

“SENT: CHURCH’S SIN AND GOD’S GRACE”

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³⁴There 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 ³⁵and laid it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need. (Acts 4:34-35)

A. THE GOSPEL HAD LOOSENED ITS GRIP ON THEIR STUFF AND TIGHTENED THEIR GRIP ON EACH OTHER.

Thus Joseph, who was also called by the apostles Barnabas (which means son of encouragement), a Levite, a native of Cyprus, ³⁷ sold a field that belonged to him and brought the money and laid it at the apostles’ feet. ¹ But a man named Ananias, (*whose name means “God is merciful”*) with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, ² 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. ³ 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? ⁴ 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.” ⁵ When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and breathed his last. And great fear came upon all who heard of it. ⁶ The young men rose and wrapped him up and carried him out and buried him. ⁷ After an interval of about three hours his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. ⁸ And Peter said to her, “Tell me whether you sold the land for so much.” And she said, “Yes, for so much.” ⁹ 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.” ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ And great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard of these things. (Acts 4:36-5:11)

B. WHY DID ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA DO WHAT THEY DID?

1. THEY LOVED MONEY AND THE PRAISE OF PEOPLE.

C. WHY DID GOD STRIKE THEM DEAD?

1. THEY WERE REALLY CLOSE TO THE ACTIVITY OF GOD.

2. SIGN: GOD TAKES HIS KINGDOM TRUTH AND DISPLAYS IT PHYSICALLY.

D. WHAT IS GOD TEACHING US THROUGH THIS SIGN?

1. IN THE CHURCH, THERE ARE TWO KINDS OF PEOPLE, AND IT’S NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE TO DISTINGUISH THEM FROM THE OUTSIDE.

2. WE CAN’T HIDE FROM GOD.

3. THE CLOSER WE ARE TO GRACE, THE GREATER THE OFFENSE.

4. FEAR IS PART OF WORSHIP.

5. SIN IS A DEADLY SERIOUS MATTER TO GOD.

6. GOD’S SPIRIT KEPT MOVING: THE GOSPEL KEPT MULTIPLYING AND PEOPLE KEPT GETTING SAVED.

And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, (Acts 5:14)

MEMORY VERSE

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

7. THE IRONY: IF YOU OWN YOUR SIN, HE’LL RELEASE YOU FROM IT; IF YOU HIDE IT, YOU’LL BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE.

8. THE BEAUTY OF THE GOSPEL IS THAT YOU ARE FULLY KNOWN AND LOVED.