

Holy God – Acts 5:1-11

INTRODUCTION

The Church was seeing progress and growth. They had been attack from outside (Peter and John in court) and now we have attack from inside as the devil whispers into the hearts of believers.

- This reminds us that we have a Holy God. **Read Acts 4:36 - 5:11.**

So many questions! What just happened? What did they do wrong? Why so severe? Where are they now? What do we do? *“Reading the Bible doesn’t end with reading, but with doing; or you haven’t read properly”*

What happened here?

Acts 4:37 *Barnabas, sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles’ feet.”* What a good guy he is! Maybe others thought *“why is he getting the praise”*

Ananias and Sapphira, together, sold some land, giving the money to the Apostles (LIKE BARNABAS).

- They kept part of the money for themselves because Satan tempted them to lie, and they did.
- Peter somehow knows he kept money back. Ananias is struck dead by God.
- v7 *“about 3 hours later”*Imagine what those 3 hours would have been like. Shock, panic, fear, confession.
- Sapphira walks in – not knowing what’s happened. She’s given an opportunity to confess but doesn’t. She too is struck dead.

Read on, v12 many signs and wonders, v13 no one else dared join them, v14 yet they grow.

What did they do wrong?

Fiona Onasanya – Peterborough MP was caught on a speed Camera – 41mph in a 30 limit. She should have had a small fine, but because she lied about someone else driving, she is in prison for 3 months. She’s not gone to prison for speeding but for the greater offence of “perverting the course of Justice” = **Lying**.

Ananias and Sapphira were under no rule to give all the money to the Apostles. Their crime was lying. The words “kept back” may mean it was a deliberate fraud. “some find it more attractive to be *thought* Holy than to *be* holy” Don Carson. “They wanted the credit and the prestige for sacrificial generosity, without the inconvenience of it” John Stott. **They lied** – and tried to make themselves look good = Hypocrisy.

Worry about what God sees. “the Lord looks at the heart” 1 Sam 16:7

Why so severe?

They didn’t just lie to the Apostles, they “Lied to the Holy Spirit” v3 – “Lied... to God” v4.

- It was the early days of the church. Get foundations wrong, whole building wrong.
- They did not repent. *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us”* 1 John 1:9
- God is Holy, Perfect and Pure – his people are called towards being likewise.

Where are they now?

Nothing in the story to suggest they were not saved and went to Hell. Those who are in Christ are new creations, even when we do unfortunately sin.

But God’s judgement in this case stopped them harming the community, damaging the presentation of the gospel and stopped them harming themselves more.

Our sin has consequences we may have to bear, even though we’re forgiven.

What must we do?

Reality Check - God is God!

- Remember that God is God - Fear generally bad but it’s no bad thing for “Great fear to seize the whole church” – When fearing God.
- Confess our sin - to God and to each other

Live Knowing that God is God and God is Good