

Series: God's Life-Changing Truth – Part 5

Acts 5:1-11 ESV

Is One Lie a Big Deal?

Wednesday, March 4 at 11:00 & 7:00

Third Wednesday of Lent – 2015

During Lent: Wednesday Services at 11 & 7; Meals at 12 & 6

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: In part 4 of our series we asked this question: Does God Always Accept Our Good Intentions? Through the accounts of Adam and Eve, Peter, and, Uzzah, we were *easily* able to answer the question with a “no!” We also heard of King David’s response to Uzzah’s death, he “was afraid of God that day...” (1Ch 13:12 ESV)

This is today’s question: Is One Lie a Big Deal? In the end you will easily be able to give the right answer. We now move into Acts chapter 5; little time had passed since Jesus’ ascension and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The New Testament Church was still *new* and *becoming established*.

1. **The Situation:** ¹ ...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.

a. Why did they sell and give? In Acts chapter 2 the Bible tells us **how much the new believers loved each other**; it says that ⁴⁴ “all who believed were together and had all things in common. ⁴⁵ And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.” (ESV) Also in Acts chapter 4 the

Bible records: ³² “no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common... ³⁴ There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold ³⁵ and laid it at the apostles’ feet...” (ESV)

- b. Did you notice any problem with Ananias and Sapphira? They sold property and gave part of the money to the apostle Peter – *to pass on to those in need*. God had blessed Ananias and Sapphira with the property, so they had the right to keep it or sell it; they also had the right to keep **some, most** or **all** of the money they had received. Thus, so far, no problem.
2. **The Realities:** 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 men but to God.”
// So he gave the impression of all, but gave only part.
- a. Who is Satan? Jesus said: “there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for **he is a liar and the father of lies.**” (John 8:44 ESV)
- b. Lying: How bad is lying? As bad as **witchcraft**, or **sexual immorality**, or **murder**? Jesus said: ⁸ “...as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually

immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, **and all liars**, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur..." (Rev. 21 ESV) We have all sinned, so let us repent – *be sorry and believe in Jesus!*

- c. Give the Holy Spirit His due: Some hold ▶the Father the highest, ▶the Son a little lower, and ▶the Holy Spirit even lower. Are such people correct? No! Peter accused Ananias of lying to the Holy Spirit; then he said: "You have not lied to men **but to God.**" So we agree with the **Athanasian Creed**: "...the Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God; and yet they are not three Gods, but one God."
3. **The Results**: 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.** // So he lied; was that a big deal? **Yes!** Lying is sin, and sin leads to death – *sometimes immediately!* Did you note the response? "...great fear came upon all who heard of it." Fear of God, *thus reverence for God*, is a blessing from God (Deut. 6:24; Mt. 10:28).
4. **The Accomplice**: 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."** // Peter was wise; if he had told her what had happened to Ananias, he never would have gotten the truth from her, so he gave her an opportunity to ⇒*come clean* **or** ⇒*to follow in her husband's lying ways*. Unfortunately she followed : (

5. **The Results**: ⁹ **But Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together [you and your husband] 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.**
- a. God knows everything: You can fool all of the people some of the time and some of the people all of the time, but you can't fool God! The Bible says: "...the LORD searches all hearts, and understands every intent of the thoughts." (1Ch 28:9 NAS) It also says that "...no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account." (Heb. 4:13 ESV) God knows everything!
- b. A powerful example: God could have said: If you lie, *you will die!* But most would not have taken God seriously. So He made an example out of Ananias and Sapphira, which had this result: "...great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard of these things."

Conclusion: Today, *as many have lost their fear of God*, let us †reverence Him, †trust Him, and †love Him above all people and all things; *He has saved us!* **Amen!**