



9 | ACTS 5:1-11

THE DANGER OF SPIRITUAL PRETENSE

It's not all about you. The Christian life is all about Jesus.

Outline

1. **THE ROOT OF SPIRITUAL PRETENSE: PRIDE (5:1-4)**
The Humility of Barnabas
The Harm of Doublemindedness
2. **THE SOURCE OF SPIRITUAL PRETENSE: SATAN (5:3)**
3. **THE JUDGMENT OF SPIRITUAL PRETENSE: DISCIPLINE (5:5-10)**
Our Judgment as Sons in This Life
Our Judgment as Sinners at the Cross
Our Judgment as Servants
My Mother's Sin unto Death
4. **THE DEFEAT OF SPIRITUAL PRETENSE: WORSHIP (5:11)**

Call to Worship

Clap your hands, all peoples! Shout to God with loud songs of joy!
² For the Lord, the Most High, is to be feared, a great king over all the earth. —Psalm 47:1-2

Songs

Living Hope
Cornerstone
In Christ Alone
Turn Your Eyes
Bow the Knee

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WELCOME: We are glad you are here! Be sure to grab a Welcome Packet from the Welcome Center if you are visiting with us.

GIVING: You can still give over Zelle through your bank with no fees.

Use secretary@livinghopechurch.net.

We also have a collection box on the Welcome Center

This is a promise from the Lord. “Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. **Test me in this,**” says the Lord Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.” – Malachi 3:10

Life Group: This week, 7pm. Wed and Thurs.

New Member Candidates: Michelle Flage and Steve Miller

Farewell Fellowship: for Pastor Garcia, May 16 after the service. We are asking you to bring a Spanish dish and a side or dessert.

MEN’S BREAKFAST: Calling all men and boys! Come join us for Men’s Breakfast on Saturday, April 17 at 8 AM for an encouraging time in the Word, prayer, and fellowship. Breakfast will be provided, so come hungry!

Legacy Kids: We are excited to announce that we will be starting Legacy Kids back up this coming Wednesday, March 17 at 7 PM. We will meet on Prayer Meeting weeks in the children’s ministry room. Legacy Kids is for children from 4 years old to 5th grade. We will be having lots of fun, and most importantly, learning the Scriptures! Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions.

Testimonies and Baptisms: We will be having testimonies and baptisms again in June. If you are a believer but have not yet been baptized, we as elders encourage you to be baptized. If you are looking for church membership, please let one of the pastors or elders know. We will be having a Membership class as well in the coming weeks.

Baby Dedications: April 18

PASTORAL CANDIDATE FOR SPANISH MINISTRY: Bro. Jose Salgado is our pastoral candidate for our Spanish ministry. Please pray for him as he goes through the candidate process. He will be preaching for a joint service on Sunday, June 6. He will be taking over the preaching duties from Pastor Garcia. We will also be having a Q and A with him as a congregation, date and time TBD.

Introduction

We continue our series in the book of Acts called “Life on Life Discipleship.” Our title this morning is: “The Danger of Spiritual Pretense”.

Some of the most miserable times in our lives are when we start focusing on ourselves. We were not made to think about ourselves as the center of the universe. We are called to behold the glory of God and be amazed. Behold our God! The story of Ananias and Saphira is really a story of selfishness. It might seem a bit over the top to us, but God acts in certain ways when he wants to do a great work. **This is a very special time of the church’s growth,** and these two believers’ selfishness was getting in the way. God would not have a lukewarm church. In the previous chapter (Acts 4), we learn about an earth-shaking prayer meeting. In Acts 5, we find the story of two believers who are chastened by God and brought home far too early. The point of today is simple: This life is not about you. When you focus on yourself you get misery, chastening, and at times, even death. **Self-focus for the Christian is like drinking poison.** It’s dangerous.

We must respect Luke as a historian. He doesn't ignore the faults of the early church. This is a reminder that even in the most Spirit-filled congregations, the evil one is at work. Every gospel-preaching church will face opposition from the outside (4:1-31), and this story teaches how sinful actions create opposition on the inside, too (5:1-11).¹

Here is a story that is similar to other frightening stories in the Bible where God strikes people dead. We read about the story of **Achan** and his family, when he broke the command of God, and stole the Babylonian garment, the silver and the gold (Josh 7). He had hidden these things in his tent, and he brought his family in on it. What did God do? Before we answer that, I want to consider that **Achan was likely a believer**. He glorified God with his confession of faith before he was put to death. But God still allowed the ground to swallow up Achan, his dear wife, and precious children, and all their property.

Another story comes to mind: that of **Uzzah** (1 Chr 13:9-12). Here he is, carefully transporting the ark of the covenant, and the cart shakes, the ark begins to topple, and Uzzah steadies the cart just in time. And for that, God takes Uzzah home.

God had decreed that if a Kohathite priest—the only ones permitted to transport the ark—**merely glanced at the ark** in the Holy of Holies for an instant that he would die. Not only was Uzzah forbidden to touch the ark, but he was also forbidden even to look at it. He touched it anyway. He stretched out his hand and placed it squarely on the ark, steadying it in place lest it fall to the ground. An act of holy heroism? No! It was an act of arrogance, a sin of presumption. R.C. Sproul give an enlightening conclusion: “**Uzzah assumed that his hand was less polluted than the earth.**”² God took this dear brother home.

And then in Acts 5, Luke records the sad story of Ananias, and his wife Sapphira, also committed acts worthy for God to take them home. They were willingly hypocritical. I believe they were saved people. They knew the Lord. But after having such light and knowledge of the Lord, witnessing miracles, possibly having been taught by the Lord in his life and in his resurrection ministry, they had a greater standard of accountability. “To whom much is given, much is required” (Lk 12:48).

They lie about their church offering. Christians have lied before. We believe in 1 John 1:9, that if we confess and forsake our sin, we will be restored to fellowship with the Lord. We see these three stories together and point out, that so far as we can tell, each of these individuals was “a believer.” That is, they were not in the same category as the heathen, who are ignorant of God, or kings or philosophers, who in the arrogance of their unbelief set themselves against God. These people were in the fellowship of God's family and were all engaged in Christian worship or service. Moreover, they were struck dead for what, to us at least, seem to be—what are not, but what we might see as—*trivial* offenses. We must conclude that **God will discipline those he loves** (Heb 12:6). We also conclude that when we see God's judgment in a believer's life, it is the **judgment of correction for that believer and the church at large**, as the apostle Peter told us.

For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? —1 Peter 4:7

Another thing we notice is that when we put these stories together, we discover that in each instance, **it was a time of important new beginnings for God's people**. This may explain some of the severity of the correction. Something **new was being inaugurated**; a

¹ Merida. *Acts*, 87.

² R. C. Sproul, *The Holiness of God* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1993), 160–164.

new era was about to come in. It would seem that God established himself as the center of glory and honor at the beginning of these special times of revealing himself.³ So as we read this text, I want you to get used to saying something to yourself.

Key thought: **“It’s not about me! It’s about Jesus!”** A life focused on self is a life of misery. A life focused on Christ is a life of joy and happiness.

Ananias and Sapphira made their gift to the church not about Jesus, but about themselves, and as we are going to see that’s a dangerous thing. The devil had tried intimidation through **persecution**. Intimidation only drove the church to her knees and caused them to have greater power. And so now, the devil decides, “Well, if I cannot bombard the church from the **outside**, I will infiltrate, and I will work from the **inside**. **If I cannot conquer the church, I will corrupt the church**, and thereby I will conquer the church.” All the devil has to do to weaken and paralyze the church is to get your eyes off Jesus.

Now, the church of the Lord Jesus Christ has always been hurt far more **her own corruption and loss of focus** than by **persecution**. Persecution only causes the church to grow. Inward corruption causes the church to disintegrate. At the dawn of this new era of grace for the world, the Holy Spirit brings great warning to his people. He did it when his people crossed the Jordan, and **Achan** died. He did it in the time of David, where not long after David’s son Solomon would build the Temple in Jerusalem, and **Uzzah touched** the ark and died. Now he does it again when the church is born. What does Satan use to destroy us? Our own pride. He wants to make us think that everything, even the Christian life, is about us, and not about Jesus. The enemy wants to misdirect our focus to ourselves and breed anger, anxiety, despair, and foolish thinking, which all come from the pride of self-focus.

1. THE **ROOT** OF SPIRITUAL PRETENSE: PRIDE (5:1-4)

Acts 5:1-4 | But 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. 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 man but to God.”

Pride says, “It’s all about me.” That’s why we give ourselves to anger or anxiety or despair. That’s why sometimes we don’t listen. We can even deceive ourselves in our prideful blindness as these two believers did. Be afraid of your own pride. Be very afraid. This didn’t have to happen.

The Humility of Barnabas

We see how the focus got off of Jesus. It was the **pride of jealousy** that welled up in the hearts of Ananias and Sapphira. There was a man named **Barnabas** who made a great

³ James Montgomery Boice, *Acts: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1997), 95.

gift to the church, and he didn't do it to show off, but he did it because **God touched his heart**. Ananias and Sapphira saw how praise was given to them, and Ananias and Sapphira were jealous. **They wanted the attention**. Just imagine, they got their focus off of Jesus and onto themselves. We are all too good at that. When start feeling upset because we are not getting our way, or **we really want something, even a good thing, and we turn it into something we must have**, then pride enters in. **Anything you are willing to sin to get is an idol**. Examine your life. Is there anything you are anxious about? Fear and anxiety are atheism. You've gone too far. You want something too much. Idolatry always brings misery.

Ananias and Sapphira sold their property, thinking that nobody knew how much they got for it, and brought the money to the church, and pretended that they were giving every cent that they received for that property to the treasurer of the church. And of course, they were **pretending**. **They were seeking happiness in something outside the glory of God**. They had not given it all; they had kept back part of it secretly. They were living a life of pretense, and they were lying to the Holy Spirit.

Ananias and Sapphira appeared to be Christians, and I believe they were, as did St. Augustine and Alexander Maclaren and others. We ourselves are terribly susceptible to their sin, a spiritual error to which believers still fall. Their correction was a "sanctifying discipline" for the church, to use Puritan Jeremy Taylor's words.⁴ **What was so horrible that the Holy Spirit had to take the lives of two of his children?**

The gravity was a warning about the root of their sin, which was **pride**. **Ananias and Sapphira wanted to bask in the glow of Barnabas, instead of Jesus**. They were jealous to be treated like Barnabas instead of jealous for their relationship with the Holy Spirit. Pride made them a sitting duck for the devil, and pride will do the same thing to you or to me. Peter says:

Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." —1 Peter 5:5

The reason that you need to be clothed with humility is:

Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ⁹ Resist him, firm in your faith. —1 Peter 5:8-9

The devil is after you. Jonathan Edwards said many years ago:

Nothing will put you further out of the devil's reach than genuine humility.⁵ —Jonathan Edwards

But when you become proud, you are ripe for Satan's attack. So, the root of the sin of Ananias and Sapphira was pride. The fruit of their sin was pretense. What is pretense? It's when you act like the Spirit is moving you when he's not. It's trying to live the life of the Spirit in the flesh. We can't put on the Spirit's power in the strength of the flesh. Don't pretend to be Spirit-filled if you are not.

What should we do then? If you are not Spirit-filled, let people know so they can pray for you. Humble yourself by letting elders and others know and ask for prayer that you might filled with the fullness of the Spirit. It may be that there is some sin hidden from your

⁴ R. Kent Hughes, *Acts: The Church Afire*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1996), 76. Jeremy Taylor lived from 1613-1667.

⁵ Jonathan Edwards. *Works, Volume 1* (London: Childs & Son Publishers, 1839), 399.

understanding that is holding you back. Or it may be a stronghold you have tried to defeat, but it is still holding you back. God wants to unite the church behind you so Satan will flee from you. We can't do this alone. We must humble ourselves so the Lord will exalt and use us.

Now, I want to make something very clear. **Their sin was not refusing to give.** They gave. **Their sin was making it about themselves.**

Nor was their sin refusing to give all of it. God had not commanded nor demanded that they give all of it. Their sin was the sin of pretense, saying that they had given all, when they had given all. That's where the sin was. It's very clear.

The Harm of Doublemindedness

By way of application, let me say that all believers who get their focus on themselves are immature and doubleminded. James tells us about doublemindedness. James says the one with half-way faith "is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind" (Jas 1:6). He goes on to say:

A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways. —James 1:8

Doublemindedness is a sign of serious immaturity. One day you love Jesus, the next you love the world. You can't have one foot in the world and one foot with Jesus.

You've got to keep your eyes on Jesus. The moment you start thinking everything is about you, then anger and anxiety and foolishness open the door to Satan to take a foothold.

2. THE SOURCE OF SPIRITUAL PRETENSE: SATAN (5:3)

What was the source of this sin? It was Satan.

Acts 5:3 | 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?"

Satan is the father of lies and the author of pride. It was Satan who put it into their heart. It was the devil who whispered, "Tell them you're giving it all. Tell them you're giving everything." Whenever we give way to sin of any kind in our lives, Satan takes a seat at your heart to counsel you. Ephesians

Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷ and give no opportunity to the devil. —Ephesians 4:26-27

Jesus said,

[Satan] is a liar and the father of lies. —John 8:44

The devil wants you to think that everything is all about you. He knows all about you and how to push your buttons.

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able

to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. —
Ephesians 6:12-13

When you tell a lie—big lie, little lie, white lie, technicolor lie, makes no difference—when you tell a lie, you are acting like the devil. That’s the reason Satan gets a seat at our hearts: we give him authority over us, even though Christ has purchased our freedom. We end up going back to Doubting Castle or to Prideful Palace or to Escape Island. We are no match for Satan, but I do know this:

Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. —*1 John 4:4, KJV*

But if you give in to pride, anxiety or anger, then you will be acting in pretense and doublemindedness. Don’t let Satan tempt you to play act. You can’t act holy if you are really focused on yourself. Be humble if you are sinning. Let people know if you are caught in sin. You want revival? Don’t play act.

Satan filled the hearts of Ananias and Sapphira. He didn’t possess them. That’s impossible for a Christian. **But they gave him a seat at the table of their hearts to counsel them.** He came in through the door of pride. But Satan can counsel a Christian through the door of anger or fear and anxiety. Satan comes through despair. Satan comes through fleshly pleasure. He comes through worldly thinking. How do you stop Satan from tempting you? Close all those doors. He comes through your emotions and your worldly desires. Die to material things. Die to the entertainment of media. Die to fear. Die to love for comfort and your reputation, and pleasing people. Live for God. You cannot have two masters.

Don’t let Satan fill your heart. Resist him. I have to keep my heart with all diligence, for out of my heart are the issues of life. Don’t lie to yourself and the Holy Spirit and try to paint yourself more spiritual or more generous than you are. The Spirit knows your heart. Don’t lie to him.

3. THE JUDGMENT OF SPIRITUAL PRETENSE: DISCIPLINE (5:5-10)

Now we all understand the reality of our guilt. That without Christ we deserve eternal hell.

The wages of sin is death, and the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. —*Romans 6:23*

But there is a judgment that has nothing to do with condemnation, because for the Christian, our guilt is completely removed.

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. —*Romans 8:1*

How could there be? Jesus paid it all! But there is a judgment of discipline. There is correction. As we said before, **God will discipline those he loves** (Heb 12:6). When we see God’s judgment in a believer’s life, it is the **judgment of correction for that believer and the church at large**, as the apostle Peter told us.

For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God? —1 Peter 4:7

That is, God says, my child that's enough, and he may send sickness or trials. Not that everyone who is sick or in trials is sinning. Remember Job. You may be living righteously and still in terrible sickness. But there is a sickness for the erring saint. There is even death for the erring saint that won't repent. Remember what Paul told the Corinthians.

Anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. ³⁰ That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. —1 Corinthians 11:29-30

God's people weren't taking the Lord's communion table seriously, so God made some of them sick, and some died as a result and went home early. If you decide you're going to just slide along, and you don't care if you are in the Lord's active use for his kingdom, he could make you sick, or you could die, like Ananias and Sapphira. God wants us all to know that it's dangerous to think the Christian life is all about you. **To pretend you are more spiritual than you are when you are not is dangerous for the Christian.** It was dangerous for Ananias.

Acts 5:5-6 | When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and breathed his last. And great fear came upon all who heard of it. ⁶The young men rose and wrapped him up and carried him out and buried him.

Ananias was stricken dead. It was a severe judgment. God took him home. Ananias falls down, and the Bible says that the young men came in, and bound him up, and carried him out, and buried him. **Later on, the same thing happened to Sapphira.**

Acts 5:7-10 | After an interval of about three hours his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. ⁸And Peter said to her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for so much." And she said, "Yes, for so much." ⁹But Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together 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." ¹⁰Immediately 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.

We read here that Sapphira came in about three hours later. I wonder why? I wonder if it was to make a grand entrance, so everybody could see her as she came forward. The same thing happened to Sapphira that had happened to her husband. God immediately took her life and took her home.

We wonder, were Ananias and Sapphira really Christians? As I said, I think they were. One of the reasons I think they were is because of this judgment. You see, God does not judge the unsaved this way; they get their judgment at the Great White Throne—but God does deal sometimes very seriously with his own children during their lives.

Our Judgment as Sons in This Life

There is a judgment that is not condemnation but correction that we all go through in this life. Remember what the Lord said in John 15.

Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. —*John 15:2*

Hebrews 12 says that whom the Father loves he chastens and disciplines every son whom he may receive—whom he may receive. And I believe that this was the Father's judgment, the scourging upon Ananias and Sapphira.

My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. ⁶ For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives. ⁷ It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? ⁸ If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. —*Hebrews 12:6-8*

God does correct his children. That kind of loving judgment of correction has to begin at the house of God. Remember the judgment of our sins took place at the cross.

Our Judgment as Sinners at the Cross

There's the judgment that we receive as a sinner that comes at the cross. Jesus took our judgment for us as sinners—that's the cross.

He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. —*1 Peter 2:24*

Our Judgment as Servants

There's another judgment we should consider, and that is a judgment as servants. It's not a judgment of condemnation, but a judgment of commendation. That's at the judgment seat of Christ. And we're going to receive a reward for the things that we've done or suffer loss for the way that we've failed. We're not saved by works, but we will be rewarded for our fruit.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil. —*2 Corinthians 5:10*

The Bible says at the Judgment Seat of Christ, we as Christians will never be judged for our sin, but we will be judged for the quality of our fruit.

For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹² Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— ¹³ each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. ¹⁴ If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a

reward. ¹⁵ If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire. —1 Corinthians 3:11-15

I want my fruit and my rewards to be great at the tribunal of Christ. Whatever crown I get, I want to cast it before his feet. He is worthy!

A Severe Judgment

Ananias and Sapphira were children of God, but they had committed the sin of pretense, and there was a very severe judgment. But, you say, “Can it be that severe?” Yes. We already saw how God judged the Corinthian believers when they were irreverent with the Lord’s table. Some of them got sick. Others died. God’s discipline can be so severe that God will call you home early.

We also read 1 Corinthians 5, talking about a man who was in the church, and the context makes it clear that he was a brother, but he was committing a sin of sexual immorality, and Paul said:

Deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. —1 Corinthians 5:5

If a believer decides to go on sinning and not listen to the brothers and sisters and the elders in the church, we are to give that one over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh. That’s Job like trials in order for that person to get so desperate, that as a true believer he or she turns back to God.

Whom the Lord loves, he chastens. I believe the Lord loved Ananias and Sapphira, and I believe that Ananias and Sapphira, like many in this building, loved the Lord, but what they committed the sin of pretending a devotion for Jesus that they really did not have, and God brought a very severe judgment. I believe I have seen it happen.

There is a sin unto death. —1 John 5:16

One likely interpretation of this is that the **sin leading to death** refers to a Christian’s sin that is so serious that God takes the life of the one committing it.⁶

My Mother’s Sin unto Death

My own mother made a profession of faith in her last couple of years on earth. I believe she came to know the Lord. I have two of her Bibles and they are scrawled through with notes on repentance and faith in Christ. I believe my mother, who was not a good mother to me, came to know Christ. I remember going to church with her for several months. And I think my mom, misguided, wanted to please the Lord, but **she married an unsaved man**. She didn’t want to live in sin with men. But she got marriage on her mind. She stopped attending church. I came to know the Lord around that time, and I remember she was now dating a man and was thinking about marriage. I think the Lord said to my mom, “Barbara, I’ve saved you. You’d better wait for the right man, a man the knows and loves me.” And the man she married was a good man, but he wasn’t a saved man. Two weeks after my mother married this man, my mother died of a massive heart attack. God called her home. She was 49 years old. Now why would God do something like that? The wicked he allows to go on, but the righteous, he will call home if they want to go against the Holy Spirit in their lives. Why?

⁶ John MacArthur, *1, 2, 3 John*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2007), 205.

This kind of judgment is a saving judgment. It's merciful. As Paul said, we are to: "Deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (1 Cor 5:5).

Now what happens when we see God really working on his church and disciplining us? There is a cleansing, a purifying, a worship, indeed a revival!

4. THE **DEFEAT** OF SPIRITUAL PRETENSE: WORSHIP (5:11)

Acts 5:11 | And great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard of these things.

The forward movement of God is always marked by the worship of God by the saints, and the evangelism and conversion of sinners.

Why would the Lord take any believer home ahead of time? Because **there is something more dangerous than physical disease and plague**. There is the **dryness waywardness of his people**. There is the waywardness of professing Christians who have no effect on the culture. Instead, the culture is having an effect on his church. And the Spirit will not have it. We are called to pray that God will do as he promised and send the reviving Holy Spirit. Who will pray for the fullness of the Spirit? Are you ready for STREAMS IN THE DESERT?

I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants. ⁴They shall spring up among the grass like willows by flowing streams. —*Isaiah 44:3-4*

God wants his people to worship him. That's why he'd take his children home early. He loves them too much to leave them in dryness. And when he is ready to do a new work, he may bring hardship and sickness, and even death.

Conclusion

God would much rather pour out the effect of his presence from the heavens. When we ask God to rend the heavens and come down (Isa 64:1), we are not saying God is less than omnipresent. We are asking for the interaction of his presence to be felt among men and women. We are asking him to personally deal with his people. That's what we want more than we want breath. May it be so, in the name of Jesus!

New Member Candidates: Michelle Flage and Steve Miller