



## SERMON DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Week of January 19, 2025

### **Acts 5:1-16**

***[1] But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, [2] and with his wife's knowledge he kept back for himself some of the proceeds and brought only a part of it and laid it at the apostles' feet. [3] But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? [4] While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man but to God." [5] When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and breathed his last. And great fear came upon all who heard of it. [6] The young men rose and wrapped him up and carried him out and buried him. [7] After an interval of about three hours his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. [8] And Peter said to her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for so much." And she said, "Yes, for so much." [9] But Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, 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 breathed her last. When the young men came in they found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. [11] And great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard of these things. [12] Now many signs and wonders were regularly done among the people by the hands of the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon's Portico. [13] None of the rest dared join them, but the people held them in high esteem. [14] And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, [15] so that they even carried out the sick into the streets and laid them on cots and mats, that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them. [16] The people also gathered from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed.***

1. Luke tells the tragic story of Ananias and Sapphira directly on the heels of his idyllic account of the incredible love and unity the early church had, as they shared everything with one another and there was no one in need. Why do you think Luke did this? What contrast do you think he was trying to emphasize and why might it be important for us to understand this?
2. Ananias and Sapphira sold a property and donated a portion of the proceeds to the church. For this, they were both killed. Do you think their punishment was extreme? Why or why not? What is so wrong with lying to and testing the Holy Spirit of the Lord? Have you ever done something similar? If so, why are you still alive?
3. In 2 Timothy 3 Paul warns us that people will be lovers of self and pleasure rather than lovers of God, having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. In Matthew 15 Jesus condemned the Pharisees as hypocrites, invoking Isaiah's prophetic condemnation that they were a people who

“honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me” What do these people, along with Ananias and Sapphira, have in common? What do you think is the root cause that leads people to do such things? How can we avoid becoming like them?

4. What role, if any, do you think Satan played in this tragic story of Ananias and Sapphira? Have you ever viewed selfishness as satanic? What should we learn from this and how can we avoid the devil's snares?
5. No one ever starts off dreaming about one day becoming the biggest hypocrite the world has ever seen. However, we can become just like Ananias and Sapphira slowly, over time if we're not careful. How can you and I avoid caring more about the world and its pleasures & accolades than about God and His honor & glory?
6. After Ananias and Sapphira are struck down by God, great fear came upon the whole church, and understandably so! If this were to happen in a church today, what do you think would happen to that church? Would you expect it to shrink or grow? In our passage we are told that although many were hesitant to join them, “more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women” Why do you think this was so? What does this tell us about the importance of God's holiness and our own hatred of sin?