

Acts 5.1-16

Hey! Look at Me!...*Dead!?!*

GROWING, VIBRANT Church > HOSTILE Reaction of AUTHORITIES

ARREST – THREATEN Followers > OUTWARD Attack BACKFIRES

NO Matter what they DO the NUMBER of FOLLOWERS GROWS

Ch 5 > NEW Tactic – INSIDE STRATEGY to bring the Church DOWN

## 1. Inward Attack

### a. Deception of Self

vs. 1,2 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.

GIVING in NT Church > TITHING is taught in BOTH Testaments

NT Tithe is BEGINNING > Greater SALVATION calls for Greater SACRIFICE

v. 7 About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened.

BUSY 3 Hours > Husband DIED and BURIED > JUST SAD MEMORY  
STRIKEN SINNER – Given NO Elaborate FUNERAL – NO MOURNING

HONESTY of LUKE the HISTORIAN > OPEN about Church's FAILURES  
NOT Everything in SPIRIT-Filled Community is HUNKY-DORY All the TIME

SAPHIRA = lit. BEAUTIFUL > 3 Hours in BEAUTY Parlor – Total MakeOVER  
IRONIC SURPRISE – ANANIAS = God is MERCIFUL > NOW NO MORE

Vs. 7,8 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."

NOTHING WRONG with NOT GIVING Land > Giving HALF or PART

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. Acts 4.36,37

Lit ‘Son of EXHORTATION’ > Great TEACHING Ability / seen in ANTIOCH  
 Barnabas CHRISTIAN Leader CONSPICUOUS of his SHEER GOODNESS  
 Every Time he APPEARS in Acts he is HELPING PEOPLE  
 From OUTSIDE Appearances – NO DIFFERENCES btwn 2 Men & GIFTS

\$ 100 bill talking to \$ 1 bill > Do you KNOW the PLACES I have SEEN!?  
 I go to 5 Star Hotels – Fancy Restaurants – Golf Courses all the Time!!  
 \$ 1 bill > I have never been to Such Places ‘but I am in CHURCH Every Sunday!!”

DECEPTION is ADDICTIVE > TELLING So Many LIES > BELIEVE THEM!  
 evildoers and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived  
 2 Timothy 3.13

DESCRIPTION of ANCIENT Roman World > FITS 21<sup>st</sup> C

They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen. Romans 1.25

World of SMEAR and SPIN > Presidents who PROMISE ‘CHANGE’

BEER – Elevators full of Cheerleaders / Sports SHOES Anyone SLAM DUNK

Is your confidence in God’s grace mingled with healthy fear of his holiness? Have the twin truths that he searches hearts and forgives the guilty set you free to drop masks by which you tried to enhance your image? Dennis Johnson

b. Demonization by Satan

v. 3 Peter said, “Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart...

You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.  
John 8.44

Church is PILLAR and GROUND of God's Truth > Satan attacks with LIES

Sin has many tools, but a lie is the handle which fits them all. Oliver Wendell Holmes

Devil FAILED to Stop Church by FORCE from WITHOUT

Now tries to use FALSEHOOD from WITHIN

DEVIL'S Focus is on CHRISTIANS > Unbelievers Already Going SOUTH

DEVIL expends ENERGY trying to make God's PEOPLE follow LOW Road

Demonization occurs when Satan gets Christians so obsessed with an idea or course of action that they get carried away and are blinded to the consequences.

Ajith

Fernando

Peter's WARNING about DEVIL in Letter to Churches – Last Chapter....

Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. 1 Peter 5.8

Peter KNEW this FIRST HAND > Jesus said "Satan wants to sift you like wheat"

The church is safe so long as Satan is attacking from the outside, but when he gets on the inside, the church is in danger.  
Warren Wiersbe

### c. Deny the Spirit

v. 3-4 you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? <sup>4</sup> 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."

PROBLEM > WORDS Conflicted with ACTIONS --- LIED to HOLY SPIRIT

One of CLEAREST BIBICAL Texts that shows HOLY SPIRIT is GOD

This was pious pretense – religious sham – simulated holiness – Christian fraud.

R. Kent Hughes

Exciting NIGHT in Jerusalem Church > Apostle's Preaching / Great MUSIC

LAST Verse of "I Surrender ALL" – Ananias & Saphira – Come Forward

TELL Apostles and CHURCH > We SURRENDER ALL of our LAND SALE!

NOT just MISERS but THIEVES and LIARS > Fishing for PRAISE of MEN

4 X's in 1<sup>st</sup> 4 Chapters (2.4, 2.28, 4.8, 4.31) Believers FILLED with SPIRIT

When he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. John 16.13

Couple FILLED w/ ANOTHER Spirit > v. 3 Satan has so filled your heart

LIE to HOLY SPIRIT > Lie to SPIRIT Filled Leaders of Spirit-Filled Church

SATAN Inspired LIE was CONTERFEIT of the GIFT of TONGUES

v. 12 And all the believers used to meet together in Solomon's Colonnade.

EASTERN CLOISTER of Temple Area > where Peter PREACHED 2<sup>nd</sup> Sermon

THINK Temple // HUGE FORBIDDEN City – Gates, Squares, Rooms, Trees

THEOLOGICAL Meaning > NEW TEMPLE > People filled with God's Spirit

Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells  
in your midst? 1 Corinthians 3.16

When GOD does NEW WORK of His SPIRIT > POWERFUL PRESENCE

HOLDS Followers to HIGHER STANDARD > SET Work in RIGHT Direction

v. 2 'KEPT BACK' same Greek word in LXX ref. to ACHAN

1<sup>st</sup> CONQUEST in CANAAN > City of JERICHO > All things DEVOTED to God

Things SO ATTRACTIVE to man ACHAN > SECRETLY, STOLE from GOD

Then Joshua said to Achan, “My son, give glory to the LORD, the God of Israel, and honor him. Tell me what you have done; do not hide it from me.” Achan replied, “It is true! I have sinned against the LORD, the God of Israel. This is what I have done: When I saw in the plunder a beautiful robe from Babylonia, two hundred shekels of silver and a bar of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them. They are hidden in the ground inside my tent, with the silver underneath... Joshua said, “Why have you brought this trouble on us? The LORD will bring trouble on you today.” Then all Israel stoned him, and after they had stoned the rest, they burned them. Joshua 7.19-26

ACHAN REALLY ACHING!! > Judgment of HOLY GOD against His People

What was ACHAN Thinking?? WHERE was GOING to WEAR that ROBE HIDING inside HIS TENT in FINEST BABYLONIAN FASHIONS??

H.S. > Really COOL Thing > STOLE Bowling Shoes > WORE and MOCKED!

...if you want to be a community which seems to be taking the place of the Temple of the living God you musn't be surprised if the living God takes you seriously... enough to make clear there is no such thing as cheap grace N.T. Wright

d. Disturb the Saints > Falsehood Ruins Fellowship

vs. 5 And great fear seized all who heard what had happened.

1<sup>st</sup> Act of CHURCH DISCIPLINE > Was SWIFT and SEVERE

2000 yrs of Church History > Churches IGNORE Discipline OR Too SEVERE

It is a good general rule that secret sins should be dealt with secretly, private sins privately, and only public sins publicly. John Stott

v. 11 Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events.

**The Gospel should disturb the comfortable and comfort the disturbed.**

FIRST Time Luke uses WORD > CHURCH = ASSEMBLY // Synagogue

SHARP Line of DISTINCTION > Who is IN and Who is OUT

CORPORATE Identity being ESTABLISHED > TRUE PEOPLE of GOD  
 CHURCH Surprised that LEADER is REBUKING a BIG DONOR like A & S  
 If Spirit did not GUIDE Leaders – Ananias would become CHURCH LEADER

The arrogant cannot stand in your presence. You hate all who do wrong; you destroy those who tell lies. The bloodthirsty and deceitful you, LORD, detest.  
 Psalm 5.5,6

SURPRISED by SEVERITY of God? He is GOD: HIS World, His Rules, JUST  
 God wants CHURCH to LAUNCH in RIGHT DIRECTION

Ask 10 People – Why don't go to Church? – 9 have HYPOCRISY STORIES!

Hypocrites in the PULPIT and even in PEWS > SAD Very OFTEN TRUE

“TOO Many Hypocrites” > COME ON! There's ROOM for ONE MORE!

Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account. Hebrews 4.13

Half of the misery in the world comes from trying to *look*, instead of trying to *be*,  
 what one is not. George MacDonald

#### e. Death too Soon

v. 5 When Ananias heard this, he fell down and die. Lit. Gave up the Ghost

TERRIBLE – Sudden, Judicial Death > JUDGMENT of GOD – NOT PETER

v. 10 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.

Early 1980's > 150 Miles from Nearest Paved Road > LUGBARA, Uganda

Knew NUMBER who lost LOVED Ones from them BEING CURSED

Someone LEAVES BAD WORDS on your DOORSTEP > Step INTO DEATH!

Conflicted with my WESTERN WORLD-VIEW – BUT People REALLY DIED!

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.  
Romans 6.23

God's COVENANT People BEGAN to MEET Him in Tabernacle

Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu took their censers, put fire in them and added incense; and they offered unauthorized fire before the LORD, contrary to his command. <sup>2</sup> So fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD  
Leviticus 10.1,2

FALSE WORSHIP Not ACCEPTABLE even if FATHER is HIGH PRIEST

These miracles remind us of the pervasive biblical truth that God is not only abundantly gracious but also holy.  
Dennis Johnson

## 2. Outward Advance

3<sup>rd</sup> SUMMARY Description in Acts – 1<sup>st</sup> 2 End of Chs 2 & 4 > CHURCH

FOCUS on PEOPLE OUTSIDE the Church & Outside JERUSALEM

Apostles NEVER Left City Limits > but APOSTOLIC Gospel Traveled

a. Danger for Sinners – BOTH Attraction and Revulsion of OUTSIDERS

v. 13 No one else dared join them, even though they were highly regarded by the people.

People like the JOY and MERCY of Gospel > Not LIFE Threatening Holiness

BELIEVERS called to GET OUT of HOLY HUDDLE

SALT only STOPS DECAY when GETS INTO the Meat

Even a SMALL CANDLE can CHASE Away a GREAT DARKNESS

REQUIREMENT for ELDERS ---- How many even KNOW UNBELIEVERS?

He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap.  
1 Timothy 3.7

...not to steal from them (Masters), but to show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will *make the teaching about God our Savior attractive*.  
Titus 2.10

The idea of going through life fearing both God and the consequences of sin seems unattractive in our age where people are so devoted to good feelings... When we fear the holiness of God and the consequences of sin, we avoid sin. Ajith Fernando

THEN we will know TRUE JOY and TRUE FREEDOM in Christ ALONE

### b. Deliverance from Sufferings

End of Ch 4 – Church PRAYED for God to Extend HAND: Healings SIGNS  
vs. 12 The apostles performed many signs and wonders among the people. And all the believers used to meet together in Solomon's Colonnade.

SIGNS > POINT beyond themselves to the MERCY and GRACE of God in Christ

v. 16 Crowds gathered also from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those tormented by impure spirits, and all of them were healed.

Dr. LUKE NOT CONFUSE SICKNESS and Tormented by IMPURE Spirits

CHURCH of Jesus > Shows the COMPASSION of JESUS

Yet the news about him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses. Luke 5.15

### c. Delight in the Savior

v. 14 Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number.

PARADOXICAL Connection vs. 13 / 14 – FEAR > AFRAID but ATTRACTED

## LIKE MOTH drawn to BURNING FLAME

v. 15 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.

CRITICS Say this LOOKS like MAGIC > It DOES very different WORLD

1<sup>st</sup> C Jerusalem > SPIRITS Real and ACTIVE AMONG them

MUSTARD Seed of FAITH > TURNED to God with SIMPLE TRUST

SINCERE SEEKER like WOMAN who TOUCHED Hem of Jesus' GARMENT

Uganda > MALARIA HEADACHE ---yikes!! Swallowed Handful of ASPIRIN  
KOREAN Christian NURSE > "Did you PRAY or do you TRUST Aspirin??"

Seen Great Emph on RIGHT DOCTRINE > Gained thru LEARNING WORD  
Do NOT have to have ALL THEOLOGY Straight BEFORE you can COME!

Christian CAMP Non-Christian H.S. Student > CHAPEL??? Pretty Girls!

GOD Visited them with COMPASSION for their ZEALOUS CURIOSITY

How many TODAY would walk Across the STREET to Encounter GOD

CARRY Afflicted to STREETS of Jerusalem > From OUTLYING Areas!

BELIEVING it was Peter's SHADOW > God straightened their Theology

AFTER First Washing in Blood / Filling with Spirit / Healing their Bodies

He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Romans 8.32

DARED to BELIEVE Healing SICK CHUMP Change for God >

PAID INFINITELY GREATER PRICE > OWN SON > Takes Away Sin

BRING their SICK > Believed Preaching > JESUS WAS ALIVE – The CHRIST!

We have SAME BELIEF?? > Same POWER and PRESENCE of Risen Christ?!  
 Maybe our SHADOWS do not HEAL the SICK Today? We CAN Show Christ!  
 Teach MIGRANTS – Feed HOMELESS – Care TRAFFICED Women – Teach S.S.  
 WORK HARD – Be HONEST – LOVE your NEIGHBORS --- ALL of them...  
 Show WORLD what Ananias & Saphira did NOT > Christian INTEGRITY!

We can ALL See and Help Bring to PASS the GREATEST MIRACLE for People  
 DEAD in SIN > ALIVE in Christ / from Hell to Heaven /

Follower of Satan to Child of God > NEW BIRTH thru RESURRECTION

Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive  
 mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. Hebrews 4.16

Mr. Clean in Jackson, MS – Over 30 yrs Ago: 4 Things God does NOT Know!

1. A Sin He does not Hate
2. A Sinner He does not Love
3. Any other way of Salvation except through Jesus Cross
4. A better Time to Get Saved than Right Now

<sup>1</sup> Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. <sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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? <sup>4</sup> 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."

<sup>5</sup> When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened. <sup>6</sup> Then some young men came forward, wrapped up his body, and carried him out and buried him.

<sup>7</sup> About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. <sup>8</sup> Peter asked her, "Tell me, is this the price you and Ananias got for the land?"

"Yes," she said, "that is the price."

<sup>9</sup> 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."

<sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events.

<sup>12</sup> The apostles performed many signs and wonders among the people. And all the believers used to meet together in Solomon's Colonnade. <sup>13</sup> No one else dared join them, even though they were highly regarded by the people. <sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number. <sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> Crowds gathered also from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those tormented by impure spirits, and all of them were healed.