

Calvary Chapel on the Horizon

August 29, 2021

Acts 5 "A Pure Church"

I. Introduction

Read: Acts 4:32-37

† Today we will look at God's desire for the purity of the church.

† We left off in chapter 4 with the disciples being of one heart and one soul – they were in one accord as in Acts chapter 1.

† And from praying and walking in unity – the Apostles had great power and were preaching. We see others felt compelled to share what they had with the rest –

○ ...this is the gift of giving we find in Romans 12.

† As a result: there was "GREAT GRACE" upon them all – they both received freely and gave freely! (Remember, grace is getting what we don't deserve)

† Grace is the natural by-product of love.

† Joh 13:35 (Jesus said) By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

† And they laid their things at the Apostles feet (for distribution).

II. Great Fear (of the Lord)

Act 5:1-11 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, 2 And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. 3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? 4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. 5 And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things. 6 And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him. 7 And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. 8 And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much. 9 Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. 10 Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband. 11 And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.

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- † **What we find here is Satan's 1st attempt at destroying the early church! – He is coming at it from the inside!**
- † **We must remember that the book of Acts is our example for the church – in this chapter we find God purifying His church as an example of what we should NOT do!**
- † **A church that is plagued by sin will be unable to perform Matt 28...same goes for the individual!**
- † **1Pe 4:17** For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?

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There are 3 principles we can learn from in this passage:

1. Satan will always be trying to get into the church!

- † **The old adage: "give him an inch and he'll take a mile" → VERY true with Satan!**
- † **Ananias and Sapphira were truly the first to be "Slain in the Spirit" :o)**
- † **God is setting a principle for us...don't allow compromise in our lives or the church!**

2. Sin must be dealt with swiftly and decisively

- † **We have a similar OT example of cleansing sin if we looked at the sin of Achan at Ai – he stole some gold and clothing at Jericho and only told his family. This brought judgment on the nation of Israel and God led Joshua to deal with the sin very harshly!**
- † **Paul tells us in Ephesians: Eph 4:17, 22-27** This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, 22 ...put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; 23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; 24 And put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. 25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor: for we are members one of another. 26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: 27 Neither give place to the devil.

3. Swift Judgment on Sin Produces a Healthy Fear of the Lord

Looking at Acts 5:11 And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.

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- † **Pro 3:7-8** Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil. (8) It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones.
- † **Pro 8:13** The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.
- † **Pro 16:6** By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil.
- † **The fear of the Lord is the healthiest attitude we can have...This fear brings a respect and reverence that causes us to shutter at the thought of displeasing our Lord Jesus!**
- † **Spurgeon:** There must ever be a holy fear mixed with the Christian's joy. This is a sacred compound, yielding a sweet smell, and we must see to it that we burn no other upon the altar. Fear, without joy, is torment; and joy, without holy fear, would be presumption."

III. Great Power from the Lord

Act 5:12-16 And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch. 13 And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them. 14 And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.) 15 Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. 16 There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.

† **We see the church's purity allows God's power to flow...**

† **2Ti 2:19-21** Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. 20 But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honor, and some to dishonor. 21 If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.

† **We see there is "Power in Purity" that comes from a healthy fear of the Lord!**

† **The purity also brought respect from the community – they knew that it isn't a light thing to be saved – we are called to a new and different walk.**

† **We're to be salt and light and NOT look like the world.**

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- † **1Jn 3:1-3** Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. (2) Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. (3) And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.
- † **NOTE, too: Multitudes of people were added to the Lord! This is the ultimate in soul-winning!**

IV. Great Power Brings Great Persecution

Act 5:17-21a Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation, 18 And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison. 19 But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, 20 Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life. 21 And when they heard that, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught.

- † **The religious leaders were filled with indignation – because of their pride...and had the apostles arrested...yet, the Lord wanted them preaching so He sent an Angel to affect a jail break!**
- † **The apostles then obediently went back into the temple and kept preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ.**

Act 5:21b-28 But the high priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought. 22 But when the officers came, and found them not in the prison, they returned, and told, 23 Saying, the prison truly found we shut with all safety, and the keepers standing without before the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within. 24 Now when the high priest and the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow. 25 Then came one and told them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people. 26 Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned. 27 And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them, 28 Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us.

- † **Here we now find the source of their indignation...the apostles didn't obey them and they were teaching the people that they were the cause of Christ's crucifixion.**

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† **Yet, in Mat 27:24-25** When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it. 25 Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children.

Act 5:29-33 Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, **we ought to obey God rather than men.** 30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. 31 Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. 32 And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him. 33 When they heard that, they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them.

† **Peter laid it out for them in no uncertain terms...Christians are to obey God rather than men when men tell them to do something that is contrary to scripture.**

† **In this case, the apostles were told to preach the gospel. How could they disobey?**

Act 5:34-39 Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space; 35 And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men. 36 For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought. 37 After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed. 38 And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: 39 But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.

† **This is saying, in essence, that any work of the flesh will die out over time; but not if it's from God**

40 And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. 41 And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. 42 And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.

† **Look at this...they rejoiced that they were worthy to suffer shame for Jesus...how would we respond?**

V. Conclusion

Purity / Fear of the Lord / Obeying God over man / Rejoice in serving & suffering for Christ