

- B. This account confirms and explains the truth of Luke 12:1-3.
- i. It serves the same purpose as Achan's story: a *warning for all who follow*.
  - ii. It helps us beware.
- C. To help us flee the sins that Ananias and Sapphira did not.
- i. v3 *"How is it that Satan has so filled your heart that...?"*
  - ii. v4 *"What made you think of doing such a thing?"*
  - iii. v9 *"How could you conspire to test the Spirit of the Lord?"*

### LIVE THE STORY

*We must not only love the Gospel Story, we must begin to live the Gospel Story, indeed, to have the Central Character live in us.*

- Do you think it is important to allow the questions Peter asked Ananias and Sapphira to x-ray our own hearts?
- How does this text show that the Christians of the early church faced similar temptations to our own?
- How does it speak to your own call to making costly sacrifices on behalf of others?
- How exactly did Ananias and Sapphira lie to the Holy Spirit? Who were they speaking to when they lied?
- Compare and discuss Acts 5:4 with 9:4. What is similar in these verses? What does this say about our commitments to each other?
- What is similar between Achan's sin (Joshua 7) and that of Ananias and Sapphira? How do these accounts speak to us?
- Are you ever tempted to take that which belongs to God? How so? How is this text calling you to change?
- How can the questions Peter asks in this text help you examine your own heart and identify "slippery slope" kinds of behavior in your life?

## Questions, Questions, Questions

Jerry Cisar — July 6, 2014

Text: Acts 4:32–5:11 READ

**Introduction:** How is it...? What made you...? How could you...?

- A. This text prompts so many questions from us, but this text has questions of its own.
- B. Does God judge sin like this in the church today?

### I. The Extraordinary Daily Life of the Church (4:32-35)

- A. Erroneous ways this scene has been read
- B. Reading this account for what is intended.
  - i. Vs. 33-34 descriptions of the church with great power and great grace.
  - ii. Sandwiched between descriptions of unity and generosity in the church. (32, 34b-35)
  - iii. Sandwiching the statements about great power and great grace between descriptions of the church's unity and generosity reveals that this unity and generosity produced a church filled with great power and grace.

### C. Something Often Missed

Ajith Fernando: "...for that to happen, **some costly sacrifices had to be made** by some believers who sold their lands and houses...."

Dietrich Bonhoeffer (The Cost of Discipleship):

*Costly grace is the treasure hidden in the field; for the sake of it a man will gladly go and sell all that he has. It is the pearl of great price to buy for which the merchant will sell all his goods. It is the kingly rule of Christ, for whose sake a man will pluck out the eye which causes him to stumble, it is the call of Jesus Christ at which the disciple leaves his nets and follows him....*

*Such grace is costly because it calls us to follow, and it is grace because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ. It is costly because it costs a man his life, and it is grace because it gives a man the only true life. It is costly because it condemns sin, and grace because it justifies the sinner. Above all, it is costly because it cost God the life of his Son: "ye were bought at a price," and what has cost God much cannot be cheap for us.*

## II. A Deviation in the Daily Life of the Church (4:36 – 5:10)

A. This account eliminates two false notions:

- i. that the early church was perfect and without flaw;
- ii. that the early church achieved the results they did without the same kinds of temptations we face.

➤ Isaiah 29:13

B. Two role models—one to follow; one to flee:

- i. Joseph Barnabas—one to follow
- ii. Ananias and Sapphira—one to flee

### C. Ananias and Sapphira—the What, How, and Why of their Sin

i. What's the big deal?

a) Ananias "*kept back part of the money for himself*".

b) The fall of Jericho

➤ Joshua 5:13-14

■ (Genesis 3:24)

➤ Joshua 7:1 LXE "*But the children of Israel committed a great trespass, and purloined [embezzled] part of the accursed thing...*"

**FF Bruce:** *The story of Ananias is to the book of Acts what the story of Achan is to the book of Joshua. In both narratives an act of deceit interrupts the victorious progress of the people of God.*

c) Stealing or lying? (Joshua 7:11)

ii. How did they, how does anyone, lie to the Holy Spirit?

iii. Why did Ananias and Sapphira do it?

## III. Transformation in the Daily Life of the Church Today (5:11)

A. This text intends that we live in the fear of God today.

i. Proper fear of God will transform life and worship.

ii. The fear of God grows from a right understanding of God as judge.

a) Revelation 14:7

b) Hebrews 12:28