

ACTS 5:1-11, Sunday Afternoon, February 17, 1935 (four pages)

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I am reading a few verses of scripture from Acts 5:1-11

Sometimes we have been caused to wonder why an incident like this was ever written into the word at all and we have wondered why God found it necessary to eliminate, even by the stroke of death, the lie and hidden thing that had been agreed upon and connived at. Here we have two people agreed in their determination to sin and it may be because of these two coming into this unholy agreement and then coming to the Apostles with the lie, that the very fact that they had agreed on this sin and that their guilt had been established and when they came into the presence of God the Spirit of the Lord caused death to come on them and the people carried them out and buried them.

It shows me what a wonderful thing the Church of Christ originally was and how jealous God was for its first purity and power and glory as it fell on the church on Pentecost. It is a strange thing that men could be so holy and pure and dwell together in the harmony of God and could hold services together that when the liar and wrong-doer came in, that instantly life was taken from them and they were taken out dead. God must have had a marvelous thing in mind when He planted that church on Pentecost. When God's people were delivered from Egypt and He was sending them across the desert to inherit the promised land on the other side, He knew the spirit of complaining in their hearts as they turned from God and their thoughts went back to the land of Egypt, and God issued a warning to them. He said to Moses, "I have delivered them from Egypt and I am going to send my angel before them and he shall go before them. Tell them to beware of him for he will not pardon their transgressions for my Name is in him." It gives us a terrible idea of what it means and what it meant for men and that nation in that day when they had the Spirit of God going before them and in that Spirit there was no pardon for their sin.

God had laid on them the law of faith. God intended to take them through by the covenant of Abraham but such was the heart of man, then and now, that constantly and continually the tendency is always away from God and God said, "Beware of my angel for my name is in Him and he will not pardon your transgressions." I don't know of a more terrible condition that could fall on human kind than to have a God in whom was no forgiveness of sin. God was providing them Manna from Heaven, a food so holy and virtuous and a drink so marvelous from that rock that every speck of disease was eliminated from their make-up that they walked, a nation without one pain or ache. Yet in spite of that wonderful thing that God furnished them in food and drink they turned from God and went back to the flesh pots of Egypt. When God answered their cry for flesh 23000 of them died instantly and explorers, recently exploring the land over which these Israelites traveled, have come across a graveyard and to this day, on the walls of that cemetery are carved the pictures of men tearing quail and eating it raw. It is an awful thing to let the wonderful grace and blessing and power of God slip out of our lives.

I suppose God intended to carry them through holy and spotless and sickless and deathless. The only record of any graves we in the wilderness is of those who refused to believe. When God planted the church on Pentecost He had wonderful plans for that church. Somehow I feel that God's plans have miscarried. I feel that men and women have not rightly appreciated the wonderful thing God committed to the church on Pentecost.

This incident spoken of in Acts 5 was a short time after God had come down on the day of Pentecost and the Holy Ghost had touched men's hearts through and through. There was not one thing unholy. The Holy Spirit was in the center of their make-up. There was one wild scramble

able as to who could get to

the Apostles first with their possessions, of the men who had been charged with the prosperity of the church. When the power of God fell 30 years ago I saw that Pentecost zeal repeated. Time after time men with thousands of dollars died poor because the Holy Ghost seemed to set the Spirit on them in such a way and the need of God on the people of world was so urgent they could hardly retain one dollar for themselves and they poured out their money and hundreds and hundreds of missionaries were sent into the foreign fields and the wonderful thing about this gospel is that the whole thing is missionary.

It was not long before the powers of persecution rested on the church of God after Pentecost and they were everywhere preaching the gospel of the only Begotten Son and thousands and hundreds of thousands of people were brought in and no man had lack of anything. And I am persuaded myself that is the thing God has put his hand to do in these times in the restoration of the church of God. Here we have the Holy Ghost making an example. This man and his wife must have gone into the lie. They had seen the power of God poured out in a marvelous miracle-working power and yet they connived. As though a man could lie to God. No human being can lie to God. It is impossible for men to deceive God. God knows everything about each one of us, and it is a marvelous thing, that knowing us as He does and having a record of everything in our lives, He still loves us and plans to give us the best that heaven has. As the Spirit of God strove to keep the church pure where power could be poured out on the people from day to day in the early church.

Paul had to show the people the awful declension of the Church of God from its original standing. He had to show them how these things were the entering wedge and a discord and division that had finally brought the church of God to an absolute stand still and then for centuries and centuries there was no light of the Glory of God. During those centuries good men, who were standards of God's bible and desirous of living pure and holy lives, separated themselves in convents and cells and went into the caves of the earth and got away from the world. Wouldn't it have been better, instead of hiding themselves away, hiding their hunger for God behind convent walls and in dens and caves, would it not have been better for them to have testified to the Glory of Jesus Christ, and instead of hiding away to seek righteousness, if they had gone out in faith and declared to the world the Glory of God. This dispensation has been a failure. When we remember the 18 centuries of dark ages and away from the Glory and power of God the thing looks terrible and awful to me and I am afraid unless God's people stir themselves to the command and take it seriously the day of Christ will come suddenly on us and the vast company of heathen will go down in their ignorance and may God stir our hearts to lay hold on Him in living faith to bring the church back to its original standing.

Christ is still the head of the church. It eats into my soul and Spirit that Christ has taken such a meager place in the world today. It troubles me that I give Him so little of my time, in prayer and waiting on God, and when I see the saints of God in a similar condition! I am hardly conscious of a moment I am not breathing a prayer but I want to raise up a contending of the faith as God wants us to do. Somewhere there is Grace and Virtue of God that should be in the church that will melt the hard hearts and cause men and women to come down in humility and surrender to Jesus as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Do you feel that way brother? Have we, as a church, missed anything in sanctification to the will of God in these matters? Some people find fault with me in regard to the missionary work and the money to carry that on but I don't feel we have ever made a mistake. I feel that every prayer we have made and every dollar spent to carry the gospel to the uttermost parts will be blessed of God out of all bounds. The church of God is a wonderful thing. I said that we look at the Jews and pity them because they have missed the revelation of Jesus Christ as their promised Messiah but sometimes I think if we would look a little closer home at that which is supposed to be the church of God and look at what we have missed. The Jews never had the opportunities that the Church of Christ has had.



There was nothing in them to attest to the world of the Spirit of God. The thing they were under was like a schoolmaster with his rod in his hand telling them to do this and that and if they failed they would suffer the penalty that would be sent to them. But not so with the Church of Christ. I don't say that we are not going to lose something if we set around in ease. We will lose something of the Glory of God, that greatest thing of all to see the word of God fulfilled in our own midst on the bodies and lives of the people. We are seeing it but there is room for vast improvement. Hallelujah'. There is power and virtue and God is still the same but is there anything we have left undone? I think myself that there is a greater purpose in the manifestation of the power of God than even healing those who are sick. It is a wonderful thing for folk to be healed but there is a greater thing. That greater thing is to see the confirmation of God's bible in the very presence of the multitude. I don't believe myself that the raising up of sick ones results very much, in itself, in the salvation of men. It attracts the attention of people and causes men and women to go to the house of God. Oh, the marvelous completeness of the gospel message of Jesus Christ. Nothing left out; our bodies are made every wit whole and our Spirit quickened in the knowledge of God and it causes us to rejoice in the presence of a living Saviour who is going to bring this thing into port in proper style.

God intended to keep the liar and the hypocrite out of the church. May God never be under the necessity of handling any of us like that. When we get into sin if we go to God with it He will cleanse the heart and wash away the sin and give us another start towards the presence and power of God. The Spirit wants to show us a church in which no sin, dying, death, or disease will ever known at all. We must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ to give account of the deeds done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Thank the Lord, we have the privilege of talking to God any time and we can know our status any time and the most wonderful status is standing before God where we know all sins are forgiven and we are washed in the blood. I am sure that when the church is cleansed the Spirit of God will keep it clean forever and forever more. He will never tolerate the presence of sin when it has been cleansed and worked out after the fashion of this woman's and Man's sin.

We must get out of the rut we are in. We must dig ourselves out by confession and consecration and sanctification unto God again. I thank the Lord for the souls saved, but Oh, the vast multitude of people. Within them there must be a cry for God and it can only be answered as you and I are true to the testimony of the Lord and do our best to bring thme the message in our simple way that they get right with God. I am sure the gospel of Jesus Christ will work in every heart what it has worked in mine and what it has wrought in yours. A great man from India came from his country and talked with the scholars of the day and they said, "We notice a difference in you." He said, "Is the difference for the better or worse?" They said, "For the better. You haven't lost any of your scientific smartness but we don't know what it is that has changed you." "Will you tell us?" And he put his hand in his pocket and brought out a little bible and said, "This is what did the work." "I was a student of all the cults but one day this came into my hand and I began to read it and started at the New Testament and when I got to the middle of the gospel of John I caved in and that is the thing that reached this heart of mine and that is what brought the improvement. The word of the Living God."

Don't be discouraged because of the hardness in the heart of your neighbor. Tell them yesterday, today, and forevermore Jesus is the same and if they will read the word it will bring them through into the presence of God and another soul will be added to the glory of God. He wants us to be better christians in this regard. There are many wonderful christians and they enjoy it so much themselves but don't be so selfish. If it is good for you give your neighbor

a taste. And I testify to you that all the treasures of the world wouldn't take my bible from the heart of me. Praise the Lord. I am sure that God is working and the Spirit of the Lord is calling to everyone of us. Let us pass on this seed corn of the gospel of God that others may be brought into the same light and experience. We must become definitely and positively a people who are winners of souls. Let us make it a daily prayer and practice until the fruitage begins to be seen. Amen.

WHO: ME

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