



Brown Community Group

Discussion Guide

Acts 4:32-5:42 – February 14, 2021

I. Starter Context:

Can you think of a time where you had direct and immediate consequences for your decisions? Did you feel they were just or excessive? Was this related to man's law or God's Law? How did these consequences drive your forward thinking? Whether positive or negative, God has promised to direct and guide your actions in life towards his will being done, are we listening?

II. Discussion of Scripture:

Acts 4:32-5:42:

³² All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. ³³ With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all ³⁴ that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales ³⁵ and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need. ³⁶ Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means "son of encouragement"), ³⁷ sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet.

5 Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. ² With his wife's full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles' feet. ³ Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? ⁴ Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied just to human beings but to God."

⁵ When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened. ⁶ Then some young men came forward, wrapped up his body, and carried him out and buried him. ⁷ About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. ⁸ Peter asked her, "Tell me, is this the price you and Ananias got for the land?" "Yes," she said, "that is the price." ⁹ Peter said to her, "How could you conspire to test the Spirit of the Lord? Listen! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also." ¹⁰ At that moment she fell down at his feet and died. Then the young men came in and, finding her dead, carried her out and buried her beside her husband. ¹¹ Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events.

¹² The apostles performed many signs and wonders among the people. And all the believers used to meet together in Solomon's Colonnade. ¹³ No one else dared join them, even though they were highly regarded by the people. ¹⁴ Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number. ¹⁵ As a result, people brought the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and mats so that at least Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by. ¹⁶ Crowds gathered also from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those tormented by impure spirits, and all of them were healed. ¹⁷ Then the high priest and all his associates, who were members of the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy. ¹⁸ They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail. ¹⁹ But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail and brought them out. ²⁰ "Go, stand in the temple courts," he said, "and tell the people all about this new life."

²¹ At daybreak they entered the temple courts, as they had been told, and began to teach the people. When the high priest and his associates arrived, they called together the Sanhedrin—the full assembly of the elders of Israel—and sent to the jail for the apostles. ²² But on arriving at the jail, the officers did not find them there. So they went back and reported, ²³ "We found the jail securely locked, with the guards standing at the doors; but when we opened them, we found no one inside." ²⁴ On hearing this report, the captain of the temple guard and the chief priests were at a loss, wondering what this might lead to.

²⁵ Then someone came and said, "Look! The men you put in jail are standing in the temple courts teaching the people." ²⁶ At that, the captain went with his officers and brought the apostles. They did not use force, because they feared that the people would stone them. ²⁷ The apostles were brought in and made to appear before the Sanhedrin to be questioned by the high priest. ²⁸ "We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name," he said. "Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man's blood."

²⁹ Peter and the other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than human beings! ³⁰ The God of our ancestors raised Jesus from the dead—whom you killed by hanging him on a cross. ³¹ God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might bring Israel to repentance and forgive their sins. ³² We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him." ³³ When they heard this, they were furious and wanted to put them to death. ³⁴ But a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, who was honored by all the people, stood up in the Sanhedrin and ordered that the men be put outside for a little while. ³⁵ Then he addressed the Sanhedrin: "Men of Israel, consider carefully what you intend to do to these men. ³⁶ Some time ago Theudas appeared, claiming to be somebody, and about four hundred men rallied to him. He was killed, all his followers were dispersed, and it all came to nothing. ³⁷ After him, Judas the Galilean appeared in the days of the census and led a band of people in revolt. He too was killed, and all his followers were scattered. ³⁸ Therefore, in the present case I advise you: Leave these men alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. ³⁹ But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God." ⁴⁰ His speech persuaded them. They called the apostles in and had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. ⁴¹ The apostles left the Sanhedrin,

rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name. 42 Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah.

Brief Explanation: This passage covers four stories that describe early miraculous works. In the tradition of the early church, members were selling their possessions and giving the profits to other believers in need; however, a couple by the name of Ananias and Sapphira faced severe immediate consequences when claiming to do the same they secretly kept some of the profit for themselves. Likewise, the passage ends with the apostles miraculously escaping from jail when there were imprisoned for preaching in the temple. When discussing these stories, make sure the focus stays on application; it will be easy to dive into the weeds of understanding the ins-and-outs of what happened while forgetting to apply it to today.

- **4:32-37 - They Had Everything in Common**
- **5:1-11 - Ananias and Sapphira**
- **5:12-16 - Many Signs and Wonders Done**
- **5:17-42 - The Apostles Arrested and Freed**

III. Group Questions:

4:32-5:11 – Giving; Ananias and Sapphira

1. What was Ananias and Sapphira's fault or sin? Was it that he did not give 100% as compared to others? Or was this a matter of concealment, pretentious show and dishonesty? Compare this situation to our past lessons over the past few weeks, what is the bottom line that this story of Ananias is telling us?
2. How did you think Peter knew the true condition of Ananias and Sapphira's heart and truth?
3. What was the "great fear" seizing all who heard in Verse 5? What were they afraid of? DO you think they knew all parts of the story?
4. What is our example and application today?

5:12-16 – Signs and Wonders

5. Why did the believers meet in Solomon's Portico? (John 10:22-30) Was it intentional for the apostles to teach at places that Christ visited?
6. In verse 13, why did "no one else" dare join the apostles and believers?
7. In Verse 15, do you think Peter's shadow had any impact on those he passed by? Why or why not? Why would Luke include that in the account of what happened?
8. Verse 16 tells us "all" who were brought to the church were healed. Why was God not more selective in the gift of healing at this point in the church's ministry?

5:17-42 – Apostles Arrested and Freed

9. What do you think the Sanhedrin authorities were jealous of? What part infuriated them?
10. How do we discern between our direct involvement versus God work things out? What happens if you try to accomplish God's will on your own?

11. Is our “success” a result of God’s involvement and is our “failure” the result of God’s absence? How should this control or direct our view of work, family or personal goals?

IV. Responding in Prayer:

1. Pray for our community to have interactions with the Gospel this week. Pray for boldness to share, discernment to respond well, and peace to accept the outcome of difficult conversations. Pray that we would all respond in joy to the Lord’s work in our lives.
2. Pray for our church leadership. Pray that they would use their giftings well this week and that they would keep the Holy Spirit at the forefront of their minds when making decisions. Pray that our congregation would support them and encourage them well this week.
3. Pray for the application of the sermon this week in our church. Pray that individuals would not intellectually engage with the stories but let the Spirit work in their lives. Pray for God to save those who heard the message this week while they ponder it.