



WEEKLY CHRISTIAN FOCUS



Warm Greetings

ACTS CHAPTER 5 SOME GREAT LESSONS FOR US TODAY!

In this Issue:

- Lying to God. Sudden deaths.
- The importance of young men.
- How to use our finances.
- Early church reputation.
- The Establishment will always fight back.
- Obeying God.
- Enduring trouble and not 'retreating'.

The Book of Acts is said by some to be one of the five main books we should know very well as servants of the Lord. The others being Genesis, Psalms, Jeremiah, The Gospel of John.

I couldn't argue with that really, not that I should want to argue at all; of course there are 66 books in the Bible and they can all be opened to us by the Holy Spirit to show us many things.

I hope to eventually write a few articles about Acts, and today

I am sharing what I learned from Chapter 5. in the New King James version, (NKJV) this chapter is divided into 5 clear sections, which I am following although I am using the text from the Amplified Classic Bible.

The Early Church is being established by God and the Apostles in Jerusalem in the first year(s) after the resurrection of Christ, after the gift of the Spirit at Pentecost in the Upper Room. Great things are happening-- enormous miracles, healings, and the Message of the Messiah being poured out first upon the Jews at Jerusalem and Judaea, as well as any proselytes** visiting or residing there. This time was the time of the harvest! To the Jews Chronologically!

Jews were being so turned on to Jesus Christ, they forsook everything; they sold their houses and lands, they wanted to partake to the fullest of the life of following Jesus Christ, and being 'trained' by the real deal by the real people--the 11 Apostles remaining there in

Jerusalem! They just wanted to give up everything. They were whole-hearted to say the least.

So that's the background in the simplest terms!

I am going to share the text in 5 sections, and write some lessons God impressed on me.

ACTS CHAPTER 5 LYING TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

5:1 But a certain man named Ananias with his wife Sapphira sold a piece of property,

2 And with his wife's knowledge and connivance he kept back and wrongfully appropriated some of the proceeds, bringing only a part and putting it at the feet of the apostles.

3 But Peter said, Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart that you should lie to and attempt to deceive the Holy Spirit, and should [in violation of your promise] withdraw secretly and appropriate to your own use part of the price

from the sale of the land?
4 As long as it remained unsold, was it not still your own? And [even] after it was sold, was not [the money] at your disposal and under your control? Why then, is it that you have proposed and purposed in your heart to do this thing? [How could you have the heart to do such a deed?] You have not [simply] lied to men [playing false and showing yourself utterly deceitful] but to God.
5 Upon hearing these words, Ananias fell down and died. And great dread and terror took possession of all who heard of it.

6 And the young men arose and wrapped up [the body] and carried it out and buried it.

7 Now after an interval of about three hours his wife came in, not having learned of what had happened.

8 And Peter said to her, Tell me, did you sell the land for so much? Yes, she said, for so much.

9 Then Peter said to her, How could you two have agreed and conspired together to try to deceive the Spirit of the Lord? Listen! The feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out [also].
10 And instantly she fell down at his feet and died; and the young men entering found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband.

11 And the whole church and all others who heard of these things were appalled [great awe and strange terror and dread seized them].

The Godly trend at the time, was for some believers to willingly give their properties or the finances from the sale of them **into** God's Kingdom; the Apostles were only stewards of this, but such income would certainly have helped finance many godly missions and travels etc. , This giving seems to have been a totally

Holy Spirit-inspired event and a reaction to the Gospel by the dear Christ-receiving, first-fruits Jews in those super early days. May God bless all the Jews who receive Jesus as their Saviour, then they can join with the rest of us Gentiles, on an equal footing! (John 14:6)

Here Ananias and or his wife decided to sell property portfolio, but keep some of the money for some reason, which we are not told of. What struck me this time, was that they didn't even have to sell the property, no one was making it a rule; just their carnal minds or greed or something else, got in the way, and then they fabricated a lie together. Peter hits it all on the head in verses 4 and 5 , and Peter knew by the Spirit what had happened, after his stern words, Ananias died



[*The Death of Ananias by Raphael*](#)

instantly in front of him! The 'young men' came and carried his corpse out, and did the hard work of burying it asap! All missionaries, and Apostles need 'young men' because one day they will become the apostles and they will learn from all that they see from their godly leaders.

Everyone who saw this were absolutely freaked out and 'terrified' as so they should be. The terror of the Lord persuades men. 2 Corinthians 5:11

His wife Sapphira came in 3 hours later, perhaps she was wondering how it went with her husband, and perhaps she was ready with the same story her husband provided for God's representative! Verse 8. Right after also lying to Peter and the Holy Spirit, Peter informed her; 'you are going to die now', and she also immediately 'gave up the ghost.' (Proverbs 19:3) The faithful 'young men' came in for a second shift of body burying. It was all over. All in a day's work for the early church.
There was no spiritual hiding

place from God through Peter and others. How unlike today I feel.

In verse 11, we see the effect of this one event on all the people and believers. Sometimes, and I would venture to say often, we need to experience or hear or see these type of things so that we can learn and have more of

a fear of the Lord.
Due to this never-seen-before event, people held the Apostles in great fear, more miracles started happening:

12 Now by the hands of the apostles (special messengers) numerous and startling signs and wonders were being performed among the people. And by common consent they all met together [at the temple] in the covered porch (walk) called Solomon's.

13 And none of those who were not of their number dared to join and associate with them, but the people held them in high regard and praised and made much of them.

14 More and more there were being added to the Lord those who believed [those who acknowledged Jesus as their Saviour and devoted themselves to Him joined and gathered with them], crowds both of men and of women,
15 So that they [even] kept carrying out the sick into the streets and placing them on couches and sleeping pads, [in the hope] that as Peter passed by, at least his shadow might fall on some of them.

16 And the people gathered also from the towns and hamlets around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those troubled with foul spirits, and they were all cured.

So the result of the first event was a lot more fruit, the message and news of this event being spread everywhere, and greater healings occurring. This is always the Lord's plan.
Even the shadow of Peter healed people! How is your church and shadow doing today?

But.... The establishment fights back!

We should not forget, that

despite this new great awakening, the system was still the dominant force in Jerusalem society, and they will never take the Truth lying down for very long without doing something evil about it and so it was:



17 But the high priest rose up and all who were his supporters, that is, the party of the Sadducees, and being filled with jealousy and indignation and rage,

18 They seized and arrested the apostles (special messengers) and put them in the public jail.

19 But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and, leading them out, said,

20 Go, take your stand in the temple courts and declare to the people the whole doctrine concerning this Life (the eternal life which Christ revealed).

21 And when they heard this, they accordingly went into the temple about daybreak and began to teach. Now the high priest and his supporters who were with him arrived and called together the council (Sanhedrin), even all the senate of the sons of Israel, and they sent to the prison to have [the apostles] brought.

So the evils arrested the goods and put them in a public jail. However, it seems the angel of the Lord, on Christ's behest, didn't seem to agree with the decisions of the evils and

released them (the goods), and told the good guys in Christ, to go back and simply carry on 'preaching' and 'declaring'.

The angel didn't say; 'Wow, the Lord knows this has been quite hard for you poor little first generation Christians, go now and take a trip to Galilee, take some well deserved time off, have a seminar, a pastors retreat, go jump in the lake at that new resort, and just chill for some time. Get refreshed and perhaps think of a better mission field, God knows all the terrible things you have been through'. No, that didn't happen, instead, just the opposite; and what could that lesson be for us?

Could it be God expects us to do more and bear more trouble than we actually think? (2 Tim 2:3 and dozens more.)

22 But when the attendants arrived there, they failed to find them in the jail; so they came back and reported,

23 We found the prison quite safely locked up and the guards were on duty outside the doors, but when we opened [it], we found no one on the inside.

24 Now when the military leader of the temple area and the chief priests heard these facts, they were much perplexed and thoroughly at a loss about them, wondering into what this might grow.

25 But some man came and reported to them, saying, Listen! The men whom you put in jail are standing [right here] in the temple and teaching the people!

26 Then the military leader went with the attendants and brought [the prisoners], but without violence, for they dreaded the people lest they be stoned by them.

27 So they brought them and

set them before the council (Sanhedrin). And the high priest examined them by questioning;

28 Saying, We definitely commanded and strictly charged you not to teach in or about this Name; yet here you have flooded Jerusalem with your doctrine and you intend to bring this Man's blood upon us.

29 Then Peter and the apostles replied, **We must obey God rather than men.**

30 The God of our forefathers raised up Jesus, Whom you killed by hanging Him on a tree (cross).

31 God exalted Him to His right hand to be Prince and Leader and Saviour and Deliverer and Preserver, in order to grant repentance to Israel and to bestow forgiveness and release from sins.

32 And we are witnesses of these things, and the Holy Spirit is also, Whom God has bestowed on those who obey Him.

The System, the powers that (presently) be, work in this way: they make directives against God's people, or against things they believe in, or they set traps for them by legal means (see the book of Daniel), they gather information about situations, start using their military arm if they can, or at least the beginning of it here (verse 26). Once they have scoped out or even met their enemies (Peter and the Apostles) in this case, **then** they will have some other secret meeting and take (usually violent) action if they can get away with it!

And the system, being itself, could not resist speaking and reprimanding and telling the goods off. The evils said: 'WE are the goods and you are

the evils, now don't try and confuse us any more than you have already. We told you not to do this, and here you are disobeying us the goods.'

They do not realise, of course, that they themselves are on the wrong side of history. They don't understand that the god of this world has blinded their eyes and minds as to what the truth is in the situation. No, they carry on pretty much regardless. Protected as they are by the **Emperor's New Clothes Syndrome++**



which works among the rest of society, and causes the sheep of humans to follow them; then they enter in to the great **Mass Formation Psychosis^^** which has been repeated across human history throughout millennia and remains active today on all continents.

But the Apostles and Peter here let the system have it with both barrels. (verses 29-32 above)

.....which was **not** well received at all by such polite society with fine clothes and upstanding education and interpersonal communication skills.

33 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and infuriated and wanted to kill the disciples.

34 But a certain Pharisee in the council (Sanhedrin) named Gamaliel, a teacher of the Law, highly esteemed by all the people, standing up, ordered that the apostles be taken

outside for a little while.

35 Then he addressed them [the council, saying]: Men of Israel, take care in regard to what you propose to do concerning these men.

36 For before our time there arose Theudas, asserting himself to be a person of importance, with whom a number of men allied themselves, about 400; but he was killed and all who had listened to and adhered to him were scattered and brought to nothing.

37 And after this one rose up Judas the Galilean, [who led an uprising] during the time of the census, and drew away a popular following after him; he also perished and all his adherents were scattered.

38 Now in the present case let me say to you, stand off (withdraw) from these men and let them alone. For if this doctrine or purpose or undertaking or movement is of human origin, it will fail (be overthrown and come to nothing);

39 But if it is of God, you will not be able to stop or overthrow or destroy them; you might even be found fighting against God!

40 So, convinced by him, they took his advice; and summoning the apostles, they flogged them and sternly forbade them to speak in or about the name of Jesus, and allowed them to go.

41 So they went out from the presence of the council (Sanhedrin), rejoicing that they were being counted worthy [dignified by the indignity] to suffer shame and be exposed to disgrace for [the sake of] His name.

42 Yet [in spite of the threats] they never ceased for a single day, both in the temple area and at home, to teach and to proclaim the good news (Gospel) of Jesus [as] the Christ (the Messiah).

Fortunately, by the grace of the Eternal God, who is really in charge of all things human and godlike, there arose a great wise man in the midst of the system, whose name was Gamaliel *.**

Gamaliel through his wise words (verses 35-39) was able and also through his previous reputation, to convince even these hard systemite people to delay or set aside their desire for vengeance, and "wait and see". His message staved off some serious persecution for the time being on this wonderful early church, although it wasn't too long before dear Apostles James was killed **because it pleased these same people later on.** (Acts 12:1-3)

Nevertheless, this does show

us that during the time of great persecution, trouble and danger, God often speaks into the situation through another human; God likes to use humans to do His Will, and here dear Gamaliel spoke up and defended the fledgling Church. How much do we need people like Gamaliel today! I think the western church and other comfortable materialistic churches around the world have not yet understood this.

We should be praying for kings and queens to be converted, for their 'nobles' to hear and receive the gospel, for presidents and for the wise men of the lands to protect our precious brothers and sisters and ourselves in the days to come! We are going to need them.

We thank God for these basic lessons and synopsis of the book of Acts chapter 5. Please share it with your friends via all social media. Please encourage your friends and relatives to subscribe through our web site below and remember that 'Time is short', a lot shorter than many of us think.

God willing until next week,

Jerry and the WCF Team

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They are written by Jerry Finch for the most part and graphic designed by Andreas Ortiz in his own unique and inspiring way!

These articles are not your usual half a page Christian devotional, but rather are usually 4 to 8 pages long and also often contain supporting links to other articles or videos on the internet for deeper research.

These articles are getting such a good reception globally, that they are also being translated into other languages! We thank God! Our goal as a ministry is to glorify God and point people to the Word of God which can be applied to every aspect of our lives in our relationship with Him and others and with the world in general.

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Our love in Jesus, Jerry and Andreas and the WCF TEAM

