

Focus: God will not be mocked. His purity will be upheld in His people and through His church.

Background & Introduction: Modern scholars are offended by the account. If their punishment shocks us maybe we don't tremble in fear and awe at the holiness of God.

I. THE CHURCH BLESSED (Great grace was upon them all)

A. A True Kingdom Community

1. Mutual Service
2. Mutual Sacrifice
3. Mutual Blessing

B. Not a Kingdom Commune

1. Private property maintained
2. No physical "separation" from the culture/society

C. The church "ideal": Barnabas!

1. *Generosity* –
 - sold – property
 - brought – money
 - placed – at feet of the Apostles
2. *Humility* – gave out of heart of service, loving others
3. *Encouragement* – given to the believers/Apostles
4. *A Good Reputuation*

II. THE CHURCH THREATENED

A. The Church "For Real": Ananias & Sapphira.

1. Ananias – does exact same thing as Barnabas – almost!
 - a. Motive: *Pride!*
 - b. Outcome? Not Affirmation – but Condemnation!

B. A Serious Threat!

1. The sins of Achan and Ananias – tied together.
 - a. Linguistically "broke faith/acted unfaithfully" – "kept back"
 - b. Biblically/Theologically-
 - Occur at crucial points in the History of redemption –
 - Clear message - God is Holy and will be treated as Holy.
2. Achan's Sin – Deceit – Defiance – Defilement
 - a. Sought to **deceive** God (1 Chronicles 28:9)
 - b. **Defies** The Holiness of God
 - c. **Defiles** the whole nation of Israel (Joshua 6:18)
3. Achan's Judgment? He is treated as part of the devoted things.
4. Ananias's sin – To be *honored* like Barnabas.

- a. **Deceit** – Lying to the Holy Spirit
- b. **Defying** God’s holiness. FAILS TO SEE REALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT’S INDWELLING PRESENCE –1 Cor.3:16,17
- c. **Defiles** the church – at its inception.

C. A Dangerous Decision –

- No one will know!!
- I can have it all – the honor of one thought generous, while I keep the rewards.

III. THE CHURCH PROTECTED/PRESERVED(?)

A. He will purify his church

1. Judgment upon Ananias - The deceiver is removed.

- Preserving the purity of the body of Christ
- UPHOLDING GLORY, HONOR, PURITY, HOLINESS OF GOD!

2. Judgment upon Sapphira

- she has chance to tell the truth – and doesn’t.

B. He will be feared – for He is Holy!

- HE WILL PRESERVE HIS NAME AS HOLY – HE WILL REMAIN PURE/UNSTAINED!

- **Deep joy and peace resides alongside fearful awe and respect!**

IV. THE CHURCH TODAY – IDEAL OR REAL?

A. Gravity of the sin – Grasp the danger!

- Lying *destroys* fellowship, trust, open & honest community. EX. – Caught in lie with your parents – how hard is it to rebuild trust? *Very!!*
- Lying begets lying – and liars surround themselves with liars.

B. Sin of “spiritual deception” is a dangerous thing – NOTE: Biblical Discipline seeks to rescue the offender, protect the body of Christ, and uphold the honor, purity and glory of Christ.

C. Maintaining a clear conscience!! - Strive to keep a clear conscience -Before God - Before men?

Therefore:

1. Look carefully and biblically at your life.
2. Lay the results before the Lord – asking Him to remove old habits and give you truly godly ones.
3. Covenant with the Lord that with His help you will consciously turn from sinful ways and repent *immediately* from any failures in this area.
4. Pray for the fruit of great grace to be upon us as we
 - drink in the fellowship of the body
 - sit under the instruction and power of the Word of God
 - seek to honor the savior with the goods and material blessings that are ours