**Acts 5 – Great Fear**

**God was working by the Holy Spirit through the apostles preaching with great power and great grace.** “with great power the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all.” Acts 4:32

**The church was unified in purpose & a spirit of giving was present among the people**

Acts 4: 32 – and the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own, but all things were common property to them

**The church provided for those who were in need as the people gave to the Lord**

Acts 4: 34 – 35 - for there was not a needy person among them, for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceed of the sales and lay them at the apostles fee, and they would be distributed to each as any had need

**Barnabas gift was an example of the giving spirit of the church**

Acts 4:36 -37 – Now Joseph, who as called Barnabas by the apostles which translated means Son of Encouragement, and who owned a tract of land, sold it and brought the money and laid it at the apostles’ feet

Barnabas gave:

1. Gave freely
2. Gave completely
3. Gave generously

**The church faced its first challenge - hypocrisy**

Acts 5:1 – 2 - But a man named Ananias with his wife Sapphira sold a piece of property and kept back some of the price for himself with his wife’s full knowledge and bringing a portion of it he laid it at the apostle’s feet.

Ananias gave:

1. Gave deceptively
2. Gave selfishly
3. Gave grudgingly
4. Gave proudly

**Peter asks the Ananias & Sapphira the hypocrites several questions**

1. Acts 5:3 – why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit
2. Acts 5:4 – Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart?
3. Acts 5:9 - Why have you agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test?

**Peter declares to Ananias the sin of hypocrisy – seeking praise from men not obeying God**

Acts 5:4 – you have not lied to men but to God

**Great fear came as God killed Ananias & Sapphira the hypocrites**

Acts 5:5 – as he heard these words, Ananias fell down and breathed his last, and great fear came over all who heart it.

Acts 5: 11 – great fear came over the whole church, and over all who heard of these things]

**God’s judgment of hypocrisy in the church is a serious matter**

1 Pet. 4:17 – for it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God, and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?

1 Tim 3:15 – I write, so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth

**The Danger of hypocrisy**

Luke 12:1 – 2 - Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy; for there is nothing covered up that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known

Hypocrisy = an actor, one behind a mask – pretender

**Christians must beware of becoming hypocrites in their spiritual lives**

1. *Hypocrisy is like leaven*
2. Leaven is hidden in the dough – Hypocrisy is hidden in the heart & hard to detect the difference between true righteousness & false righteousness

Matt. 23:25 – you clean the outside of the cup & of the dish but inside full of robbery & self - indulgence

Matt. 23:27 – you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful but inside they are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness

 Matt. 23:28 – so you too, outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness

1. Leaven is spreads in the dough – hypocrisy spreads throughout the heart of a person

 1 Tim 4:2 – by means of hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron

1. Leaven swells up the dough – hypocrisy is prideful & desires the praise of others

 Matt. 6:1 – Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them

 Matt. 6:2 – do not sound a trumpet as the hypocrites do in the synagogue so that they may be honored by men

 Matt. 23:5 – 6 - they do all their deeds to be noticed by men…they love the place of honor at the banquets and the chief seats in the synagogue and respectable greetings in the market places and being called Rabbi by men

1. *Hypocrisy knows God’s word but disobeys it*

 Matt. 23:3 – for they say things and do not do them

 Matt. 23: you tithe mint & dill & cumin & have neglected the weightier provisions of the law, justice & mercy & faithfulness, but these things you should have done without neglecting the others

1. *Hypocrisy pretends righteousness to gain power & prominence*

 Matt. 23: 14 – you devour widows houses

 Matt. 23:25 – full of robbery and self – indulgence

1. *God will judge the hypocrite*

 1Pet. 4:17 – for it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God

**How can we detect the leaven of hypocrisy?**

Do I desire the praise of others in my spiritual actions?

Do I love being recognized & respected for my spiritual actions?

Do I worship & serve with a desire to be recognized as righteous?

Am I pretending to follow Jesus but live in secret sin & wickedness?

**How do I avoid hypocrisy?**

Put aside your hypocrisy

1 Pet. 2:1 – put aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and slander

Confess & repent of the sin of hypocrisy

Matt. 23:26 – clean the inside of the cup & the dish so that the outside may be clean also

Live in secret & public knowing that God sees & rewards the righteous

Matt. 6: 4 – giving in secret you Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you