

1) Picking up the questions from last time...

So, looking at the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira we have to ask the question then what was God's purpose? Was it strictly punishment or was there possibly another purpose?

- Most likely, it is a life lesson for the church. The closing comment makes it clear that it struck fear in ALL who heard about it – not surprising!
- This action to me gives a clear indication of the seriousness of lying, hypocrisy, and specifically about lying to God and/or the Holy Spirit.
- We live in an age of spin where it is everywhere. We see it in every aspect of our lives from politicians, businessmen, TV ads and even clerks in stores putting things in ways that do not portray the truth – not telling it like it is!

So, is Spin a lie?

- A lie is a lie is a lie!!
- Wright makes what I think, is a very interesting observation here:

The real, deep-level problem about lying is that it misuses, or abuses, the highest faculty we possess: the gift of expressing in clear speech the reality of who we are, what we think, and how we feel. It is, as it were, the opposite of the gift of tongues.

Wright, N. T.. Acts for Everyone, Part One: 1 (The New Testament for Everyone) (p. 81). Presbyterian Publishing Corporation. Kindle Edition.

2) If we look deeply at the sermon on the mount, we will find that Jesus truly did address this exact thing.

Matthew 5:33–37 (NIV)

- 3) Many times we look at this passage and place the emphasis on not taking oaths. And, indeed this is a major part of what He is saying.
- 4) However, the last statement made regarding Yes being Yes and No being No speaks to integrity and what is behind what we say – exactly what Wright is talking about.

Comments / Questions?

Now, to the next question held over from last time...

- a) N.T. Wright makes the point that holiness is really a part of temple worship.
- b) If we consider this new church as a substitute for that temple, we can see a need for that holiness.

c) Wright further comments:

Holiness, in other words, is not an optional extra. How God chooses to make that point is in the last analysis up to him, since he is the only one who knows the human heart. But the earliest Christians were quite clear. To name the name of Jesus, and to invoke the holy spirit, is to claim to be the Temple of the living God, and that is bound to have consequences.

So, is he correct? Is holiness NOT an option? How serious should we take the idea of being “holy as He is holy”?

1 Peter 1:15–16 (NIV)

- If we don't get anything else out of this event, we must get that God will not abide these kinds of actions.
- I think Wright's comment is on point – Holiness is not an option – when we claim Christ as our savior and Lord, we are to become holy as He is holy – there should be no room for intentional sin, greed, or hypocrisy in our lives. **EMPHISIS on INTENTIONAL!**

Comments / Questions?

1) O.k. – from the good to the bad and now, back to the good ...

Acts 5:12–16 (NIV)

2) We must make a point here regarding where the disciples are.

- a) We need to remember that the temple in Jerusalem was not just a single building.
- b) We have the various courts etc.
- c) We also have even lodging for priest and others who came to serve when it was their turn.
- d) Additionally, there was a porch.
 - i) Depending on your translation, this might be called a Colonnade or a Portico.
 - ii) Don't think of this like a porch on your house – even the big southern wrap around porches we see on the renovation shows.
- e) Solomon's Colonnade was an area that stretched the entire length of the temple grounds along the eastern side.
- f) It was a covered area with many columns supporting the roof.
- g) Basically on the temple grounds but not “really in” the temple.

- 3) This is the area that we are talking about here where the disciples were basically healing and preaching.
- 4) Again, Wright brings, what I think is an interesting parallel here.

This situation would be like a group of ne'er-do-well musicians setting up outside Carnegie Hall all the time, including during the many super concerts that are held there. It probably would not take long for the management to get serious about moving these people out!

- 5) We might consider this to be what is happening here.
- 6) Peter and the rest of the disciples had basically setup shop in this area and were obviously preaching much the same message which they preached on Pentecost and some weeks before at the entry to the temple grounds.
- 7) Not what the local “management” wanted to here!
- 8) There is a curious statement regarding no one wanting to join them. It could possibly mean anyone else who had a message etc.
 - a) There was also likely the remembrance of the Ananias and Saphira affair of a short time before.
 - b) If you were just curious, you might not be so anxious to associate with this group.
- 9) But, Luke hastens to add that many folks were still being added to their number everyday – less folks under the “management” of the temple.
- 10) Next, we look at another one of those unique situations that seem to be occurring during this time – the fact that folks were being healed by even Peter’s shadow passing over them.
- 11) We have another similar situation with the handkerchiefs of Paul having a healing property as well.
- 12) Obviously, during this time, God is choosing to work in many different miraculous ways – ways unique to this time in the history of the Church.
- 13) The equally obvious reason is to show the power of the risen savior and to bring people to Him.

If you were a passer by here would you stop to listen or would you move quickly by?

How about if someone today approaches you with a Bible in hand – what SHOULD you do? And (honest answer) What WOULD you do?

- Harks back to Micah’s sermon this morning – being personal dealing with contact situations in the way Jesus would.

Acts 5:17–24 (NIV)

- 1) When we look at what happens, we cannot help but see the contrast in our culture and laws and those of the Jews of this time.
 - a) These men (the Sanhedrin and specifically, the Sadducees) simply have the power to arrest all the apostles and throw them in jail without any regard for anything else – guilt or innocence.
 - b) We will see here shortly that these kinds of actions do not stop at throwing them in jail.
- 2) One thing we should take note of here is the reason these men were thrown in jail – Luke tells us that it was **jealousy**.
 - a) The apostles, as we discussed a bit ago were really starting to gather momentum.
 - b) People were believing their teachings and joining the Church in large numbers.
 - c) It appears that the religious leaders were not able to refute them and they became frustrated and jealous because of that inability.
 - d) To say it another way, Peter and the apostles were commanding more respect than they were and this was absolutely not setting well with these guys.
- 3) Their only recourse is to arrest them and try to shut them up that way so, that’s exactly what they did.
- 4) However, it does not work – God has other plans!
- 5) Gamaliel in a few verses will be quoted as telling these very men who have made the arrest that they cannot fight against God. In verse 38 and 39 he says ...

38 ... for if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. ³⁹ But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God.

 - a) I think it is important to note here that Gamaliel is a Pharisee, NOT a Sadducee.
- 6) God’s plan comes fully into play later in the evening when He sends an angel to miraculously release the apostles and return them to preaching in the temple court.