who offered improper fire upon God's altar and were struck dead, and the story of Uzza who reached out and touched God's ark when it was being transported to Jerusalem and he was struck dead. I'm also reminded of how Moses almost lost his life in Exodus 4:24ff.

David was about to be killed when Nathan confronted him about his murderous sin and adultery.

The sin unto death is not all that uncommon.

Ex 4:24-26

24 At a lodging place on the way, the Lord met [Moses] and was about to kill him. 25 But Zipporah took a flint knife, cut off her son's foreskin and touched [Moses'] feet with it. "Surely you are a bridegroom of blood to me," she said. 26 So the Lord let him alone. (At that time she said "bridegroom of blood," referring to circumcision).

NIV

Num 3:2-4

2 The names of the sons of Aaron were Nadab the firstborn and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. 3 Those were the names of Aaron's sons, the anointed priests, who were ordained to serve as priests. 4 Nadab and Abihu, however, fell dead before the Lord when they made an offering with unauthorized fire before him in the Desert of Sinai. They had no sons; so only Eleazar and Ithamar served as priests during the lifetime of their father Aaron.

NIV

2 Sam 6:6-8

6 When they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah reached out and took hold of the ark of God, because the oxen stumbled. 7 The Lord's anger burned against Uzzah because of his irreverent act; therefore God struck him down and he died there beside the ark of God.

8 Then David was angry because the Lord's wrath had broken out against Uzzah, and to this day that place is called Perez Uzzah.

NIV

2 Sam 12:7-10

7 And Nathan said to David, **Thou art the man.** Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul;

8 And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things.

9 Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon.

10 Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife.

KJV

2 Sam 12:13

13 And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; **thou shalt not die.**

KJV

We may also speak of the many Israelites that die in the desert after 40 years of wandering in the wilderness. Were they not disobedient to the Holy Spirit and had they not presumptuously sinned.

So here is Ananias lying to the Holy Spirit, being jealous, and allowing Satan to use his mind to disrupt the unity of the church. This was premeditated presumptuous sin. As with David, this sin gave occasion to blaspheme.

2 Sam 12:14

14 Howbeit, because by this deed **thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme...**

KJV

Our witness in Christ is important. This act of judgment brought great fear among the people. The curious onlookers and uncommitted darn not apply. Again, H. A. Ironside doesn't hold back... *"The curse of Christianity Today is that vast numbers of members of Christian churches have never been saved! Their hearts are in the world and they love the things of the world. This mix multitude has always hurt the testimony of the church,"* (p. 134).

Satan was literally using the oldest trick in the book. This was just like the first lie told in the bible. "Did God really say that?" Satan is the Father of lies. He put a lie into their hearts. In each one of these illustrations, the people that died were guilty because they had been given instructions as to how to perform their duties before the Lord. They violated those instructions and lost their lives. ***This would be a good place for you to praise God for his grace and mercy in the New Testament Covenant.***

Verse 6:

Illustration: "Wound him up"- **sustello** (like using a drawstring). This is a vivid picture. No funeral. Didn't wait for his wife. Just buried him. Do you think that Ananias had any thought that he was living his last day?

Prov 29:1

A man who remains stiff-necked after many rebukes
will suddenly be destroyed — without remedy.

NIV

Rom 2:5-6

5 But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. 6 God "will give to each person according to what he has done."

NIV

Eph 2:3-6

Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. 4 **But** because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in **mercy**, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions — it is by **grace** you have been saved.

NIV

Rom 5:20-21

...But where sin increased, **grace** increased all the more, 21 so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

NIV

Rom 5:15-17

15 But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's **grace** and the gift that came by the **grace** of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! 16 Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the **gift** followed many trespasses and brought **justification**. 17 For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, **how much more** will those who receive God's **abundant provision of grace** and of **the gift of righteousness reign** in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

NIV

1 Peter 4:17-18

17 For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? 18 And,

**"If it is hard for the righteous to be saved,
what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?"**

NIV

Where in the world did Peter get such a statement? Could it have been from the OT? Yes!

Prov 11:31

31 If the righteous receive their due on earth,
how much more the ungodly and the sinner!

NIV

We are reading how Peter interpreted this proverb. This is fantastic. Estupendo!- Stupendous, Great! What an awesome privilege. This is like perfect confirmation about the interpretation of the text.

You may have never read this or just missed it but listen to this passage.

1 Tim 5:24-25

24 The sins of some men are obvious, reaching the place of judgment ahead of them; the sins of others trail behind them. 25 In the same way, good deeds are obvious, and even those that are not cannot be hidden.

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Ananias and Sapphira we're not giving this grace. Their judgment came before the judgment day. Your sin and my sin may also be found out in an instant. Their sins became obvious immediately.

1 Tim 5:24-25

24 The sins of some people are easy to see. Their sins show that they will be judged. But the sins of some others are seen only later. 25 It is the same with the good things people do. Some are easy to see. But even if they are not obvious now, none of them will stay hidden forever.

Easy-to-Read Version

Verse 7: As verse 1 tells us, Ananias, with his wife's knowledge, brought a portion of the money to Peter. The fact that they both came at different times shows us that their intent was to draw attention to their gift. Why didn't they just come together to lay their gift at the disciples feet? Just like Judas, she was given an opportunity to come clean. She was asked one more time about the price of the land. Are you bringing all you have to worship or are you holding a portion back?

God is not asking us to be perfect. He asking us to be honest and bring pure worship. Jesus has given us access to God. Make the most of it. Just bring yourself and offer it to God in honesty.

Romans 12:1-2 says this is our reasonable act of worship. Bring yourself as a **living** sacrifice. That's an oxymoron. Sacrifices are not living. And we, my friend, are to be dead to self and alive to God. Stop crawling off the altar.

Verse 8: Likewise, three hours later Sapphira comes with her portion of the money or at least to get her praise. The text doesn't say she brought money but she goes to Peter to get thanked. She also gets the same result, death. Notice she is asked once more about the truth. That's grace.

Verse 9: Do not **"test"** the Spirit (**peirazo, examine**)– To **test** means to **try, prove** or, **examine** goodness. **People of God, we do not examine the Holy Spirit; the HS examines us.** There are many different ways to test the Lord (**Note also Acts 15:10; 1 Cor. 10:9**).

Matt 4:7

7 Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

NIV (**From Deut. 6:16**)

1 Cor 3:11-14

11 For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, 13 his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, **and the fire will test the quality of each man's work.**

NIV

If you need to test something, test to see if you are in the faith! (2 Cor. 13:5).

Verse 10: As Boice says, for what seems like a *trivial* offense to us was very significant in the eyes of the Holy Spirit. I, like Boice, hate to even use the word *trivial*, but from a human perspective, this seems to be excessive. However, we must understand that sin is serious and that any form of disobedience is wrong. *This particular sin disrupted the unity of the early church.* If we understood how much our unfaithfulness to God was hurting the body, we would do better to bring holiness to Christ. God knows we are just dust. He is simply seeking honesty in our acts of worship.

This should make us all aware of the great mercy and grace that we all experience every day of our journey with Jesus. How much must God be winking at or overlooking each moment of our weaknesses because of the atonement and redemption Christ has provided for us? I stand amazed! Thank God that He sees Jesus when He looks at me. The blood of Jesus is on the mercy seat. What kind of seat is it? It is the **mercy** seat.

The Lord told Adam and Eve that if they sinned that they would die. They died spiritually first, and then they died physically at a later date (1 Tim. 5:24-25). Ananias and Sapphira did not have that luxury. They literally dropped dead on the spot after their sin. Here's a passage for Jessie Duplantis and Kenneth Copland and Benn Hinn.

Prov 6:12-15

A scoundrel and villain,
who goes about with a corrupt mouth,
13 who winks with his eye,
signals with his feet
and motions with his fingers,
14 who plots evil with deceit in his heart —
he always stirs up dissension.
15 Therefore disaster will overtake him **in an instant**;
he will suddenly be destroyed — without remedy.
NIV

Prov 29:1

A man who remains stiff-necked after many rebukes
will suddenly be destroyed — without remedy.
NIV

2 Chron 36:16 (During Zedekiah's Reign)

16 But they mocked God's messengers, despised his words and
scoffed at his prophets until the wrath of the Lord was aroused
against his people and there was no remedy.
NIV

Verse 11: I am often confronted by church members when we have to discipline another church member. Most pastors don't even exercise church discipline anymore due to the many problems that it causes. Most modern church members don't even know it is a biblical command from God But you will see in verse

11, that due to the discipline of those who had lied, that fear came upon the whole church.

Many believe this is the first reference to the word church [**ekklesia**] in context of the new believers) and a healthy fear of the Lord began to flourish. Also see Acts 2:47 for the actual first use of church.

Great fear (megas phobos) fell upon the people. This was **mega fear**. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. What follows this cleansing of the church is nothing less than miraculous. When the church is cleansed revival breaks out. I hope you will also see that individual sin is not individual; sin effects the entire body of believers. I want you to also see that if you plan presumptuous sin in your heart (No matter how small) that Satan will be more than generous in helping you succeed in the task.

Closing: Recap: The Joyous Church – Unity
The Jealous Couple – Jealousy
The Judicial Consequences- Death

Quotes:

“For one man who sincerely pities our misfortunes, there are a thousand who sincerely hate our successes.”

-Charles C. Colton

Lee Travino- *“Every golf shot that is hit is either loved or hated. If you hit it good you love it and your opponent hates it. If you hit it bad your opponent loves it and you hate it.”*

“The man who keeps busy helping the man below him won’t have time to envy the man above him – and there may not be anybody above him anyway.”

-Henrietta C. Mears

Spurgeon said, *“A lie can get half way round the world before the truth can get its boots on.”*

Your sin will find you out! 2267: Down in Mississippi, three young boys came into school late. They had been fishing, but when they came into the classroom they told the teacher that they had had a flat tire, which was a lie. Upon hearing the story, the teacher simply separated the boys and asked each boy separately, which tire was flat?

One big difference that seminary classes had from my days at Augusta College was that the professors brought in the tests on test days and then left. With 35 preachers in the room, no one dared to cheat. We were self-monitored. Why can't we just be that honest all the time?

Closing Illustrations:

Picture the people coming in and getting these two and taking them out. What a vivid picture and awful scene. It's almost more than you can take. How would you feel if this happened at WBC one Sunday morning?

Think of what this couple missed out on because of jealousy and lying.

Same thing is going on right now! People are rejecting Jesus and missing fellowship in many good churches. Some people are looking for a perfect church.

Illustration and Quote: Someone once told Charles Spurgeon that they were leaving his church because they were going to find a perfect church. Spurgeon, who had a great deal of wit, and sometimes was more forthright than people dare to be today, said to them, “when you find it please don't join it because you'll ruining it (Quoted by Boice, p. 97).

Question? Who in their right mind would have left Charles Spurgeon's church? Makes me feel a lot better when people leave

Woodlake because they're so righteous and picky and then they end up in a liberal church somewhere enjoying the social gospel. If you are not growing, tithing, attending, or witnessing at WBC, ***no need to leave just so you can be disobedient somewhere else.*** You can do that right here and we're already used to your disobedience. Do not test God on this.

Some people are never satisfied. They can be in as close to perfect church as possible on earth and still jealously want what others have. Lying is a direct result of seeking self-glory and recognition. Give God all the glory.

The greatest statement of grace in the NT

2 Cor 5:21

21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

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