**Transformed: A Survey of the Book of Acts**

**Week 5 (Feb. 5, 2019)**

**Helpful Background**

1.As the early Church grew in numbers, God also caused a deep sense of community and closeness to deepen as believers were “united in heart and mind”. The Church helped each other unconditionally, motivated by love and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Individuals actually practiced an “other-centered” perspective instead of a self-centered perspective.

2. The attitude and actions of Joseph (nicknamed Barnabas) demonstrated what it meant to be a follower of Jesus and a part of a Biblical community. Joseph had been transformed by his faith in Jesus, and was part of the believers living in community in Jerusalem. Joseph had been such a positive, consistent, and faithful friend, brother, and helper, that the leaders of his community named him “son of encouragement.” He no longer considered what he owned to be his own, so he was willing to sell it to help others. He sold a field, and gave the money to the apostles.

3. Ananias decided to sell some property that he had as well. Perhaps it was a good decision made out of a genuine desire to help others and to worship the Lord. But when the property was sold, Ananias simply chose to lie, to cheat, to disobey, and to intentionally try to fool the Church leaders.

4. Ananias also condemned his wife as well by involving her in this situation. In most cases in the first century, ownership of property was limited to men, and a husband and wife did not share ownership of property most of the time. By involving her in the plan, and getting her consent, Ananias made her equally culpable for this transaction for no reason other than his own interests.

5. Finally! A way for the youth of the Church to serve in a significant way! (Let’s have the young men pick up, transport, and bury the ones who die in Church!) The young can pick up and transport the dead, and make sure that the bodies are being properly treated, respected, and buried. In Jewish culture in the first century, the goal was to get the body of the person in the tomb/grave prior to sundown on the day that they had died. Then the family and friends would mourn for days afterwards.

6. God is a creative, interesting, and all-powerful God. He chooses to do things that are far beyond our understanding. He may never repeat such an event as is describe in Acts 5-1-11, but then again, He might. God loves His Church more than we can understand. He wants His Church to worship/seek Him, thrive in His grace, reach out to others, and to share the light and love of Jesus with those around us. The Holy Spirit empowers the Church to obey and live out the Great Commission and the Great Commandment, and if the Church refuses, then……

If we are NOT seeking the lost, loving the Word of God and helping people to know Christ and to make Him known, then God may need to shake us out of our lethargy.

7. In the early Church, the Holy Spirit confirmed the message and leadership of the apostles by signs, wonders, and miracles. Acts 5:12-16 is to remind readers of times during the ministry of Jesus when many sick were healed, demons were cast out, and mighty miracles that could not be explained happened. The Holy Spirit did ALL of these miracles to confirm that the good news about Jesus was true, that the apostles’ teaching could be trusted, and that God was at work affirming Jesus as the Lord.

8. But again, the religious leaders reacted badly to the growing group of followers of Jesus Christ and the demonstrations of the Holy Spirit’s power. Luke highlighted that the office of high priest and other high official offices were held at that time by members of the Sadducees. (The leadership offices would have rotated between the various parties, but the Sadducees would be particularly threatened by the followers of Jesus due to their primary teaching that there was no resurrection.) Not only had Jesus been resurrected from the dead and personally raised several people from the dead during His ministry, but Jesus had taught that He was the Resurrection and the Life. Jesus taught that the resurrection of the dead was a future reality for everyone, which was the exact opposite of the Sadducees beliefs and teachings.

9. The religious leaders again had the apostles arrested and thrown in jail for an overnight stay, with a trial set for the next day. But God sent an angel to miraculously free the apostles, to further befuddle the religious leaders.

**Review Questions**

10. (5:1-2) Who was Ananias and Sapphira? Why is it VITAL to keep this in the context of the end of chapter 4? What did Ananias do? Why is his wife’s consent mentioned? What did they decide to do?

11. (5:3-4) How did Peter respond? What did he say? What reality did Pete point out? What options did Ananias have throughout the process? What was the true sin committed by Ananias?

12. (5:5-6) So, what happened? When? Why did Ananias die? What was the response? What then happened? Why did this happen?

13. (5:7-8) How much time passed, and why is this mentioned? What important info did Sapphira NOT know when she came in? What did Peter say to Sapphira? How did she respond? Why are both the question and answer significant?

14. (5:9-11) What did Peter say? How were they testing the Spirit? What happened to Sapphira? When did it occur? Why such a sudden consequence? What was the response?

15. (4:12-16) What continued to happen in the early Church? Why were the apostles able to do such miracles? What was the purpose of the miracles? How did people respond?

16. (4:17-20) Why is it important that the leaders mentioned were Sadducees? Why were the apostles arrested again? What happened this time though? Why did God rescue them in this miraculous manner? What message was given?

17. (4:21-24) What did the apostles demonstrate by showing up at daybreak? What did they do, and how did they do it? How did the religious leaders discover the problem of an empty jail? What was the initial response?

18. (4:25-28) What “startling news” arrived to the high council? What happened? Why was caution necessary by the guards? How did the high priest first address the apostles?

19. (4:29-32) How did the apostles respond? What did Peter proclaim with boldness? How did he teach again about Jesus being Messiah, and what happened to Him? What was/is the role of every Christian? Why is obedience so important?

20. (4:33-39) How did the high council respond? Who stepped forward and what did he advise? How did he build his case, and what impact did it have on the high council?

21. (4:40-42) What did the high council decide? What did they say and do to the apostles? What’s it mean to be flogged? How did the apostles respond? What happened as a result?

**So What? (Apply)**

22. What was the response to what happened to Ananias and Sapphira in the early Church? What’s your response to it today? What actually happened?

23. In the story about Ananias and Sapphira, how did “God show up” in this situation? Why did He act? Why was the consequence so sudden and severe? Does God still show up in this way today? Why or why not?

24. What happens when humans try to build something apart from God? What happens when humans try to destroy something that God is building? What lessons can we learn for our Church from this chapter? What lessons can we learn for our personal lives?