

October 16, 2011

Willow Park South
Small Group Questions
Acts 5:1-11

- Please read *Acts 5:1-11* together at the beginning of your small group meeting.

One of the challenges we face is accepting the God of the Bible when it challenges the way we think life should be. Taking a look at the account of Ananias and Sapphira, we see that God is challenging how we think about Him and the consequences of our actions.

What are some of your concerns and questions about this story?

Why do you think this is an unpopular story in the Bible?

Why is it important to accept all of scripture rather than only the sections we like?

Why do you suppose God chose this account to be reported in the Bible?

When Ananias and Sapphira sold a piece of their property, the Bible says that Ananias “kept back for himself some of the proceeds and brought only a part of it and laid it at the apostles' feet” (Acts 5:2 ESV). In the original Greek, the language used implied that Ananias and Sapphira did so in a secret and dishonest way.

Why was it a sin for Ananias and Sapphira to keep some of the proceeds rather than giving it all to the church?

- Twice Ananias was charged with keeping part of the income from the land (5:2, 3), indicating that he must have claimed that he was dedicating the whole to the Lord's work. His sin was the lie, claiming to be doing more than he did.

Why were the consequences of their sin so sudden and so harsh?

- The Spirit was closely linked to the unity of the fellowship manifested in the early Church community's sharing. Ananias and Sapphira abused the fellowship through their deception and thereby threatened its unity.

Why does God have to punish sin?

- God must punish sin in order to be just and maintain His holiness. God would no longer be a perfect and good God if He did not punish evil.

Ananias and Sapphira's underlying sin was that they were pretending to be something they were not. While pretending to be godly, they thought that it would make life better to keep the extra money. When it came to feeling fulfilled and living a happy life, they believed they knew better than God.

Are there any areas in your life where you are pretending to be more godly than you are actually living?

Are your actions and attitudes helping to build up the unity of our church community?

Are there any areas of your life which you neglect God's teaching because you think you know better?

How does Jesus' sacrifice allow us to admit when we are not living a godly life?

How did Jesus' sacrifice free us from the wrath of God while still upholding God's holiness?