

Acts 5:1-16 - Awe and Wonder
October 25, 2020 - Outline and Scripture

OUTLINE

1. Greet one another, begin with prayer, and read Acts 5:1-16.

2. Review Acts 4:23-37 very briefly.

3. Discuss the lying to the Holy Spirit by Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5:1-10.

—Strong counterpoint to the generosity of Barnabas noted in Acts 4:36-37:

Ananias sells property, but keeps some of the proceeds for himself

—Problem is not with either selling property or keeping proceeds, but in the

deception of appearing to match Barnabas' generosity, and to receive kudos for doing so, while secretly keeping some of the money for their own benefit

—Peter confronts Ananias with knowledge of the deception; Ananias dies

—Peter repeats the confrontation with Sapphira with the same result

—If allowed to proceed unchecked, Ananias and Sapphira's sin would be incredibly detrimental to the early Christian movement's health

—Unpack Peter's statement in vv. 3-4 about Ananias. What is Peter saying? How does it shed light on what is happening in this passage?

—Why does Ananias and Sapphira's sin warrant such an extreme remedy?

4. Discuss the theological importance of the statement about "great fear came over the church" in Acts 5:11.

—Fear: often translated as awe and reverence; not terror

—Helpful to be reminded of God's holiness and purity

—Generated by a rare time that God's judgment is enacted "right now"

—God's grace so frequently covers us in daily life that we become numb to sin

—What other accounts in Scripture emphasize the "fear of the Lord"? How do those passages help us understand Acts 5 more clearly?

—How do we abuse and misuse God's grace in daily life? How can we stop doing it both individually and communally?

5. Discuss the summary of the progress of the Christian movement in Acts 5:12-16.

—Clear that God is at work through the ministry of the apostles

—Supernatural works of healing taking place

—Expansion of ministry beyond Jerusalem city limits to territory around city

—Looking ahead: expansion of ministry will prompt persecution in next passage

—How do you see God working in the world today? Support with examples.

—How can you be part of the work God is doing today? Please be specific.

6. Close in prayer.

SCRIPTURE (NRSV)

1 But a man named Ananias, with the consent of his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property; **2** with his wife's knowledge, he kept back some of the proceeds, and brought only a part and laid it at the apostles' feet. **3** "Ananias," Peter asked, "why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back part of the proceeds of the land? **4** While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, were not the proceeds at your disposal? How is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You did not lie to us^[a] but to God!" **5** Now when Ananias heard these words, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard of it. **6** The young men came and wrapped up his body,^[b] then carried him out and buried him. **7** After an interval of about three hours his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. **8** Peter said to her, "Tell me whether you and your husband sold the land for such and such a price." And she said, "Yes, that was the price." **9** Then Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Look, 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 died. When the young men came in they found her dead, so they carried her out and buried her beside her husband.

11 And great fear seized the whole church and all who heard of these things.

12 Now many signs and wonders were done among the people through the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon's Portico. **13** None of the rest dared to join them, but the people held them in high esteem. **14** Yet more than ever believers were added to the Lord, great numbers of both men and women, **15** so that they even carried out the sick into the streets, and laid them on cots and mats, in order that Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he came by. **16** A great number of people would also gather from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all cured.

Footnotes

Acts 5:4 Gk *to men*

Acts 5:6 Meaning of Gk uncertain