

Chapter 5 Purity and Power

Read from chapter 4:32- Note great power and great grace

v.1-2 Ananias with Sapphira- one accord on this

-held back or misappropriated-The ancient Greek word for **kept back** is *nosphizomai*, which means “to misappropriate.” The same word was used of Achan’s theft in the Greek translation of the Old Testament ([Joshua 7:21](#)). The only other time *nosphizomai* is used in the New Testament, it means to steal ([Titus 2:10](#)).

v.3 peter has a word of knowledge 1 Cor.12 - Satan filled his heart- there is much filling in Acts-

[Act 2:4](#)

And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Acts 4:8; 4:31; 9:17; 13:9

*Acts 3:10 Then they knew that it was he who sat begging alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were **filled** with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.*

*Acts 5:17 Then the high priest rose up, and all those who **were** with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were **filled** with indignation,*

*Acts 13:45 But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were **filled** with envy;*

*Acts 13:52 And the disciples were **filled** with joy and with the Holy Spirit.*

the issue was not the amount but the motivation, **Of course, his sin was greed (in keeping the money); but his greater sin was pride**, in wanting everyone to consider him so spiritual that he “gave it all” – when he had not.

ii. Their sin is imitated in many ways today. We can create or allow the impression that we are people of Bible reading or prayer when we are not. We can create or allow the impression that we have it all together when we do not. We can exaggerate our spiritual accomplishments or effectiveness to appear something we are not. It is too easy to be happy with the *image* of spirituality without the *reality* of spiritual life.

- Their great sin was rooted in *pride*. Pride corrupts the church more quickly than anything else.

- Peter did not pronounce this death sentence, he was probably as surprised as anyone

- God struck Ananias dead for his sin. Doesn't this seem rather harsh?

- The greater wonder is that God delays His righteous judgment in virtually all other cases. Ananias received exactly what he deserved; he simply could not live in the atmosphere of purity that marked the church at that time.

- The physical means by which Ananias died was probably a heart attack. Ananias lived in a time, and among a people, who really believed there was a God in heaven we must all answer to. It frightened him to have his sin exposed and to know he was accountable before God for it. How many people would be frightened before God if confronted with sin like this? Today, too many people would yawn or debate if confronted with sin like this! Or any sin for that matter

- This was a critical juncture for the early church, and such impurity, sin, scandal and satanic infiltration could have corrupted the entire church at its root. G. Campbell Morgan said **“The Church has never been harmed or hindered by opposition from without; it has been perpetually harmed and hindered by perils from within.”**

It is interesting that the central message has been the resurrection, and the punishment here is death

v.11 fear came upon the church- **first use of the word church in the book of Acts.**

v.12-13 power increases in the church and the church's reputation grows

- people realize that it is a serious thing, a serious commitment to join with this group of believers

None of the rest dared join them: The community of Christians had a marvelous reputation for integrity, and everybody knew it was a serious thing to be a follower of Jesus. An Ananias and Sapphira incident would reduce the level of casual commitment.

- being a believer in other parts of the world

- Christianity in this country is a very casual commitment, not even high on our priority list – **see Rev. 3:14-22- church of Laodicea**

v.14-16 they expected miracles to take place

What is the reputation of the church at large today?

- A group of bigoted close minded people?
- Old fashioned ethics?
- Or compromising to bring people in, or worse to justify their lack of commitment

We see a lack of purity in our society today. Look at all the allegations being leveled at high profile people.

- People seem to be surprised that in a culture where sensuality is used to sell everything, where movies and TV are filled with sinful lifestyles, where the role models are people who constantly post their sensual lifestyle on social media, that people act on those things

Worse the church often reflects that. There is even a website devoted to news of fallen pastors. If a church addresses sin, it is considered judgmental and possibly even guilty of hate crimes.

We shouldn't miss the connection between the purity preserved in the first part of the chapter and the power displayed here. God was blessing a pure church with spiritual power