



Rice Memorial MBC

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Sharing All Things

Definitions in **bold letters** are from **Strong's** Exhaustive Concordance
Other definitions are from **Webster's** Dictionary, 1828/1913 Edition
or Roget's Thesaurus – **September 13, 2015**

Acts 4:34 – 5:10

Introduction: (Chapter 5) In this chapter we have, **I.** The sin and punishment of Ananias and Sapphira, who, for **LYING** to the **Holy Ghost**, were struck dead at the word of Peter (v. 1-11). **II.** The flourishing state of the church, in the power that went along with the preaching of the gospel (v. 12-16). **III.** The imprisonment of the apostles, and their miraculous discharge out of prison, with fresh orders to go on to preach the gospel, which they did, to the great vexation of their **persecutors** (v. 17-26). **IV.** Their **arraignment** (the act of calling and setting a prisoner before a court to answer to an accusation, and to choose his triers) before the great Sanhedrim, and their justification of themselves in what they did (v. 27-33). Gamaliel's counsel concerning them, that they **should not persecute** them, but **let them alone**, and **see what would come of it**, and their concurrence, for the present, with this advice, in the dismissing of the apostles' cheerful progress in their work notwithstanding the prohibition laid upon them and the indignity done them (v. 41, v. 42). (Source: <http://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/matthew-henry-complete/acts/4.html>)

Acts 4:32-35, And the **multitude** of them that **believed** were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his **OWN**; but they **had all things common**. And with **great POWER** gave the **apostles witness** (testimony) of the **resurrection** of the Lord Jesus: and **great grace** was upon them all. Neither was there ANY among them that **LACKED**: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses **sold them**, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and **distribution** was made unto **every man** according as he **had NEED**.

NOTE: This is not a reference to another manifestation of the event narrated in Acts 2:43ff, but another reference to that same event, introduced here by Luke as preliminary to the happenings regarding **Ananias** and **Sapphira**. The custom of having **all things common** which began shortly after Pentecost had continued until the time of these events; but Luke's reference to it here sheds new light upon it.

Acts 2:43-46, And **fear (reverence)** came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and **had all things common**; And **SOLD** their **possessions** and **goods**, and **parted** them to ALL MEN, as every man had **NEED**. And they, continuing daily with **ONE accord** in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and **SINGLENESS** of heart...

The things which he possessed ... Thus it is clear that **private property** had not been abolished. What is taught here is not that the institution of private possessions

had been abolished, but that the Christians held their possessions, not as their OWN, but as **subject** to the **will of God** in the **USE** of them for the **RELIEF** of the **needy**. "This was an emergency, and ALL were willing and anxious to use whatever they possessed for the **common good**." In the fact of the "emergency" mentioned by Boles and so many others, there is a clue suggesting that all of the events mentioned thus far in Acts occurred within a **very short space of time after Pentecost**; because the most logical reason for any emergency, which is actually inferred rather than plainly stated, lies in the fact that **vast throngs** in Jerusalem for Pentecost, after **obeying the gospel**, continued to REMAIN in Jerusalem for a time in order to hear the preaching of the apostles, and perhaps to aid in evangelism. Naturally, such a situation would terminate after a while; and the extreme generosity of the Christians prolonged it as long as possible.

To each, according as any one had need ... "This shows that only the **needy** received anything, and that those who were not needy were the givers."^[40] As McGarvey further noted:

This **church was not** at this time a **COMMUNE**, or a **socialistic club**, as many interpreters have fancied. There was no uniform distribution of the property of all among the members; neither was the property of all held and administered by the apostles."

(Source: <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/view.cgi?bk=ac&ch=4#1>)

Acts 4:36-37, And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed (call, distinguish by the name of) Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation [COMFORT],) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, Having land, SOLD it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

NOTE: It should be noted that **not** a word is here given to the effect that Barnabas "SOLD ALL that he had," there being no evidence at all that he did any such thing. Then, there is the further consideration that the **sister of Barnabas, Mary**, the mother of **John Mark**, appears in Acts 12 as the **owner** of a large residence in Jerusalem, capable of housing a considerable portion of the church for a prayer meeting, the house having a courtyard and a gate which was attended by the serving girl, Rhoda. It was NOT the practice of those early disciples to make a total liquidation of their assets in order to distribute all to the poor.

Son of Exhortation ... contrasts with "Son of Consolation" as in the **KJV** and the English Revised Version (1885) margin, both meanings being in the original.

Barnabas ... This was the **faithful** and **distinguished** Christian who accompanied Paul on the first missionary journey.

Having related the example of the **generosity** of **Barnabas**, Luke would at once relate the story of **Ananias and Sapphira** and their scheme of imposing upon the Twelve apostles. This incident, about to be narrated in Acts 5, has the utility of shedding even more **light** on the so-called "**Christian communism**" of Acts.

(Source: <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/view.cgi?bk=ac&ch=4#1>)

Acts 5:1-2, But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, And KEPT BACK PART of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

NOTE: But. Amid the peace, grace and abounding liberality of **the church** there was one dark spot. The SIN and FATE of **Ananias and his wife** must be recorded. **Kept back part of the price.** Like many others, of their **own accord** they sold a possession for the benefit of the church. They were not compelled to sell it, or when sold to give the money, or to give all. Their sin was not withholding a part, but **lying** about it. (1) They gave from the wrong motives, not for the Lord, but for

human praise. (2) There was hypocrisy and falsehood.

His wife being privy to it. Hence equally guilty. There was a guilty conspiracy between them.

Brought a certain part. Pretending it was ALL. His was a deliberate, **PUBLIC LIE.**
(Source: <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/pnt/view.cgi?bk=ac&ch=5#1>)

Acts 5:3, But Peter said, Ananias, why hath **Satan filled (influence) thine heart (MIND)** to **LIE** to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?

NOTE: Peter could have known this only by **“revelation.”** It was the manifest design of Ananias to **deceive;** nor was there any way of detecting him but by its being revealed to him by the Spirit of God. As it was an instance of enormous wickedness, and as it was very important to detect and punish the crime, it was made known to Peter directly by God.

(Source: <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bnb/view.cgi?bk=ac&ch=5#1>)

NOTE: As Boles said, "This is the **first sin recorded** against any member of the Church." It might not be the first ever committed by a member, but it is the first one mentioned in the New Testament.

Why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie... The malignant (dangerous to life) personality of the EVIL ONE is affirmed by this apostolic question; but it should be noted that, although **instigated** (INCITED [stirred up; spurred on]) by Satan, the SIN was still reckoned as the responsibility of Ananias. Thus **yielding** to **evil desires.**

(Source: <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/view.cgi?bk=ac&ch=5#1>)

Thought 1. This a good time to remind ourselves that it's NOT a sin to be tempted by Satan. Even Jesus was tempted in ALL points like us, yet without sin. He used his good understanding of the FEAR (reverence) of God and faith in what was written in the scriptures to resist temptation and NOT YIELD.

Romans 6:13, Neither **YIELD** ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but **YIELD** yourselves **unto God,** as those that are **alive** from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

Thought 2. The belief Christians are tempted and sin because they have TWO natures: "God's nature" and "the FLESH", is proved to be error, since Adam and Jesus had only ONE nature. Scripture will prove that Adam sinned, as do all who RECOGNIZE evil, because they don't have a "good understanding" of reverence for God.

Psalms 111:10, The **fear** (reverence) of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: a **good UNDERSTANDING** have **ALL** they that **DO** his commandments...

Proverbs 2:3-5, Yea, if thou **criest** after **knowledge,** and **lifest** up thy voice for understanding; If thou **SEEKEST** her as silver, and **SEARCHEST** for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou **UNDERSTAND** the **fear (reverence)** of the LORD...

Proverbs 14:2, He that walketh in his uprightness **FEARETH** (reverence) the Lord: but he that is **perverse (to turn aside)** in his ways **DESPISETH** (disesteem (to slight [ignore], DISRESPECT) him.

Acts 5:4, Whiles it remained, was it not thine OWN? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou **conceived** this thing in thine **heart (MIND)?** thou hast not **LIED** unto men, but unto God.

NOTE: This place proves that there was **no “obligation” imposed on** the disciples to sell their property. They who did it, did it voluntarily (without being moved, influenced or impelled by others); and it does not appear that it was done BY ALL, or **expected**

to be done by all. **And after it was sold ...** - Even after the property was sold, and Ananias had the money, still there was no obligation on him to devote it in this way. He had the disposal of it still. The apostle mentions this to show him that **his offence** was especially aggravated. He was not “compelled” to sell his property - he had not even the poor pretense that he was “**obliged**” to dispose of it, and was “**tempted**” to withhold it for his own use. It was “all” his, and might have been retained if he had chosen.

Thou hast not lied unto men - Unto people “only,” or, it is not your “**main**” and “chief” OFFENCE that you have attempted to deceive people. It is true that Ananias “had” attempted to deceive the apostles, and it is true, also, that this was a crime; but still, the principal magnitude of the offence was that he had **attempted to deceive “God.”** So small was his crime as committed against “**men**” that it was lost sight of by the apostles, and the great, crowning sin of attempting to deceive “God” was brought fully into view. Thus, David also saw his sin as committed **against “God”** to be so enormous that he lost sight of it as an offence to man, and said, “Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight,” Psalm 51:4.

(Source: <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bnb/view.cgi?bk=ac&ch=5#1>)

Acts 5:5, And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost (expire [to DIE]): and GREAT FEAR (reverence) came on ALL them that HEARD these things.

NOTE: Seeing that his guilt was known, and being charged with the enormous crime of attempting to deceive God. **He had not expected to be thus exposed;** and it is clear that the exposure and the charge came upon him unexpectedly and terribly, like a bolt of thunder. **Fell down** - Greek: **Having fallen down.** **Gave up the ghost** - This is an unhappy translation. The original means simply “he expired,” or “he DIED.” Compare the notes on Matthew 27:50. This remarkable fact may be accounted for in this way: **(1)** It is evidently to be regarded as a “**judgment**” of God for the **sin** of Ananias and his wife. It WAS NOT the act of Peter, but of God, and was clearly designed to show his abhorrence of this sin. See remarks on Acts 5:11.

(2) though it was the act of God, yet it does not follow that it was not in connection with the usual laws by which he governs people, or that he did not make use of natural means to do it. The sin was one of great aggravation. It was suddenly and unexpectedly detected.

Such a striking and **awful judgment** on **insincerity** and **hypocrisy** was suited to excite **AWFUL** (inspiring AWE; filling with profound (DEEP) REVERENCE) emotions among the people.

Reverence, profound (deep} respect) and esteem (high regard) mingled with FEAR and affection (LOVE). (1913 Webs.).

The fear acceptable to God, is a filial [CHILD in relation to his parents] FEAR, an awful reverence of the divine nature, proceeding from a just esteem [high value] of his PERFECTIONS [infinite power, holiness, justice, benevolence (disposition [FRAME of mind] to do good; good will) and wisdom], which produces in US an inclination (leaning of the MIND or will) TO his service and an unwillingness to offend him.).

Sudden death always does it; but **sudden death** in immediate connection with **crime** is suited much more deeply to affect the MIND.

(Source: <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bnb/view.cgi?bk=ac&ch=5#1>)

Thought 1. One truth we know about Ananias telling this LIE is for God to judge his sin as worthy of death, rather than some less severe punishment means this was NOT the first time he'd been deceptive. Since our Father is a JUST God (Supreme highest authority), we know he'd been patient and had warned him and his wife. But since they refused to JUDGE themselves and REPENT, this was a FAIR punishment.

1 Corinthians 11:30-31, For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many **sleep (be dead)**. For if we would **judge** ourselves, we should not **be judged**.

Acts 5:6-7, And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him. And it was about the space of **three hours AFTER**, when his **wife, not knowing** what was done, came in.

NOTE: Sapphira was NOT notified; **no mourning** was mentioned; **no delay** was made; and, in such circumstances, apostolic authority must be assigned as their cause. The natural thing, upon the death of Ananias, would have been the seeking and informing of his wife; but no such amenity (pleasantness) was permitted. The apostles accepted the occurrence as a **divine judgment** against sin, remembering no doubt that "**severe examples** had also occurred" in the days of Moses, as in the cases of Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10:1,2) and of **Achan** (Joshua 7:16-25).

ENDNOTE: ^[7] B. W. Johnson, The New Testament with Explanatory Notes (Delight, Arkansas: Gospel Light Publishing Company, n.d.), p. 434.

...the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. However the divine judgment must have shocked and surprised Peter, in the case of Ananias, he could not have been **unaware** of the **judgment** that would befall **Sapphira** in case she was guilty. What a DREADFUL (AWFUL) FEAR must have fallen upon the assembly as **Sapphira** made her entry. "Can you imagine the silence as her examination proceeded? Her unhesitating reply proved they had conspired together." (Source: <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/view.cgi?bk=ac&ch=5#1>)

Acts 5:8, And Peter answered unto her, **Tell ME** whether ye **sold** the land for **so much?** And she said, **Yea, for so much.**

NOTE: Tell me whether you sold the land for so much? **naming the sum** which Ananias had brought and laid at the apostles' feet. "Was this all you received for the sale of the land, and had you no more for it?" "No," saith she, "we had no more, but that was every farthing we received." Ananias and his wife **agreed** to tell the same story, and the bargain being private, and by consent kept to themselves, nobody could disprove them, and therefore they thought they might **safely stand in the lie**, and should **gain credit** to it. It is sad to see those relations who should quicken one another to that which is good **harden** one another in that which is **evil**. 2. Sentence was passed upon her, that she should partake in her husband's doom. (Source: [Http://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/matthew-henry-complete/acts/5.html](http://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/matthew-henry-complete/acts/5.html))

Thought 1. Before meditating this verse in the light that God's LOVE gives everybody a CHOICE to either do right or do wrong, my first thought was Peter should've warned her about telling the truth, letting her know of her husband's death. However, God's wisdom was for her to have a chance to choose to either tell the truth, or lie. The purpose was for her frame of MIND to be revealed when asked a simple question.

Acts 5:9, Then Peter said unto her, **How is it** that ye have **agreed together** to **tempt (test [ENTICE])** the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out.

NOTE: Peter knew that the same **penalty of death** which befell Ananias would also fall upon Sapphira; and the timing of the young men's return from the burial of Ananias further confirmed Peter's certainty of what would ensue.

Try the Spirit of the Lord ... It is significant that three different expressions appear in this narrative as being synonymous: "Lie to the Holy Spirit" ... Acts 5:3. "Lied not unto men, but unto God" ... Acts 5:4. "Try the Spirit of the Lord" ... Acts 5:9. (Source: <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/view.cgi?bk=ac&ch=5#1>)

Acts 5:10, Then fell she down **straightway (instantly)** at his feet, and **yielded up the ghost**: and the **young men** came in, and found her **dead**, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband.

Thought 1. The MOST important question now to be answered is “Where did they go when they left their bodies? To Heaven with Jesus and the Father? Or to Hell where the rich man went in Luke 16, which is where all go who are not of “the faith of God.”

John 3:14-18, And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever **believeth** in him should **not perish**, but have **eternal life**. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever **BELIEVETH** in him should **not perish**, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that **believeth** on him is **not condemned**: but he that **believeth NOT** is **condemned** already, because he hath **not believed** in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Believe defined 4100, pisteuo pronounced pist-yoo'-o ; to have FAITH in, by impl., to ENTRUST (especially one's spiritual well-being to Christ).

Thought 2. So, ALL humans have a command to “entrust their spiritual well-being” to the authority that’s in Jesus, or be eternally lost.

Luke 8:13, They on the **ROCK** are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which **for a WHILE believe**, and in time of **temptation (adversity) FALL AWAY (desert [desert a cause]: DEPART)**.

Romans 11:19-22, Thou wilt say then, The branches were **broken off**, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of **UNBELIEF** they were broken off, and thou **standest by FAITH**. Be not high-minded, but **FEAR**: For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare **not** thee. Behold therefore the **goodness** and **severity** of God: on them which fell, **severity**; but toward thee, goodness, **IF** thou **continue** in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be **cut off**.

Faith defined 4102, pistis pronounced pis'-tis, i.e. moral conviction of religious truth), especially reliance upon Christ for salvation; abstractly, CONSTANCY in such profession.

Constancy, fixedness of mind; persevering resolution.

Hebrews 3:12-14, Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil **heart** of **UNBELIEF**, in **DEPARTING from** the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be **hardened** through the **deceitfulness** of SIN. For we are made partakers of Christ, **IF** we **hold** the beginning of our **CONFIDENCE** stedfast unto the **END**...

Thought 3. So, the scriptures say as long as a person “KEEPS their FAITH” in Jesus, they’re **IN** him, and will be **WITH** him when they die. Lying caused them to die early, but they died as children of God, still in his family by faith.

2 Timothy 2:19-20, The Lord **knoweth** them that **are HIS**. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. But in a great **house** there are not only vessels of **gold** and of **silver**, but also of **wood** and of **earth**; and **SOME** to HONOUR, and **SOME** to DISHONOUR.

Acts 5:11-12, And **great FEAR (reverence)** came upon **ALL** the **church**, and upon as many as **HEARD** these things. And by the hands of the apostles were many **signs** and **wonders wrought** among the people; (and they were all with **ONE ACCORD** in Solomon's porch