



SERMON NOTES

US N°. 99

Date: April 28th, 2013

Title: Fear, Fraud & Faith

#7 in the Series on the Acts of the Apostles

1. Two sorts of characters are presented in the early church
 - a. Barnabas – son of encouragement; his focus was on others.
 - i. A Levite from Cyprus; uncle of John Mark of gospel writer fame and young missionary; also whose house the disciples met in during the arrest of Peter.
 - ii. Sold a piece of property and gave it all to the Church
 - iii. Brought Paul to the Apostles after his Damascus road conversion.
 - iv. Sent to Antioch to shepherd the church there, eventually goes on first missionary trip.
 - b. Ananias & Sapphira – vain, envious and greedy; their focus was themselves.
 - i. The passage begins with “*But a certain man named...*” gives lie to his motives.
 - ii. Sold a possession and together he and his wife “*kept back*” a part themselves; this is the same phrase used of Achan (cf. Jos. 7:1) who kept some of Jericho’s wealth.
 - iii. Deceitfully presented their gift as the totality of the sale price, seeking recognition of the community as generous and self-sacrificial givers without parting with too much.
 - iv. The Spirit gives Peter discernment and knowledge of their sin, confronts them both respectively and both are struck dead.
2. Piety v. Property
 - a. Jesus spoke more about money and wealth than any other topic; love of money is considered idolatry and where we spend our money reveals where and what we worship.
 - b. The root of Ananias and Sapphira’s sin and judgment was not their property; it was their lack of piety. Their deception of trying to defraud the God and community brought about severe punishment. (e.g. *Achan’s sin*)
 - i. Their vanity. The textual opposition between them and Barnabas suggests their envy and jealousy; they wanted that good reputation.
 1. Rx prescription – make God number one in their lives and live before the audience of one. Jn. 5:44, “*How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes from the only God?*”
 - ii. Their greed. They
 1. Rx prescription – prefer other’s needs above their own and live by acts of generosity and surrender. Rom. 12:10, “*Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another;*”
 - iii. Their fear. Perhaps they were just afraid to fully commit themselves to God and community.
 1. Rx prescription – review of who God truly is and then match their faith to their God. Is. 41:10, “”

- c. How did they get to that point? They were convinced of the worth of religion; outwardly embracing the Christian faith but not having a complete surrender, denying all for Christ.
 - i. The love of money impairs our judgment; it reveals where our hopes lie.
 - ii. Money is meant as an instrument to be used for God's purposes. 1 Tim. 6:17-19, *"Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life."*
 - iii. Satan filled their hearts to lie to the Holy Spirit; Satan works with what he finds. We need to be vigilant to close *"doors and windows"* of our lives to keep out the Thief who seeks to steal and destroy.
 - 1. Do not be ignorant of Satan's devices.
 - d. What we do with what we have demonstrates what kind of person we are.
3. Holiness of the Bride of Christ
- a. God's desire
 - i. Eph. 5:3-7, *"But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them."*
 - ii. Eph. 5:25-27, *"as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish."*
 - iii. Rev. 19:7-8, *"Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready. And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints."*
 - iv. 1 Pet. 1:15-16, *"as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, "BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY.""*
 - b. God's response; Achan, time of the Judges, Jerusalem, etc.
 - i. 1 Pet. 4:17, *"For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?"*
 - ii. Jn. 2:14-17, *"And He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers doing business. When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables. And He said to those who sold doves, **"Take these things away! Do not***

make My Father's house a house of merchandise!" Then His disciples remembered that it was written, "ZEAL FOR YOUR HOUSE HAS EATEN ME UP."

iii. Mark 11:17, *"'Is it not written, 'MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR ALL NATIONS' ? But you have made it a 'DEN OF THIEVES.''"*

c. The only way evil can be kept out of the church is by acts of judgment; reverence of God and church maintain spiritual health for the whole. A purged church is a church ready for revival; even unto Peter's shadow.

4. Love for the community

a. Biblical communal living was done by love and not at the point of a gun; this lifestyle was not instituted among the Gentile churches.

b. Property was still the right of the owners.

c. 2 Cor. 8:1-5, *"Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing, imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God."*

5. The results

a. Revival

b. Judgment took place within the church, miracles are taking place outside

c. People are coming because of the miracles and the preaching of the Word

d. There's joy because of the unity among themselves, the number of converts is large, and people from all walks are joining

e. Fraud, Fear, & Faith

f. You alone are God

Should the church maintain 3 months of budget in its accounts?