



December 16, 2015

Acts 4:36 – 5:42

Pastor Gary Hamrick

Exegetical Study

1. **Acts 4:36–37** – *“Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means Son of Encouragement), sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles’ feet.”*

2. **Acts 5:1–11** – *“Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. With his wife’s full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles’ feet. Then Peter said, ‘Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? Didn’t it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn’t the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied to men but to God.’ When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened. Then the young men came forward, wrapped up his body, and carried him out and buried him. About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. Peter asked her, ‘Tell me, is this the price you and Ananias got for the land?’ ‘Yes,’ she said, ‘that is the price.’ Peter said to her, ‘How could you agree to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also.’ At that moment she fell down at his feet and died. Then the young men came in and, finding her dead, carried her out and buried her beside her husband. Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events.”*
 - a. Peter used either the gift of knowledge or the gift of discernment to challenge Sapphira concerning her part in her 100% complicity in the plot to *“lie to the Holy Spirit.”*
 - b. Ananias and Sapphira were Jewish Believers in Jesus Christ.
 - c. Pastor Gary said, “The issue at hand here is not that they had to turn in 100%

of the price that they got for the land. That was never required of them. The Bible says that God loves a cheerful giver and that no one should give under compulsion. ... [God] wants us to worship him with our resources, not because we are obligated. ... The sin of Ananias and Sapphira was twofold. [First] it was deception... they wanted the perception to be that they were really spiritual in what they were doing. ... [Second, the other offense was against God because they lied to the Holy Spirit.]”

- i. **2 Corinthians 9:7** - *“Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”*
- d. Pastor Gary said, “Of course, no doubt, had [Sapphira] been honest at this moment and said, ‘Well, I gotta be honest with you. You know, we kept some money back.’ I think grace would have been extended [to her]. I don’t think that she would have died. But she played the game with her husband [and] she deceived, and she lied... This is a radical thing, there’s no doubt about it. This is not a pattern. We are under grace and we should be thankful for that. The reason why God [did] something so swift, [decisive, dramatic, and drastic was] because the Church [was] young... barely a few years old, and God [wanted] to send a strong message, and the message [was] there’s got to be purity in [God’s Church]. ... The Church would not experience the goodness, the grace, and the power of the Lord to be used for his purpose and for his glory. ... He wants men and women who will take the Word of God seriously. He wants men and women who will live according to the Word of God and before God with integrity and conviction and character and purpose. He wants us to be men and women who live out the Word of God and not just give it lip service. ... [He wants us] to live a life that exemplifies Christ in our culture... When lying creeps in, and deception and immorality creep in, we not only blow our witness, we dishonor God. ... Right from the beginning God [set the tone because he wanted everyone to know that he wanted the Church to be pure.] What was the result of this? ... They became aware of the fear of the Lord.¹ ... [Some people think this only means that they need to have a holy reverence for God. Well, that’s part of it, but it means [we need to] have a real fear that we serve an awesome, holy, righteous God, and we should not glibly go through life and think that it’s just okay to offend him and sin against him. ... Not a fear of God that paralyzes us and distances us from God, because then we think that he’s unapproachable.”
- e. The Greek word for *“kept back”* means to misappropriate.²
- f. “The history of the Church shows that the Church pure is the Church powerful...” – G. Campbell Morgan

¹ See [Acts 2:5](#) and [Acts 2:11](#)

² <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=G3557&t=NIV>

- g. The Greek word for fear is phobos, which is where we get the word phobia; this is real fear! ³
 - h. **Psalm 111:10a** - *“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding.”*
 - i. Pastor Gary said, “Knowledge is the accumulation of information. Wisdom is the application.”
 - i. **Proverbs 1:7a** - *“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge...”*
 - j. **Proverbs 10:27a** - *“The fear of the LORD adds length to life...”*
 - k. **Proverbs 16:6b** - *“... through the fear of the LORD a man avoids evil.”*
 - l. **Proverbs 22:4b** - *“... the fear of the LORD brings wealth and honor and life.”*
 - m. **Acts 9:31** - *“Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. It was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord.”*
3. **Acts 5:12-16** - *“The apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders among the people. And all the believers used to meet together in Solomon’s Colonnade. No one else dared join them, even though they were highly regarded by the people. Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number. As a result, people brought the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and mats so that at least Peter’s shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by. Crowds gathered also from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those tormented by evil spirits [demons], and all of them were healed.”*
- a. The people didn’t take following the Lord lightly.
 - b. The people became very serious about following the Lord and having a proper reverence and awe of the Lord.
 - c. The Church continued to grow as more and more people heard and believed the gospel.
 - d. Pastor Gary said, “I think that there’s a trend in some churches where it seems to be that people think that Christ will be more appealing if [the Church] dumbs things down, [and] down the gospel, [lowering] the bar. I want you to notice that the bar got raised really high. [They realized that if they started messing with God that he could kill them. They took God and the Christian faith seriously and walking with Christ seriously!] The bar was raised, and the Church began to grow. ... We need to be serious and we need to be sober minded and we need to tell people the truth even when the truth hurts.”
4. **Acts 5:17-20** - *“Then the high priest and all his associates, who were members of the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy. They arrested the apostle and put them in public jail. But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors*

³ <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=G5401&t=NIV>

of the jail and brought them out. 'Go, stand in the temple courts,' he said, 'and tell the people the full message of this new life.' "

- a. Pastor Gary said, "What I find interesting here is that the word from the Lord through this angel is to get back out there and tell the good news. ... There was no [message for them to be careful and be on the down-low because they are going to arrest you and take you back to jail if you go back to sharing the good news]. ... A difficulty in Scripture does not always result in some providential miracle. ... [It seems to indicate that all of the apostles were thrown in jail.] When you look at history and you look at what happened to all of these apostles, except for John... [whom] they tried to kill by putting him into a boiling cauldron of oil, [which] he survived, who ended up living out his life and dying a natural death, ... [all of the rest were killed!] ... Where was their angel [when they were in trouble?] In other words, God has a purpose in our lives even when he does not deliver by miraculous means. You cannot look at these [men] and think, 'Was God asleep?' ... Why didn't [God spare these godly men] from horrible deaths? We won't always know why. Sometimes God works miraculously, and sometimes his purposes are still fulfilled even when he does not deliver in miraculous ways, and we need to hold onto that. This is not something that we need to think about in terms of disparaging on God's character. ... You can't look at the way [these men] died and that God wasn't present, and God wasn't working in their lives; it's just that sometimes his purposes are fulfilled in the miraculous and in the not so miraculous. One of the hardest things we have to do in life is to accept those times when it doesn't always turn out as miraculously as we would like. God is still on the throne and God still loves us and God is still good. Sometimes we connect his goodness with the results we want, and when we don't get the results we want, we think that God is not good, and that lie has been around since the Garden of Eden. That's exactly what Satan wanted Eve to believe. 'Did God say that you can only eat from these trees? Did God really say that? [God's] not that good, is he?' [Satan] twisted what God had said because God had actually said that they were free to eat from all the trees in the garden except for the one. ... [The] only reason that God put that one tree in the garden was to offer the gift of free choice so that we would come to God by of our will and our choice, rather than something robotic out of the Law. God loves us and wants to have relationship with us, [and] you can't have relationship with someone if [they] are forced or compelled to against [their will]. ... We can't allow that game to be played in our own [minds], that when the miracle doesn't show up, and the angel doesn't show up for us, we somehow think that God is not good, and God does not care. God is good and God cares all the time, and he works out his purposes miraculously and sometimes through the events that are not so miraculous. ... These men as they died painful deaths as martyrs still served the same God and loved the

same God who sent the angel to set them free from prison [on this occasion]. ... Put your faith in who God is and his character and nature as your loving Father and leave the results up to him. All of us want the miraculous results, and all of us can pray for the miraculous results. [I] believe that God [will sometimes] give the miraculous results.”

i. According to Church history:

1. Matthew was beheaded.
2. Mark died in Alexandria as a result of the injuries he suffered by being dragged through the city.
3. Luke was hanged from an olive tree in Greece.
4. Peter was crucified upside down in Rome.
5. James was beheaded in Jerusalem.
6. Phillip was hanged.
7. Bartholomew was whipped and beaten to death.
8. Andrew was crucified while preaching at the top of his voice to his persecutors.
9. Thomas was run through with a spear.
10. Jude was executed with a spear.
11. Paul was beheaded in Rome.

b. It is the duty, responsibility, and privilege of mankind to share the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

i. The Bible only records one instance of an angel declaring the gospel.

1. **Revelation 14:6** - *“Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth - to every nation, tribe, language and people.”*

ii. Pastor Gary said, “[I believe the only reason that an angel has the privilege of sharing the gospel is because the Church has been raptured.]”

5. **Acts 5:21-42** - *At daybreak they entered the temple courts, as they had been told, and began to teach the people. When the high priest and his associates arrived, they called together the Sanhedrin - the full assembly of the elders of Israel - and sent to the jail for the apostles. But on arriving at the jail, the officers did not find them there. So they went back and reported, ‘We found the jail securely locked, with the guards standing at the doors; but when we opened them, we found no one inside.’ On hearing this report, the captain of the temple guard and the chief priests were puzzled, wondering what would come of this. Then someone came and said, ‘Look! The men you put in jail are standing in the temple courts teaching the people.’ At that, the captain went with his officers and brought the apostles. They did not use force, because they feared that the people would stone them. Having brought the apostles, they made them appear before the Sanhedrin to be questioned by the high priest. ‘We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name,’*

he said. 'Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man's blood.' Peter and the other apostles replied: 'We must obey God rather than men! The God of our fathers raised Jesus from the dead – whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel. We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.' When they heard this, they were furious and wanted to put them to death. But a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, who was honored by all the people, stood up in the Sanhedrin and ordered that the men be put outside for a little while. Then he addressed them: 'Men of Israel, consider carefully what you intend to do to these men. Some time ago Theudas appeared, claiming to be somebody, and about four hundred men rallied to him. He was killed, all his followers were dispersed, and it all came to nothing. After him, Judas the Galilean appeared in the days of the census and led a band of people in revolt. He too was killed, and all his followers were scattered. Therefore, in the present case I advise you: Leave these men alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God.' His speech persuaded them. They called the apostles in and had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name. Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ."

- a. It's interesting to note that not one single member of the Sanhedrin asked the apostles, "How did you get out of jail?"
- b. **Matthew 5:11-12** – "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the 1984 New International Version (NIV)