

The Church Marches on in Works and Words

Nothing can stop the church when she is on the move!

Acts 5

Don Ruhl • Savage Street, Grants Pass, Oregon • March 5, In the year of our Lord, 2017

Song Leader and Song Suggestions: Larry Amberg – Songs that make us bold

Prelude:

I. A great work began in Jerusalem,

- A. providing for the Jews who stayed after the Jewish feast day of Pentecost, for
- B. they unexpectedly had converted to Christ.

II. The converted Jews living in Jerusalem

- A. sold their things and brought the proceeds to the apostles,
- B. who then distributed the funds to those who had need of them.

III. However, Luke then shows a married couple,

- A. who took part in doing good works for their new brethren in Christ, but
- B. who wanted to make it look like they had done more than what they had.

Persuasion:

I. Acts 5.1–11 | Do Not Lie about Your Good Deeds

1 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession. **2** And he kept back part of the proceeds, his wife also being aware of it, and brought a certain part and laid it at the apostles' feet. **3** But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? **4** While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God." **5** Then Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and breathed his last. So great fear came upon all those who heard these things. **6** And the young men arose and wrapped him up, carried him out, and buried him. **7** Now it was about three hours later when his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. **8** And Peter answered her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for so much?" She said, "Yes, for so much." **9** Then Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out." **10** Then immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. And the young men came in and found her dead, and carrying her out, buried her by her hus-

band. 11 So great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things.

- A. Ananias and Sapphira sold their possession, but
 - 1. kept back part of the funds.
 - 2. They brought to the apostles the part that they wanted to give, but
 - a) Peter, informed by the Holy Spirit,
 - b) knew that this couple gave the wrong impression,
 - (1) wanting everyone to believe
 - (2) that they had given 100% of the proceeds.
- B. Satan influenced this couple to lie to the Holy Spirit.
 - 1. Ananias and Sapphira did not know
 - a) that Satan filled their hearts, and
 - b) that they actually lied to the Holy Spirit and not merely to men.
 - 2. Yet, Peter doubled-down on the fact that they had lied to God, not to men.
- C. They retained control of their property
 - 1. both before and after the sale.
 - 2. They had freedom to do with the money as they chose.
 - a) However, they did not have the freedom to lie
 - b) about the amount of the sale nor about how much they were donating.
- D. Instantly, Ananias falls down dead,
 - 1. causing everyone who heard of the meeting between Peter and Ananias
 - 2. to fear greatly.
 - a) Young men came and
 - b) buried the body of Ananias.
- E. Three hours later his wife came in and
 - 1. Peter questioned her on the sale.

2. Peter revealed that Ananias and Sapphira conspired to lie about their gift.

a) Just as Peter revealed what happened to her husband and

b) that the same would happen to her,

(1) she also dropped dead.

(2) They buried her by her husband.

F. Verse 11 says

1. that everyone in the church feared, and

2. anyone, including those not of the church, also feared.

a) You do not lie to the Holy Spirit, to God, and

b) think that you will get away with it.

II. Acts 5.12–16 | The Condition of the Church

12 And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon's Porch. 13 Yet none of the rest dared join them, but the people esteemed them highly. 14 And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, 15 so that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them. 16 Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed.

A. Ananias and Sapphira did not stop the apostles from doing more good works.

B. While the rest of the Jews in Jerusalem did not dare join the church,

1. they still esteemed the church highly.

2. After all, the city saw the goodness of the church, but

a) they also knew of the Jewish leader's opposition to the church.

b) So they valued the church, but feared becoming part of it.

C. However, as the church continued teaching and preaching,

1. multitudes of people, both men and women,

2. believed and were added to the Lord,
 - a) they were baptized into the Lord.
 - b) Galatians 3.27

D. Note these things about verses 15 and 16:

1. Just Peter's shadow passing over the sick healed them.
2. Multitudes brought the sick and the demon-possessed, and
 - a) the apostles healed them *all*.

III. Acts 5.17–21 | Arrested for Good Works and for Preaching

17 Then the high priest rose up, and all those who were with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with indignation, 18 and laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the common prison. 19 But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, 20 "Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life." 21 And when they heard that, they entered the temple early in the morning and taught. But the high priest and those with him came and called the council together, with all the elders of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought.

- A. The apostles continued teaching the people and healing the multitudes.
- B. That filled the high priest and the Sadducees with envy,
 1. just as with Jesus whose popularity they envied, and so
 2. they arrested the apostles, just as they had arrested Jesus.
- C. However, imprisonment does not stop the Lord, and
 1. it does not stop those who follow the Lord zealously.
 2. Therefore, the Lord sent an angel to open the prison doors, and
 - a) brought the preachers out,
 - b) giving them a three-fold command:
 - (1) Go.
 - (2) Stand.

(3) Speak.

(a) He told them where to go and stand to there.

(b) He told them what to speak.

3. The apostles obeyed the Lord by the mouth of angel.

a) Since they did,

b) the world has never been the same.

D. Not knowing what had happened,

1. their enemies gathered together and

2. asked for the apostles to be brought to the Council.

IV. Acts 5.22–33 | The Apostles Will Not Quit Teaching

22 But when the officers came and did not find them in the prison, they returned and reported, 23 saying, “Indeed we found the prison shut securely, and the guards standing outside before the doors; but when we opened them, we found no one inside!” 24 Now when the high priest, the captain of the temple, and the chief priests heard these things, they wondered what the outcome would be. 25 So one came and told them, saying, “Look, the men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people!” 26 Then the captain went with the officers and brought them without violence, for they feared the people, lest they should be stoned. 27 And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest asked them, 28 saying, “Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man’s blood on us!” 29 But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: “We ought to obey God rather than men. 30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. 31 Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. 32 And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him.” 33 When they heard this, they were furious and plotted to kill them.

A. The officers of the Jews could not find the apostles in prison.

1. They could not figure it out, because

2. everything was as it had been the night before.

- a) You can see and hear their concern.
 - b) This thing has gotten out of hand!
- B. The apostles had gone right back to the temple and taught the people.
- C. The leaders rearrested the apostles without violence
- 1. lest the crowd become violent with the Jewish leaders.
 - 2. Then the high priest put pressure on the apostles.
 - a) He reminded them that they were commanded
 - b) not to teach in the name of Jesus,
 - (1) implying that the apostles had either
 - (2) rebelled against the command or were ignorant of it, because
 - (a) the apostles continued to fill Jerusalem with their teaching,
 - (b) implying that they brought the blood of Jesus on the leaders.
- D. Then Peter answered more directly than he had before.
- 1. He had said earlier to these same men,
 - a) asking *them* to judge what was right,
 - 19 “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. 20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard” (Acts 4.19–20).**
 - b) This time Peter gave *his* judgment
 - (1) that they were going to obey God, not those men,
 - (2) he and his fellow-preachers would not obey the Jewish Council.
 - 2. He explained why the preachers would obey.
 - a) He reminded them that God raised up Jesus, but
 - b) that they had crucified Him.
 - (1) Nevertheless, God exalted Jesus as the Prince and Savior,
 - (2) who would give to Israel repentance and forgiveness of sins.

- (a) After all Peter's tough talk,
- (b) he still offered the most gracious gift in the world.
 - i) He and the other preachers,
 - ii) along with the Holy Spirit, had witnessed
 - (1) Jesus and His crucifixion,
 - (2) Jesus and His resurrection.
 - (a) As Peter indicated in Acts 2.38,
 - (b) God gives the Holy Spirit to those who obey Him.

E. That did not exactly thrill the high priest and his supporters.

- 1. No, it angered them, and
- 2. they plotted to kill Peter and the apostles.

V. Acts 5.34–39 | Paul's Old Teacher Saved the Day

34 Then one in the council stood up, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in respect by all the people, and commanded them to put the apostles outside for a little while. 35 And he said to them: "Men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what you intend to do regarding these men. 36 For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody. A number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was slain, and all who obeyed him were scattered and came to nothing. 37 After this man, Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the census, and drew away many people after him. He also perished, and all who obeyed him were dispersed. 38 And now I say to you, keep away from these men and let them alone; for if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing; 39 but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it—lest you even be found to fight against God."

A. Gamaliel, who taught Saul of Tarsus,

- 1. saved the Jews from committing another senseless murder, and
- 2. he saved the lives of these preachers.

B. His premise was:

- 1. Leave these preachers alone.

- a) If their work is merely of men,
 - b) they shall fail and come to nothing.
2. Fight these preachers, and
 - a) if their work is of God,
 - b) you will be fighting God.

VI. Acts 5.40–42 | Worthy to Suffer for Jesus

40 And they agreed with him, and when they had called for the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. 41 So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. 42 And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.

- A. The rest of the Council more or less agreed with Gamaliel, because
 1. they did not kill the apostles, but
 2. they did beat them and
 - a) command them not to speak in the name of Jesus.
 - b) Then they let the preachers go.
- B. How did the apostles react to the beatings and the threats?
 1. They rejoiced that they could suffer for the name of Jesus.
 2. They taught and preached daily, publicly and privately.
 - a) How do you stop people who rejoice
 - (1) that they have been considered worthy
 - (2) to suffer shame for their Master and Teacher?
 - b) How do you stop people who insist
 - (1) on teaching at every opportunity and everywhere, and
 - (2) the threat of violence does not slow them down?