

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MARCH 1ST, 2026 // BOOK OF ACTS

## TOGETHER (ACTS 4:32-37) OVER 5,000 UNIFIED BELIEVERS

Instead of suppressing the Church, persecution only grows it. Not only does the church grow numerically, but it grows spiritually, too. They grow in unity, they grow in generosity, and they grow in power.

- There's an amazing work that God does through His people when they focus on what **unites** them and not what **divides** them.

## NOT A FORM OF CHRISTIAN COMMUNISM

One of the first great lessons Christians learn is that everything belongs to God and we are stewards (managers) of what He's given us. Knowing this meant the early Church could be generous amid the hardships of living for Jesus in a world hostile to Him and His people.

- Living for Jesus came at a cost but with the blessings of a new forever family.

## THE CENTRAL MESSAGE

The resurrection was at the heart of the message proclaimed by the early Church. Jesus, who was crucified and buried, was resurrected and seen by eyewitnesses, including the apostles.

- **That the power of God was on them as they proclaimed Jesus fulfilled the promise Jesus gave in Acts 1:8.**

## GOD'S GRACE AT WORK

Not only was there the outward work of the Spirit as the people proclaimed Jesus, there was also an inward work among the people as they cared for one another by God's grace. Grace (when we get what we don't deserve) fuels our desire and ability to love our neighbors as ourselves.

- **Selling stuff for the good of others wasn't a burden but a blessing.**

## THE BODY CARES FOR ITSELF

Throughout the history of the Church, the people of God have ultimately looked to one another, rather than outside, to care for one another. Caring for one another within the Church takes wisdom, patience, and accountability for both those who are tasked with meeting needs and those receiving help.

- **We are blessed to be a blessing to others.**

## A GOOD EXAMPLE

Joseph, nicknamed the Son of Encouragement (Son of Prophecy), sold a field and gave the money to the church. In the OT, Levites didn't own property. By the time of Acts, many things had changed. Eusebius, an early church historian, said that Barnabas was one of the 70 in Luke 10. What we do know is that **Barnabas was a good man, loved God, and loved people.**

## SIN EXPOSED (ACTS 5:1-11)

### A POOR EXAMPLE

Contrasted with the good-hearted Barnabas, Ananias and his wife, Sapphira, were greedy liars craving the applause of men. They, too, sold a piece of property but chose to lie about the amount they were giving to the church. It seems they wanted people to assume they had given all the proceeds to the church.

- **Only God can see our hearts.**

### THE ENEMIES WE FACE

The Bible seems to indicate that Christians will face three enemies: 1) Our flesh, 2) the world, 3) Satan (demonic forces). The only constant of these three is our flesh (the parts of us that still love sin that we should be continuously putting to death). The world and the devil work to inflame our sinful natures so that we will sin against our Lord and Savior.

### SATAN FILLED HIS HEART

Being filled with the Spirit means we allow ourselves to be influenced and controlled by Him for His glory and our good. Instead of allowing the Spirit to fill him, Ananias allowed Satan to influence his pride so that he lied to the church.

- During the fast, we are reminded of the influence that we can give to **media, social media, and the agenda of the world system.**

### ANANIAS HAD A CHOICE

Peter clearly states that God had given Ananias the choice as to what to do with the proceeds from the sale. This was to be a freewill offering left up to Ananias and Sapphira.

- While we believe that the tithe (giving 10% of our income to the Lord) is biblical, we also believe that each of us is answerable to God about our stewardship of His good gifts.

### THE TRINITY (A QUICK ASIDE)

The Trinity (that there is one God eternally existing in three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit) is taught throughout the Bible. Peter says that Ananias lied to the Holy Spirit in v. 3 and that he lied to God in v. 4, indicating that the Holy Spirit is God. **We gratefully and joyfully worship God as He has revealed Himself.**

### THE CONSEQUENCES OF WILLFUL SIN

The Bible teaches that the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23), and when sin fully grows it brings death (James 1:15). Ananias "planned this thing in [his] heart" and experienced immediate death for his sin.

- While immediate death isn't a regular occurrence, **willful sin by Christians who say they love Jesus is serious to Him.**

## SIN COMPOUNDED

Brothers and sisters in Christ should join us in fighting against our flesh, the world, and Satan. We should be killing sin, not inflaming it. But Sapphira was a willful co-conspirator in her flesh with her husband and received the same fate as he did.

- While each of us is responsible for our own sin, **community is a gift from God as we fight it.**

## HE'S NOT A TAME GOD

In vs. 5 and 11, we see the deaths of these two people bring great fear over the church and over all who heard about it.

- **Great fear of God can be a great gift when it causes people to run to His mercy and grace.** The acts of God often have two opposite results, either to **gather people** to Jesus or **scatter them** from Him.

## SIGNS & WONDERS (ACTS 5:12-16) POINTERS

Signs and wonders were not the ends but the means to an end. They pointed, most importantly, to the truthfulness of the apostles' message about Jesus. They also pointed to the reality that Jesus is Lord over everything, including sickness. Finally, signs and wonders pointed to the time when Jesus would return and usher in a new age free from sickness and death.

### ALL ARE INVITED; NOT ALL WILL COME

Solomon's Colonnade was a part of the Temple complex on the eastern side. It was a gathering place for the early Church. The fear of God caused some to stay away from the group, although they had good things to say about them. Others were coming to faith in "increasing numbers."

- **We share the gospel; God does the saving.**

### GOING OUT, COMING IN

There's a rhythm to the early Church. They didn't only wait for people to show up; Peter and the others would go to the people. But as news spread of what God was doing through His Church, people would come and be healed.

- We need the same rhythm. We are to go and be the light in our community. And as we do, God will use us to bring people here.

## THE TESTIMONY OF UNITY

- That God would bring a people like us together speaks of His power to lower dividing walls and give us hearts for one another.
- **We need one another so that we will have the courage to stand, knowing we're never alone.**
- **Others need to know the joy of family.**

## FROM OWNERSHIP TO MANAGEMENT

- **As stewards, we should hold tightly to Jesus and hold on to everything else with open hands.**
- When we seek first the Kingdom of God, Jesus takes care of our needs, sometimes through the generosity of the Church.
- If we store up, God stops giving. If we give away, God keeps sending. **Don't hoard; give!**

## WE WAR AGAINST WILLFUL SIN

- The temptation to sin is real, but so is the truth that God will make a way of escape (1 Cor. 10:13).
- We can choose to sin or say no to sin.
- **We mock God and our salvation if we call ourselves Christians but engage in willful sin.**
- **At ECC, we reward confession.**
- What bad influences do we allow in our lives?

## DO WE EXPECT GREAT THINGS FROM GOD?

- While our culture's greatest idol is self, we should still expect God to do great things for His glory and our good.
- **People may not agree with our theology, but they should know we love God, we love one another, and we love our community.**
- **Are we asking God to use us so that many will come to Jesus through our going?**