

BLASTING OR BLESSING

Acts 5:1-12

Introduction: It is thought that if today's Churches acted like the early Church that things would be so much better for the early Church had converts daily, love for each other, great fellowship, a thirst for God's Word and all went well. However our text reveals that not all went well all the time for a problem arose within the Church membership and that sounds like today's Churches.

I. SOMEBODY COMMITTED A SIN

1. A sin was committed within the fellowship.
 - There were plenty of perils outside the Church for Christians were not liked at all and were persecuted.
 - The Church members felt safe and protected within the fellowship of their Church family.
2. The sin committed was not:
 - refusing to give all one had, for there was no law or policy, for everyone gave voluntarily.
 - in keeping back a part for there were no regulations to that matter.
 - a requirement for fellowship or service.
3. What the sin was:
 - pretending that the part given was ALL.
 - a sin of hypocrisy - what appeared wasn't really the truth.
 - lying to the Church family, and to God.
 - Today Church members sing hymns, say they are giving all they can, doing all they can but are guilty of the same sin as Ananias and Sapphira.
 - If the Church was what it ought to be today, there would be MANY dead at the end of the service.
 - Sin is by words, actions, attempting to make things appear as they really are not.
 - God never gets angry at honesty (remember Job and Martha)
 - What makes God angry more than anything else perhaps are hypocrites.

II. WHY THE SIN WAS COMMITTED

1. SELF instead of love caused the sin.
 - The Church loved each other and did things for those who couldn't and bought food for those who were hungry, etc.
 - In this atmosphere of love Satan was allowed to enter the hearts of two members. They made a choice, self instead of love.
 - Ananias and Sapphira chose to do what they did - lie.
 - Barnabas also made a choice - he chose to give all and he gained God's favor.
 - Judas received 30 pieces of silver for his betrayal of Jesus, but he never spent a cent of it.
 - Ananias and Sapphira had the part they kept back and lied about, but they never got to spend it.
 - One cannot fool God - dishonesty in any degree will not escape God's all seeing eyes.

III. THE DISCIPLINE OF SIN

1. It seems only natural that punishment should follow sin.
2. What is unnatural is that people should still be alive in Church while professing Jesus Christ and continuing living lives of impurity.
 - The atmosphere of the early Church made it impossible for a lie to enter undetected.
 - What is so astonishing about this episode is not the death of Ananias and Sapphira but the purity of the Church, thus compelling their death - not the law, but the pure atmosphere dominated by the Holy Spirit while the members walked in the light of Jesus Christ.
 - It might be noticed that Peter said nothing to Ananias about going to die and Peter called for no curse, God did it all.
3. So, why hasn't such discipline continued in the Church today?
 - If the Church had remained pure, discipline would have continued.
 - The Church is dangerously weak - it has allowed unconverted people into fellowship and have become like the Samaritans of Jesus' day, intermixed.

IV. THE OUTCOME OF IT ALL

1. For the first time the Christians who were meeting were called the "CHURCH."
2. A new sense of fear came over the membership.
3. They knew of God's love, now they learned about remaining pure.
4. Fearfully today, the Church's "drive" for more members it has lost the idea of purity.
5. Love can cause a person to sell all he/she has and give it away, but a lie to God and His Church cannot live in God's presence.
6. One or the other had to go - Ananias and Sapphira and their lie or the Holy Spirit.
 - HERE is the key to powerlessness in the Churches of today and in our lives.

CONCLUSION:

1. Why isn't the Church more effective in our time? Why doesn't the Church have respect and fear?
Because there is hypocrisy within the membership and the Holy Spirit just cannot work in such an atmosphere of lies.
2. Look at yourself! If this Church were pure, would you still be alive at the end of this service?
 - If God struck dead everyone in this room who had lied to other members and to God who would be left alive?
3. Ananias and Sapphira were given to us as examples of how not to be as Church members and that nothing escapes God's eyes and there is a "PAYDAY SOMEDAY."