

The Gift of Confession

ACTS: The Journey Continues

Acts 5:1-11

EXPLORING THE SERMON

- What did you hear?
- What did you think or feel about what you heard?
- What is one thing you can take away from the sermon this week?

KEY VERSES

5 But a man named Ananias, with the consent of his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property; ² with his wife's knowledge, he kept back some of the proceeds, and brought only a part and laid it at the apostles' feet. ³ "Ananias," Peter asked, "why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back part of the proceeds of the land? ⁴ While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, were not the proceeds at your disposal? How is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You did not lie to us^[a] but to God!" ⁵ Now when Ananias heard these words, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard of it. ⁶ The young men came and wrapped up his body,^[b] then carried him out and buried him. ⁷ After an interval of about three hours his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. ⁸ Peter said to her, "Tell me whether you and your husband sold the land for such and such a price." And she said, "Yes, that was the price." ⁹ Then Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out." ¹⁰ Immediately she fell down at his feet and died. When the young men came in they found her dead, so they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. ¹¹ And great fear seized the whole church and all who heard of these things. Acts 5:1-11

DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION

This passage is a strong reminder that it matters to God how we steward all of our resources, as does the motivation behind our decisions. Because Ananias and Sapphira only gave a portion of the proceeds from their land sale to the disciples, their motivation was likely status, so they would be seen as favorable in the eyes of the church. Our decisions are too often motivated by these three factors: guilt, fear, and pride. **Discuss how the three of these may have played into your life's decisions:**

- 1) **Guilt:** decisions guided by guilt are self-serving and unsustainable
- 2) **Fear:** fearful of judgment, decisions guided by fear lead us to anger
- 3) **Pride:** our decisions make us the hero of our story. When our pride stops receiving accolades, it leaves.

Psalm 51 is a plea from David to God for forgiveness and a reminder that no matter how far we fall, God seeks our honest heart: *You desire truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart (v.6).* Our secrets can destroy us. The way out of our secrets is through confession, a glorious exchange in which God meets with His great grace. **How has confession been a part of your faith journey?**

Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit (v.12). **How does this encourage you that our motivation matters to God, and that our service should be in response to God's great grace?**

Heavenly Father, we are grateful for your great grace that you bestow upon us. May we know the depths of your love and forgiveness so that we cannot help but have an attitude of joyful service. Strengthen us in our confession, that we bring our hearts to you regularly, knowing that your grace has no limits. **Amen.**