

Trouble in the Church

Scripture Reading — Acts 4:36-5:11

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?” — Acts 5:3

Land was sold. The money from the sale was brought to the church. People celebrated: “Thank you, Barnabas! What an encouragement you are!”

Then Ananias and his wife, Sapphira, crafted a plan. They would also sell some land. Prompted by the whispers of Satan, they planned to bring *some* of the proceeds to the apostles and then declare before God and his people that they gave *all* of the money to the church.

Why would they make up such a lie? Did they want the same acclaim that was given to Barnabas? Did jealousy entangle their hearts? Did greed convince them that they should keep some of the money for themselves?

At the end of this story there are two dead bodies and a fearful church. Though everything seemed to be going well, the church includes people who still struggle with sins, such as jealousy and greed—and so much more. What we all need are hearts open to grace from God.

As Peter confronted the couple, I am sure he did it with great sadness. He knew what it was like to let God down and to disappoint Jesus (Luke 22:54-62).

We don't have to have a heart filled with Satan's whispers. There is another way.

Prayer

Dear God, we are more like Ananias and Sapphira than we care to admit. Help us to open our hearts to you in confession so that we may live fully by your Spirit. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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