

# Abandon in Spirit and Truth

Acts 4:1-11

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Acts 5:1-11 prompts us to ponder about the nature of God, the work of Christ, the power of the Holy Spirit, the purpose of the church, and the essence of the Christian life. The Christian life is the ABANDONed life.

## Acts 5:1-11 - A Warning: Hypocrisy & Holiness Don't Mix

### **1. The Standard of Christ's demand**

V.4a - At the heart of Ananias' scheme was the prospect of being honoured and loved by others. His heart had been seduced with the prospect of fame and status. Peter rebuked Ananias for not guarding his heart (v. 3, 4b). It is the heart that Jesus requires and demands. The pursuit of the ABANDONed life is for our Saviour - no one else. To woo Him, to elicit is pleasure, to make Him great. Christ demands our whole hearts above our wild gestures. We need to guard our hearts! Do not let Satan fill your heart with deception but abide in Christ and remain in His love. The standard of Christ's demand is wholeheartedness. Jesus wants your heart and to be your everything.

### **2. The Severity of Christ's displeasure**

The story of Achan (Josh. 7) serves as a backdrop to what happened to Ananias and Sapphira. Ananias and Sapphira's deception would have brought defeat and death into the Israelite congregation, the same way Achan's deception did. For the same reason Achan was put to death, Ananias and Sapphira perished because they had violated Christ's character, holy Word, and sanctity of God's people among whom Christ's holy presence abides. Hypocrisy and holiness do not mix. Hypocrisy invites judgement. What happened to Ananias and Sapphira was a kind of discipline meant to preserve the

Church's faith in Jesus (1 Cor. 11:32). Hypocrisy and judgement go hand in hand. Hypocrisy attracts people by offering outcomes that people crave with the deception of only needing half the effort. Be wary of hypocrisy and spare yourself the discipline of God. Humble yourself and bring your whole heart to God; take refuge in Him (Ps. 2:12)!

### **3. The Scope of Christ's dominion**

Jesus is the holy Lord over His church. He is jealous for the zeal of His people and despises hypocrisy and deception. The dominion of Christ reaches down to our hearts. Christ blesses and flourishes those who guard their hearts but those who withhold their hearts from Him in deception, He holds to account. Jesus' dominion extends not just over the good that is done in the light, but also over the wickedness that is plotted in the dark (Luke 12:2). Not only does Christ have reign over our disobedience, He also has the authority to work even the most wicked things in our hearts for our good. He is Lord! Jesus used the fear that had aroused in the church (v. 11) to shape the church. It was not until the people knew to fear the Lord that they were ready to take on the title of *ecclesia* (the church). The fear of God is our assurance to face a life free from spiritual death. Christ's dominion goes to the extent that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us; He chose us! Even if we cling to our hypocrisy, He will put the fear of Him in us - but in a terrifying manner! Until we grasp the fear of the Lord, we will not experience the fullness of Christ's worthiness (Heb. 12:28-29). Pursue the ABANDONed life in spirit and truth, and fear the Lord!