**ACTS of GOD #18:** *Discounting God’s Holiness*

Acts 4:36-5:11 5/26/2019

**An example of the grace being experienced by all** (v. 36-37)

***36****Now Joseph, a Levite of Cyprian birth, who was also called Barnabas by the apostles (which translated means Son of Encouragement),****37****and who owned a tract of land, sold it and brought the money and laid it at the apostles’ feet.*

 -Luke introduces Barnabas as an example who return later in Acts

 -Barnabas typified the Jerusalem Church at this time

 -Filled with the Spirit, Committed to Love, Standing in One Accord

 -Enjoying the abundant grace of God & selflessly sharing for His glory

 -Rejoicing, fellowshipping, enjoying favor, adding to the number daily

**Ananias & Sapphira: Deceived & deceitful hearts still a threat** (v. 1-2)

*But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property,****2****and kept back some of the price for himself, with his wife’s full knowledge, and bringing a portion of it, he laid it at the apostles’ feet.*

 -Eve in the garden, Golden Calf, Achan’s Sin (Joshua 7), Now Ananias

 -Sin arises despite the overwhelming presence of God’s grace

 -Ananias means God is gracious, yet he presumed upon God’s grace  -Collusion with his wife Sapphira to defraud the church for their gain

 -Self-serving strategy not a Selfless action

 -Appear Commendable & Accept Congratulation as Selfless

 -Actually kept a portion hidden while attempting to accept benefits

**Confronting the Corrupted Heart** (v. 3-6)

***3****But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back some of the price of the land?****4****While it remained*

*unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.”****5****And as he heard these words, Ananias*

*fell down and breathed his last; and great fear came over all who heard of it.****6****The young men got up and covered him up, and after carrying him out, they buried him.*

 -The Spirit reveals truth & Ananias must answer for what was in his heart

 -Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?

 -Satan has influenced, but Ananias must answer for it

 -Ananias conceived/purposed the deed in his own heart

 -Not a matter of broken vow or disobeyed order

 -property was at his discretion before & after the sale

 -He could sell & give according to his own determination

 -Deception despite discretion

 -Gain earthly favor while maintaining earthly treasure

 -A quick con that doesn’t really hurt anyone

 -You have not lied to men, but to God

 -A failure to realize the present holiness of God who shows grace

 -Hearing these words, Ananias fell down & breathed his last

***7****Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.****8****For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.* **Galatians 6:7-8**

 -Do not be deceived into discounting the Lord’s Holiness

 -God is gracious but not mocked, we will reap what we sow -Ananias sowed to the flesh without thought to the Holiness of God

**The Continuing Tragedy of Self-Delusion** (v. 7-10)

***7****Now there elapsed an interval of about three hours, and his wife came in, not knowing what had happened.****8****And Peter responded to her, “Tell me whether you sold the land for such and such a price?” And she said, “Yes, that was the price.”****9****Then Peter said to her, “Why is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out as well.”****10****And immediately she fell at his feet and breathed her last, and the young men came in and found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband.*

-Sapphira Puts the Spirit of the Lord to the Test as well

 -Entering at a later time, she upholds the deception

 -As she joined her husband in deception, she joins him in his demise

 -The wrong questions and the right question

 -Speculation to try to determine their situation

 -Introspection to examine my own heart

 -Am I living as if God does not see?

 -Am I fooling others & thinking God is fooled?

**The Response of the Church**

***11****And great fear came over the whole church, and over all who heard of these things.* (Compare v. 5b)

 *So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your*

 *Salvation with fear and trembling* **-Philippians 2:12**

-the out-working of what God has worked within

 -Do not discount the holiness of a gracious God

***26****For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,****27****but a terrifying expectation of
judgment and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries…****31****It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

 *-* **Hebrews 10:26-27, 31**