

Acts 5:1-11

Trouble in the Church...

This story tells us that there will be imposters and counterfeits in our churches.

What does this story tell us...in today's language?

- *God is a jealous God*
- *To Fear God in to hate evil...Proverbs 8:13*
- *You can get by in many cases lying to man...but you can't get by lying to God.*
- *Who gives us our wealth? Who takes care of us when we can't take care of ourselves? Selfishness is the opposite of selflessness...and pride is the opposite of humility... a lie is the opposite of truth.*
- *Be sure that your sins will find you out... "Stand in awe and sin not!" Psalm 4:4*

This shows us that sin is sin against God.

This passage of scripture shows us that:

- ***Failure in diligence is sin against God.***
Everything that contributes to the health, the happiness and the welfare of mankind is work done for God.
- ***Failure to use our talents is sin against God.***
God gave us the talents we have; we hold them in stewardship for Him; and we are responsible to Him for the use we make of them.
- ***Failure in truth is sin against God.***
When we slip into falsehood it is sin against the guidance of the Spirit in our hearts.

What is it that prods our minds to sin...to telling the lie instead of the truth?

What is it that prods our minds to say "get thee behind me, Satan...I want nothing to do with you today?"

Without the precious Holy Spirit to prod us on to heights in which we can't gain on our own, we will fail!

Is the Holy Spirit working in your life with comfort or against rebellious attitude?

It is our choosing...

Choose God...and you cannot fail!

In this passage, we should see what Peter saw.

He saw two people:

- *Motivated by envy of Barnabas and others like him*
- *Manipulating God's people for their own ends*
- *Lying to God (v. 3,4)*
- *Attempting to deceive the apostles (v.2)*
- *Betraying the trust of God's people...and betraying God's Sovereignty.*

Betrayal of Trust Could Not Go Unchallenged by God...If it had, the new Christian movement could have been derailed in the first stages of its journey.

Deceit of this kind would:

- *Poison relationships*
- *Compromise the Christian community*
- *Reduce the thrust of the Christian witness.*

Some additional thoughts on this passage:

- ❑ ***This act parallels with Joshua 7:1-26, where Achan is dealt with in a similarly decisive manner.***
- ❑ ***The word "church" is used for the first time in verse 11.***
The "church" is being welded together...a 'mixed-bag' group of believers from many backgrounds and age groups.
- ❑ ***If the new-born church is not to be a "still-born" church, tough action is necessary against sin of this kind.***

Some conclusive facts....and response questions for consideration:

- 1. Peter exercised the first church discipline for unacceptable behavior.***
Do you think church discipline ought to be exercised more?
In what circumstances?
- 2. Do you think we should treat sin more seriously than we do?***
Why?
What do you think the result would be?

The Attraction of Christianity...Acts 5:12-16

A Picture of What Went on in the Early Church..

- ❑ ***It tells us where the church met..***
Solomon's Colonnade...one of the two colonnades surrounding the temple area. Early Christians were in attendance at the house of God...desiring to know God better and to draw upon His strength.

<i>How do we draw upon God's strength?</i>

Is it as necessary today as it was then?

□ ***It tells us how the Church met...***

Assembled where everyone could see them...they did not hide from society...from those who harassed them. They were determined to show all men whose they were and where they stood.

Are we determined to stand up for our beliefs today? We know whose we are...Do others know whose we are...and, if they do, do they want what we have?

□ ***It tells us that the early Church was an extremely effective Church...***

Things happened...lives were changed, God's hand was evident with miracles of healing..the sick, the lame, the demon possesses (those with unclean spirits) were healed.

Do you feel that things are happening for good in the Church as a whole today? Are lives being changed? Is God's hand obviously playing a part in changing the world and the people in it? Are you making an impact for Christ like the early believers were doing? Bringing the sick (body, soul, and/or spirit) and letting God touch them to make them whole?

Unclean spirits...

Unclean spirits trouble mankind when mankind opens his/her mind to Satan's temptation, Satan's powerful influence, and Satan's evil programs. Unclean spirits take over a mind that has no Godly influence...or a mind that refuses and rebels against God's precepts!

The Church still exists...praying that the bad influences coming from evil people will be changed for the good...and those good and solid people will be standing firm that God is still in control and He is alive and well...warring against every evil influence.

PRAYER; A FIRST RESPONSE, NOT A LAST RESORT

✓ ***Have you ever had a weak moment of faith?***

We really want to trust God....and we often pray words of faith, but our heart betrays us and we doubt and show lack of faith.

✓ ***How do we gain more faith?***

WE PRAY! Yes, we keep on praying...and doing what our prayers gives us the initiative to do.

Any Lesson on Prayer...is intended to encourage and challenge us to grow in faith, embracing prayer and its possibilities.

What the Bible teaches us about Prayer:

“Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity.” Colossians 4:2-5

Paul first encourages us to be consistent in prayer.

When he says, “devote yourself to prayer,” the word “devote” means “to persist at.” It means, “to remain at something” or “to cling to something” or “to continually be available for something.”

Hebrews 4:14-16...the writer states that because we have so great a high priest, which is Jesus, let us, therefore, approach the throne of grace with boldness that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

As you look forward to tomorrow...and to growing in Christ, what are some of the “doors” in your life that need to be opened for healing...for restoration?

- ❑ The “door of time” opening in your schedule to participate more fully in praying for the needs of the church...the Bible Study class.
- ❑ The “door of courage” opening for you to invite a family member, Christian friend, or non-Christian neighbor to church...our class.
- ❑ The “door of trust” opening for you to take a step of faith and just give testimony of your faith in Christ.
- ❑ The “door of your heart” opening for you to become passionate about prayer.
- ❑ The “door of humble servanthood” opening for you to be more available to God during this important time of our lives.

During these moments....let us pray for a more committed life of prayer....and a more committed heart to see others:

- Know Christ
- Grow in Christ

Prayer is the key to it all!

Resurrection of the Dead..

In any early Christian church there were two backgrounds....the Jews and the Greeks.

- **Jewish background—Sadducees denied that there was any life after death at all.** So, part of the Jews denied both the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body (Acts 23:8)...

However, immortal hope in eternity with God developed...

Two reasons:

1. Israel was the chosen people, and yet her history was one continued tale of disaster (man's choice)...man began to feel that it required another world to redress the balance.
 2. For many centuries it is true to say that the individual was an unimportant unit. God was the God of the nation and the individual was an unimportant unit...The individual was here to bring the nation either closer to God...or further from God.
- **Greeks believed in immortality...but feared death. They believed the soul was going to meet God, but the body was a waste.**
Therefore, they did not feel it a detriment for the body to be absorbed by sin...and what sin can do to the body. They believed in God...but wanted to enjoy life in this body while it was existing.

PAUL HAD A DIFFERENT OUTLOOK ON THE SITUATION BETWEEN GOD AND MAN.
--

GOD, PAUL BELIEVED, WAS INTERESTED IN MAKING SURE THAT OUR SOUL WAS SAVED AND THAT WE PRESENT OUR BODIES A LIVING SACRIFICE THAT HOUSES THE SPIRIT OF GOD WHILE WE ARE HERE ON EARTH.

To the Christian, we believe the life to come involves the total man, body and soul. Paul believed that after death the individual remains.

Paul never said that we would rise with the body with which we died.

He insisted that we would have a spiritual body...Man's personality will survive.

Paul believed in the resurrection of the whole man.

Man will be himself; he will survive as a person. Everything of the body and of the soul that is necessary to make a man a person will survive, but, at the same time, all things will be new, and body and spirit will alike be very different from earthly things, for they will be immortal....not of earth, but of God's likeness.

One of the greatest stories found in the book of Acts (chapter 5) is when Peter boldly and effectively witnesses for Jesus. He was emphatic about the only way to the Father, but sympathetic to the ignorance of the leaders and those they led. Paul was promoting the cause of Christ...not for his cause, but for the sake and cause of Jesus and the followers of this man called Jesus, the Messiah..

Paul was using his influence as a Roman citizen, a previous member of the Sanhedrin Court, as a learned student under Gamaliel, and as a previous persecutor of the Way (later called CHRISTIANS) to defend all the Jews who came to know the Messiah, Jesus.

PAUL SPEAKS OUT AS A FAITHFUL WITNESS OF JESUS, THE MESSIAH. TODAY, ARE YOU SPEAKING UP FOR JESUS...OR, ARE YOU BOWING DOWN TO THOSE WHO TRY TO PUT JESUS, CHRISTIANITY, AND WHOLESOME LIVING DOWN?

