

***The Next Chapter***

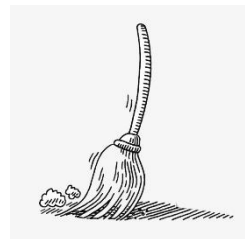
**THE GRIM TALE OF ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA**

**Acts 4:32-5:11**

Since creation God has been seeking places for His presence here on earth, places where He can show His glory and share His goodness with all who enter. The first place was the Garden of Eden. Later the tabernacle and temple became places of God's presence.

Hanging out in God's house was not a free-for-all. Our first parents and nation of Israel experienced the limits of God's hospitality when they tried to take what belonged to Him and when they brought things into God's house that He didn't like. When He was here, the Son of God cleared God's house of money-changers and marketers.

Starting in chapter 2, the book of Acts has been chronicling the visible effects that the Holy Spirit had on the people who first received Him. Acts 4:32-5:11 tells of another effect. These verses describe a house cleansing conducted by the Holy Spirit.



With these verses, Luke wanted to impress two things on his reader and the Holy Spirit wants to impress two things on us. First, with Acts 4:32-37, He shows us that *the church, as a community of God's people, has taken the place of the temple as the place of God's presence.*

- The things described in these verses –unity, generosity, boldness, power and justice – were evidence that the glory of God had moved out of the temple in Jerusalem and had taken up residence in the followers of Christ.
- These verses highlight the generosity of a few people, who sold property and gave the proceeds to the church to help the poor. Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, is singled out. He was a picture of God’s generosity hanging on the wall of God’s house. For that he was honored by the apostles with the name Barnabas, son of encouragement.

The second thing the Holy Spirit wants us to see, with Acts 5:1-11, is that *God is just as protective of the church, as the place of His presence, as He was of Eden and the temple.*

- Ananias and Sapphira wanted to share in the honor that Barnabas had received, so they mimicked him and sold a piece of property. (There was nothing wrong with that.)
- Rather than giving the entire sum of money, they withheld a portion. (There was nothing wrong with that either.)
- The sin of Ananias and Sapphira was that they presented themselves one way when in reality they were another way. By doing so they brought something into the house of God that God despises. It’s called deception.
- God is absolute truth. He cannot tolerate deception in His presence. So, when it appears, He either destroys it or mercifully withdraws His presence and His blessing until we realize, repent and return (Rev. 2:5). Here in Acts 5, He destroyed it. Ananias and Sapphira were carried out feet first.