

ACTS: I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH (PART 8)

In Acts 3 & 4, immediately after the Day of Pentecost, the emphasis is on the NAME of Jesus Christ. This is NOT a coincidence! A name is much more than just identification; it carries with it AUTHORITY and POWER. The first concern of the first Christians was to give glory to His NAME!

Acts 3:6 In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.

Acts 3:16 And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know

Acts 4:7 By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?

Acts 4:12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Acts 4:18 and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.

Acts 4:30 and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.

The early church had REVIVAL because of this emphasis upon the NAME of Jesus, and because they had UNITY among themselves ...

Acts 4:32-37 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

This is not manmade “communism,” neither is it the many who would work supporting the few who wouldn't work, as we sometimes see today. This is a FAMILY, a BODY, a CHURCH, who are so sold out to the Great Commission that they put the church's message and ministry FIRST in every part of their lives, including their possessions. These are FREEWILL OFFERINGS, like were given for the building of the Tabernacle and Temple, and BARNABAS leads the way.

The Lord knew that in AD 70 the city of Jerusalem would be destroyed by the Romans and the people scattered. EVERYONE would lose EVERYTHING ... EXCEPT those who gave it to the church NOW!

THE DEVIL HATES (AND FEARS) UNITY! He has tried persecution of the church from without and that hasn't stopped them, so now he tries corruption from within. The enemy within the church is ALWAYS more deadly than the enemy without!

Acts 5:1-11 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things. And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him. And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much. Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband. And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.

Ananias means “gracious” – but he presumed on the grace of God. Sapphira means “beautiful” – but her heart was ugly with secret sin.

It should be noted that the Lord judges sin severely at the beginning of each new covenant He makes with His people, as a warning to them:

- Just after the tabernacle was finished, God killed Nadab and Abihu for trying to offer “strange fire” before the Lord (Leviticus 10)
- Just after Israel was banished to the wilderness for 40 years, God had a man killed for working on the Sabbath day (Numbers 15)
- Just after Israel entered the Promised Land, God had Achan killed for taking forbidden spoils from the city of Jericho (Joshua 7)

GOD IS SERIOUS ABOUT HIS COVENANTS AND COMMANDMENTS!

Ananias and Sapphira's sin was not having land or possessions, or refusing to give, or not giving the entire amount. Their sin was LYING TO

THE HOLY GHOST, giving a false outward impression to the church in hopes that the inward reality wouldn't be detected. This is HYPOCRISY. It was pride that transformed Lucifer into Satan (Isaiah 14), and it was pride ("Ye shall be as God!") that caused Adam & Eve to sin (Genesis 3). **Pride opens the door to every other sin, for once we are more concerned with our reputation than our character, there is no end to the things we will do to make ourselves "look good" before others.**

God is jealous over His church, for it was purchased with his own blood (Acts 20:28). The church is "the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Timothy 3:15), while Satan is "a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44). The devil will do anything he can to infiltrate the truth with a lie, in order to hinder and harass God's precious possession. Had Peter not received a Word of Knowledge, Ananias & Sapphira might have become influential people in the church, and the devil could have worked through them on the inside!

Their sin was the sin of presumption that Jesus faced in the wilderness:

Matthew 4:6-7 And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

1 Corinthians 11:31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.

Hebrews 10:28-31 He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Their sin was not in robbing God of MONEY, but in lying to the Holy Spirit and thus robbing God of GLORY.

Acts 5:9 How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord?

Who is it that you have "agreed together" with to do something that both of you know is against the Word of God? What a dangerous place to live!

The fall into sin does not happen overnight. Satan knows that the wages of sin is death, but his greatest desire is that we NOT receive the immediate consequences of our sin! Why? Because he knows the Bible! **Ecclesiastes 8:11** Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.

If you find yourself in a habitual pattern of sin, but you are not experiencing any consequences, fall on your knees immediately and REPENT! Why? Because Satan is setting you up for a fall!

At this point, we move from "great power" and "great grace" (Acts 4:33) to "great fear" (Acts 5:11), which falls on the church and the city. THE TRUE GRACE OF GOD ALWAYS BRINGS THE TRUE FEAR OF GOD.

Hebrews 12:28-29 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire.

Acts 5:12-16 And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch. And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them. And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.) Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.

v. 13 – "And of the rest durst no man join himself to them (APOSTLES); but the people magnified them."

v. 14 – "And believers were the more added to the Lord."

Verse 13 is not saying that the community was afraid to join the church, since verse 14 tells us exactly the opposite. It states that, as the church looked on their leadership with less familiarity and more reverence, and "magnified" the office God had given them, revival broke out again!

Billy Cole: "I can only minister to you to the degree that you respect me."

Hebrews 5:1-4 For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity. And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins. And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.

If you want to loose a supernatural move of God in the church, then hold in high esteem the ministries that God has set in the church!