

May 13, 2018

“Empowered: The Church on Fire!”

“A Journey through the Book of Acts”

“A Fire No Man Can Extinguish”

“But if it is from God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You may even find yourselves fighting against God!” Acts 5:39

A. Two confrontations with two different results...

“For instance, there was...Barnabas (which means ‘Son of Encouragement’)...He sold a field he owned and brought the money to the apostles.” Acts 4:36-37

“But there was a certain man named Ananias who, with his wife, Sapphira, sold some property” Acts 5:1

1. Two different groups came before Peter and the church...Barnabas and Ananias and Sapphira.
2. Both sold property and both offered the proceeds to the church!
3. Peter and the apostles were brought before the Sanhedrin. (71 members, including 70 men and the high priest. They met in the Temple every day except Festivals and the Sabbath. This was the Supreme Court of Jerusalem.)
4. The apostles were threatened, imprisoned, and beaten!

“Then they brought the apostles before the high council, where the high priest confronted them. ‘We gave you strict orders never again to teach in this man’s name!’ he said. ‘Instead, you have filled all Jerusalem with your teaching about Him, and you want to make us responsible for His death!’” Acts 5:27-28

B. Barnabas, Ananias and Sapphira...

1. The contrast between these two was glaring. It is simple to say, they were completely opposite to each other.
2. They both sold property and both donated to the church. There was no law or expectation that anyone had to donate their property.

“The property was yours to sell or not sell, as you wished. And after selling it, the money was also yours to give away.” Acts 5:4a

3. While Barnabas told the truth, Ananias and Sapphira both lied as to amount of their gift.

“He brought part of the money to the apostles, claiming it was the full amount. With his wife’s consent, he kept the rest.” Acts 5:2

4. Profile of Barnabas:

He was known for his integrity, his honesty, his generosity, and his heart for God!

“Barnabas was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and strong in faith. And many people were brought to the Lord.” Acts 11:24

5. Profile of Ananias and Sapphira:

They were known for the lies, their deception and their fraud. They were phony in their profession of faith. They were hypocritical in their life. They wanted the praise of people more than the praise of God. They were trifling with sin and ultimately lied to God!

“And Peter said, ‘How could the two of you even think of conspiring to test the Spirit of the Lord like this? The young men who buried your husband are just outside the door, and they will carry you out, too.’” Acts 5:9

C. Peter and the Apostles before High Council...

1. The high priest and associated were jealous and imprisoned the apostles.

“The high priest and his officials, who were Sadducees, were filled with jealousy. They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail.” Acts 5:17-18

2. God released the apostles by an angel in the night.

“But an angel of the Lord came at night, opened the gates of the jail, and brought them out. Then he told them, ‘Go to the Temple and give the people this message of life!’” Acts 5:19-20

3. The apostles went back to teaching in the Temple courts.

“So at daybreak the apostles entered the Temple, as they were told, and immediately began teaching.” Acts 5:21

4. The high priests summoned the apostles to be brought before them once again to be questioned. The guards brought them before the Sanhedrin.

“The captain went with his Temple guards and arrested the apostles, but without violence, for they were afraid the people would stone them.” Acts 5:26

5. Peter and the other apostles gave the same response as they had given earlier.

“But Peter and the apostles replied, ‘We must obey God rather than any human authority.’” Acts 5:29

6. The Sanhedrin was furious and wanted to put them to death.

“When they heard this, the high council was furious and decided to kill them.” Acts 5:33

7. Gamaliel becomes the voice of reason.

“So my advice is, leave these men alone. Let them go. If they are planning and doing these things merely on their own, it will soon be overthrown. But if it is from God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You may even find yourselves fighting against God!” Acts 5:38-39

8. The apostles were flogged and threatened once again not to speak in the Name of Jesus!

“The others accepted his advice. They called in the apostles and had them flogged. Then they ordered them never again to speak in the name of Jesus, and they let them go.” Acts 5:40

9. The apostles left rejoicing!

“The apostles left the high council rejoicing that God had counted them worthy to suffer disgrace for the Name of Jesus.” Acts 5:41

D. Points to ponder...

1. How sincere is your faith?
2. Is there hypocrisy in your life? Are you pretending to be something you are not? Is honesty a characteristic for which you are known?
3. Are you more concerned about what others think than what God thinks about you?
4. How has God tapped your heart toward generosity?
5. How will you be remembered?
6. Are you willing to obey God even if it cost you?
7. How do you handle opposition? Do you look deeper to see where it is coming from? Are you willing to continue in spite of the opposition?
8. Are your decisions made in the midst of emotion? Or is there a voice of reason? Are you willing to trust God as He leads? Are you willing to believe He can handle His plans?

“Remember the things I have done in the past. For I alone am God! I am God, and there is none like Me. Only I can tell you the future before it even happens. Everything I plan will come to pass, for I do whatever I wish.” Isaiah 46:9-10

“No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us. And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God’s love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God’s love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 8:37-39