

"Satan's Persistence"

Part 1

Acts 5:12-42

Introduction: The last time we were in our study of Acts we looked at Acts 5:1-11 where we find the story of Annias and Sapphira. These two had witnessed the actions of Barnabas and his recognition and they longed to have the same. They sold a possession and pretended to give all the money to the church to help the poor, but they actually held back part of the money. This was an attempt by Satan to stop the progress of the church. This was his attempt to get sin within the church because he knew God could not bless the church while sin was in the midst. Before this Satan used fear in an attempt to stop the growth of the church and when we get to chapter 6, we will see that there will be another attack and it will come in the form of division. God would not however allow deception to exist within the church and therefore Annanias and Sapphira were judged. Because of their deception they both were struck dead. These two were used as an example to all of us about how God views sin within the church.

Application:

God does not strike people dead today like He did then and for this we can all be thankful. As we considered last time, we could never sing the hymn, "I Surrender All" without carrying several people out each time the hymn was sung. But for us we do learn from this that God hates sin within the church and there are consequences when sin gets in. As we continue our study, we shall see that Satan will not give up for he will continue to attempt to stop the progress of the church.

I. The Results of the Purgings

Notice Acts 5:12-14

We briefly looked at these verses the last time but there is more here to point out.

1. Purity results in power.

We see the power of God in two ways here. First it is seen in the signs and wonders of the apostles. The second way is that believers were added to the Lord.

Application:

The lesson for us in this is that we **MUST** walk in purity if we expect to see the power of God in our lives. There is enormous potential in each believer.

Ephesians 3:19-20

¹⁹ And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

²⁰ Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.

We are not going to do miracles as the apostles but God's power works through us as we serve and as we pray. But the problem is that many believers are not walking in purity and therefore the power of God is not seen in the believer's life. This is also true of churches today. They permit sin to exist within the church and for that reason the power of God is not at work within the church. Let me ask you a few questions:

Do you experience answered prayer?

If not, maybe you are not walking in purity and you are hindering God's power from being released in your prayer life.

Do you see God's power in your life?

Again, if the answer is "NO" then possibly you need something purged from your life.

Notice Acts 5:13 again.

2. Purity results in a strong testimony.

Let us understand just how important this is. We who are the church/body of Christ are God's earthly representatives. Here in this verse we see that the people watching understood that to be a follower of Jesus Christ was a serious commitment. They knew that to be a follower of Jesus meant living a separated life. It meant being held to a higher standard of life. This is the very message Jesus communicated while He walked the earth.

Luke 14:25-27

²⁵ And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them,

²⁶ If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

²⁷ And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

As followers of Jesus Christ it is our responsibility to walk in purity and to keep short accounts with sin. It is for us to represent the holiness of God in the church and in our daily walk.

1 Peter 1:13-16

¹³ Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

¹⁴ As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance:

*¹⁵ But as he which hath called you is holy, so **be ye holy in all manner of conversation;***

¹⁶ Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

Notice Acts 5:15-16

Here are two interesting verses. The people of the cities around Jerusalem brought the sick and the possessed in hopes of just having contact with Peter's shadow and at the end of verse 16 we are told that ALL were healed. What is this about? There was no power in the shadow of Peter just as there was no power in the garment of Jesus.

Matthew 9:19-22

¹⁹ And Jesus arose, and followed him, and so did his disciples.

²⁰ And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment:

²¹ For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole.

*²² But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy **faith** hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour.*

Here in this passage the woman's faith was released when she touched the hem of Jesus' garment. It was not faith in the garment, but it was faith in the MAN wearing the garment. In Acts 5:15-16 the same thing happened. It was not that the people had faith in Peter's shadow. The shadow had no power. The shadow was a means to release their faith which was in the POWER flowing through Peter. These people were not healed spiritually but only physically. The healings that were done to these people were for the purpose of testifying that the message of the apostles was True. Let us remember that the people

needed a way to know the teaching of the apostles was accurate and therefore God gave the apostles unique gifts of miracles and healing to show the authority of their message.

II. The Response of the Sanhedrin

Notice Acts 5:17

Here we see that the Sanhedrin were filled with "indignation." This means they were filled with jealousy. The "spiritual leaders" were furious with the apostles, and they were so jealous that they missed the fact that people were being healed and released from the grip of Satan. They were so focused upon themselves. They wanted the attention that the apostles were getting. They wanted the followers that the apostles had. They were so self-centered that they could not rejoice in the good that had been and was being done. Let us understand that whatever a person is filled with will control them.

Notice Acts 5:18

The officials took the apostles, and they were locked up in prison. When I read this Peter's words quickly to my mind.

1 Peter 4:12-13

¹² Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

¹³ But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

Now let us get back to the principle that what a person is filled with will control them. Here we see this very principle at work. Jealousy in the heart of an individual will not just lay dormant, but it will bring about an action of some sort. Jealousy is an evil emotion that must be confessed quickly and dealt with immediately. In the Old Testament we know what happened to Joseph because his brothers were filled with jealousy.

III. The Miracle

Notice Acts 5:19

This verse is very interesting when we read that the angel of the Lord opened the prison doors. Keep in mind that it was the Sadducees who locked the apostles in prison.

Acts 23:8

⁸ For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both.

The very "thing" which they did not believe in had set the apostles free. This miracle is yet another conviction into the heart of the Jewish people. God was doing so much right in front of the Jews to get them to see the Truth concerning Jesus. It started with the Day of Pentecost and the tongues of fire. It was then the salvation of thousands and the healing of the lame man. Then it was the death of Annanias and Sapphira. Now it is the jail break! God is sending one hammer blow after another to convict the Jews because He longs to see them saved. The Sadducees who denied the supernatural were brought face to face with it. Let us notice the command.

Notice Acts 5:19-20

The apostles were commanded to go into the temple and teach ALL THE WORDS OF THIS LIFE. They were to teach all they knew about their new life in Jesus Christ. Let us consider what this command entailed. To go to the temple and teach in the name of Jesus could very well get them executed. This was why they were in prison to begin with. The apostles knew the potential cost, yet they never hesitated. They did not need to pray about what to do. The command was very clear. Let us also notice they were to STAND.

Notice Acts 5:20 again.

The command to STAND tells us they were in a spiritual battle.

Ephesians 6:10-14

¹⁰ Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

¹¹ Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

¹² For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

¹³ Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

¹⁴ Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

Notice Acts 5:21a

The apostles were obedient to the command. What a change in these men from weeks before!

John 20:19

¹⁹ Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

Here in John they are hiding in fear but in Acts 5 they walk right out of prison and into the temple to preach in the name of Jesus Christ. What brought the change? There are many things which had occurred but one in particular that we need to see. Remember their prayer from chapter 4?

Acts 4:29

²⁹ And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word.

God had answered their prayer for boldness.

Application:

These men walked and stood right in the face of danger because God had given them boldness to do so. We too need to pray for boldness to speak the Truth. There are so many in need of hearing the Truth because they have been deceived by the lies of Satan and the world. When we pray for boldness, we can be sure God will hear and answer our prayer.

1 John 5:14-15

¹⁴ And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:

¹⁵ And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

Conclusion:

How much different would our communities be if God's people prayed for boldness and then walked in faith with that boldness?