

FIVE DAYS OF ENCOUNTER

#2. The Cleansing

3.24.19

Acts 5:1-16 NASB But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, ² and kept back some of the price for himself, with his wife's full knowledge, and bringing a portion of it, he 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 some of the price of the land? ⁴ While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God." ⁵ And as he heard these words, Ananias fell down and breathed his last; and great fear came over all who heard of it. ⁶ The young men got up and covered him up, and after carrying him out, they buried him. ⁷ Now there elapsed an interval of about three hours, and his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. ⁸ And Peter responded to her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for such and such a price?" And she said, "Yes, that was the price." ⁹ Then Peter said to her, "Why is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out as well." ¹⁰ And immediately she fell at his feet and breathed her last, and the young men came in and found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. ¹¹ And great fear came over the whole church, and over all who heard of these things. ¹² At the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were taking place among the people; and they were all with one accord in Solomon's portico. ¹³ But none of the rest dared to associate with them; however, the people held them in high esteem. ¹⁴ And all the more believers in the Lord, multitudes of men and women, were constantly added to their number, ¹⁵ to such an extent that they even carried the sick out into the streets and laid them on cots and pallets, so that when Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on any one of them. ¹⁶ Also the people from the cities in the vicinity of Jerusalem were coming together, bringing people who were sick or afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all being healed.

The Story...As the church came under the supernatural grace of giving, the atmosphere of blessing was threatened by the impurity of Ananias and Sapphira. Such hypocrisy was not uncommon. The sons of Eli corrupted the gifts of the congregation. Even in the presence of Jesus, Judas was allowed to get away with pilfering the funds. But now God would deal with the sins of His Church powerfully and intentionally.

The Meaning of the Word...The church will find that she is unable to function under God's new updated operating system until sin is dealt with. "Full Surrender" and "True Holiness" is the next focal point of God's Kingdom.

The Burden of The Lord...We must understand that judgment must take place first in God's House. We must embrace the blessing of chastisement, and embrace the Fellowship of His Sufferings. We must realize that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of a wrathful God.

Understanding the Second Encounter...The sin of Ananias and Sapphire is about more than money. It is about a sense of "profane thinking." God chose Jacob over Esau not because Jacob was holy, but because Esau was profane. He had no sense of the magnificence of The

Lord, The Terror of The Lord, or the Holiness that marked true people of God.

In fact, what we see today is the result of profane thinking and living, not just a lie about an offering.

Today's message is about "cleansing" and deals with purity concerning the mind of the church, the People of God. Next week's word is "correction" and has to do with the ministry of the church.

Mind has to do with our perception; how we think about the Spiritual realm.

Ministry has to do with our service; how we move in things of the Spirit.

Though the ideas are similar, there is a distinction. In both cases, we must learn that judgment, cleansing, and correction must always begin within the Household of God.

I. The Issue

- A. We begin our cleansing at the Cross — at the moment of conversion.
- B. We will conclude our cleansing when we are united with Him in Eternity.
- C. The Battleground for us presently is the present life we live on earth.
 - 1. Works are the basis of our reward, not of our salvation.
 - 2. During the journey of Sanctification, there are defining moments of Consecration that affect our destiny on earth and our reward in Eternity.
- D. Jesus' focus in His final prayer for us was unity, security, and PURITY.

II. On the Table

- A. The story of Ananias and Sapphira is a story about profane thinking. When such thinking takes root in us, we produce death instead of life.
- B. The thinking of many Christians has been largely contaminated by several false teachings:
 - 1. Aimlessness caused by the marginalization of Scripture.
 - a. "Because we live with no authoritative, divine revelation, we have become a

people who live free of any restraint.” (Proverbs 29:18)

- b. I understand the problems caused by error and abuse of Scripture, but we can never correct one wrong by embracing a second wrong.
 - c. We deal with abuse and error by returning to the fountainhead. John called this “doing the first works again.”
2. The carnality caused by the Prosperity Gospel.
- a. I do believe in God’s blessing, but this teaching quickly and certainly creates a wrong focus. It is a redirecting of the Gospel message.
 - b. We are speaking not just about the carnality of things, but also the carnality of methods (we cannot do a spiritual work using fleshly means).
3. The sin that is protected by the Hyper-Grace Movement
- a. The idea that there is no need for conviction and repentance
 - b. Misunderstanding the realm in which we live; not understanding that God’s perspective is different from ours.
 - c. FYI - “Hyper grace” is a misnomer.
 - d. Dangers:
 - 1) “There is no room for judgment, for all judgment was achieved at the cross of Christ.”
 - 2) Scriptures as well as Prophetic words of rebuke and correction are marginalized or ignored because “we are living under a new covenant.”
 - 3) “God is in a good mood” is a catchphrase that denies the terror of Our Lord and His moments of Judgment.
 - 4) We must embrace John 3:36 as well as John 3:16. “He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” (John 3:36)

- 5) We must learn to “finish verses and ideas.” For instance, Romans 2:4 tells us it is the goodness of God that leads us to repentance, but the next verse says “But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.”

- 6) By not telling the whole truth, they may be leading millions to hell in a misguided attempt to give God a makeover.

- 7) The very teaching of the Apostles (Hebrews 12; 1 Corinthians 11:29-32) and even Jesus (Revelation 3:19) are set aside in the name of an affirming false Gospel.

III. Our Response

- A. Realize the concerns we have are glibly dismissed by half-truths and flippant sayings that do not hold true in the long run.
 1. Prophets who warn about judgment are called “Prophets of Doom.”

 2. They are called “judgmental and critical.”

 3. They are said to “not understand the love and goodness of God.”

 4. “They are accused of “operating under the Old Covenant.”

 5. They are called “legalistic and harsh.”

- B. We must love those who have embraced deception. “In weakness, instruct those who oppose themselves.” (2 Timothy 2:25)

- C. We must cease being “Spiritual Groupies,” prostituting ourselves with those who merchandise and trivialize the Gospel.

- D. Darkness in all of life is the result when we are willing to embrace deception in selective areas. “Is your eye “unfolded,” and full of light? Or is your whole life full of darkness? (Matthew 6:22)

- E. Beware the mesmerizing spirit of deception. “What sorrow for those who say that evil is good and good is evil, that dark is light and light is dark, that bitter is sweet and sweet is bitter.” (Isaiah 5:20)

IV. Christian Life Lessons

- A. “The Gospel is more than simply “Good News.”
1. Euangelion was used by Emperors for the announcement of the appearance or accession to the throne of the ruler. In contemporary Greek it denoted a weighty, authoritative, royal, and official message. A new ruler was in charge; his laws were binding; all opposition will be subdued.
 2. “Lying to the Holy Ghost” is a willful resisting of the Spirit’s move in our life. It is a sin of knowledge, not neglect.
 3. We must understand that often the most amazing fruit is born because of judgment upon the sin.
 - a. Acts 5:14 — more and more people believed in The Lord because of the episode with Ananias and Sapphira.
 - b. Unusual power and anointing was given to the church in that day of purifying. (Acts 5:15, 16)
 - c. Great fear seized the church as well as those who casually associated with the church. (Acts 5:11)
 4. None of the people of God are above the possibility of deception.
 - a. “The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule on their own authority; and My people love it so!” (Jeremiah 5:31 NASB)
 - b. Without a cleansing of our service (the way we view The Lord), our ministry will become corrupted. That is what we will look at next week.