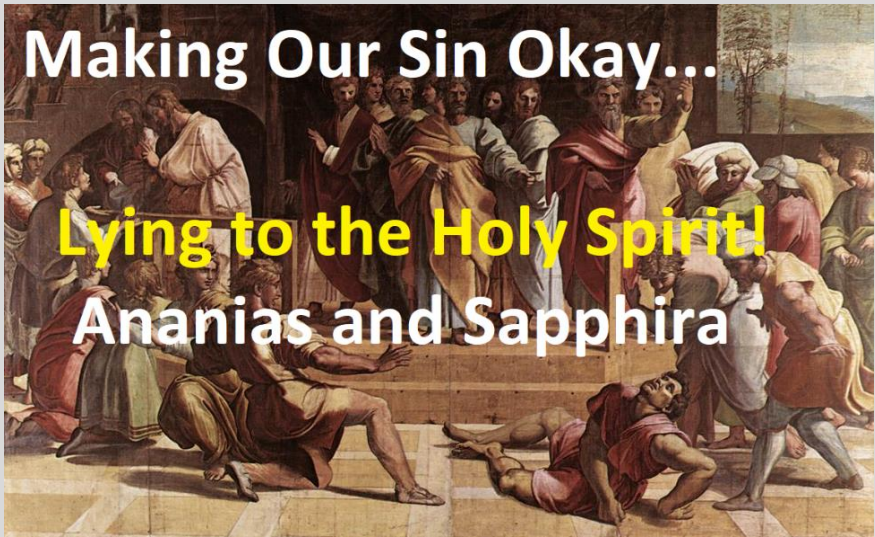


Text: Acts 5:1-11 NAU (New American Standard, 1995 Version)



Making Our Sin Okay...

Lying to the Holy Spirit!

Ananias and Sapphira

Wednesday, March 10 at 11:00 & 7:00

Fourth Wednesday in Lent – 2021

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: God has blessed each one of us with many possessions. How should we respond? The Bible says that we should thank and honor God by giving at least 10% for the work of His kingdom.

In the Early Church, the Bible records that a man “**who owned a tract of land, sold it and brought the money and laid it at the apostles’ feet**” (Acts 4:37 NAU). He gave 100%. The Bible teaches: When we give more, *God gives us more!*

The land sale and donation, *as recorded in Acts 4*, most likely encouraged the actions of Ananias and Sapphira, *in chapter 5*. It could have been **wonderful**, *but it turned out horrible!*

- Situation:** ¹ ...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. // With what the Bible says so far, *it sounds fine*, but this was the problem: When they gave their donation to the apostles, they **said** or **implied** that it was the FULL AMOUNT of the sale. Yes, their donation was generous, *but they lied!* What about us: Have we ever said we gave a tithe – when we only gave 8%? And since 8% is generous in the eyes of the world, does that make lying okay?

2. **First Lie:** 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.
- a. Who was the source of the lie? Satan; Peter told Ananias that *Satan filled his heart!* And what does the Bible say about the connection between *the heart* and *the mouth*? The mouth speaks from that which fills the heart (Luke 6:45).
- b. To whom did Ananias lie? He gave the money to the apostles, *and Peter is the one who spoke to Ananias*, but he lied “**to the Holy Spirit.**” And who is the Holy Spirit? Peter said, “You have not lied to men but to **God.**” All lying is against God; however, there seems to be a significant difference between **lying to God’s called representatives** versus **lying to others**. Since such men are called to extend and withhold God’s forgiveness, *lying to them is lying to God!*

- c. Why was the penalty so harsh? In other words, we have all lied, *and yet we are all still alive*. So why did immediate death come upon Ananias?
- i. Keep in mind that the NT Church was new: Recently
 - ✦ Jesus died, was raised, and ascended;
 - ✦ Jesus poured out the Holy Spirit;
 - ✦ many in Jerusalem were being brought to faith;
 - ✦ the Church was growing; and
 - ✦ the believers were united!
 - ii. Then we come to the sin of Ananias and Sapphira: Their sin was ***the first deliberate sin recorded in the history of the NT Church***. Therefore, *to strongly discourage others from doing the same*, God took radical action!

3. **Second Lie:** ⁷ Now there elapsed an interval of about three hours, and his wife came in, not knowing what had happened [*Where is my husband?*]. 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. // Sin is never good, *but multiple sins are worse*. Think about lying... When we tell a first lie, *and someone questions its truthfulness*, that is a **key moment**; ✦ we can cover the first lie with a second lie **OR** ✦ we can confess the first lie.

a. With a second lie, we push God further away 😞!

b. When we confess the first lie – thus ▶admitting it, ▶being sorry for it, and ▶looking to Jesus in faith, then *we have God's gifts of forgiveness and peace*😊! What should we do? ▶Push God away OR ▶receive His precious gifts!

4. **Fear:** ¹¹ **And great fear** [*alarm, fright*] **came over the whole church, and over all who heard of these things.** // The people reasoned: Ananias lied, *then died*; Sapphira lied, *then died*. These are some good conclusions:

- a. Sin is a serious matter!
- b. I have lied; I should have died!
- c. I am sorry; I don't want to lie again or sin again!
- d. I am thankful for God's forgiveness through the finished work of my Lord Jesus Christ!

Conclusion:

- **Truth** – “the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23 NAS).
- **Relevance** – We continue to live – *because of God's mercy (holding back the bad we DO deserve)!*
- **Inspiration** – We are forgiven – *because of God's grace (giving us the good we DO NOT deserve)!*

Let Us Pray: Dear F, S, and HS! TYSM for Your grace and mercy to us! Please ▶assure us that we are forgiven, ▶fill us with thanksgiving, and ▶help us to go and sin no more!