

SPRING TERM 2024 – WEEK 10

BUILDING A COMMUNITY THAT IS **HOLY** (2)

IT'S HARD BEING HONEST! THERE, I SAID IT. I SOMETIMES HAVE A TENDENCY TO "BEND THE TRUTH." TO ADJUST THE FACTS TO SUIT MY OWN NARRATIVE. TO WANT TO MAKE MYSELF LOOK BETTER THAN I AM. AND I'M GUESSING I'M NOT ALONE IN THIS.

THIS WEEK, AS WE CONTINUE OUR SERIES ON BUILDING A COMMUNITY THAT IS HOLY, WE ARE FOCUSING ON THE STORY OF ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA FROM ACTS 5. IT'S A SHOCKING STORY. AND IF I'M HONEST, IT SCARES ME.

MARK PARSONS

²⁹ 'NOW, LORD, CONSIDER THEIR THREATS AND ENABLE YOUR SERVANTS TO SPEAK YOUR WORD WITH GREAT BOLDNESS. ³⁰ STRETCH OUT YOUR HAND TO HEAL AND PERFORM SIGNS AND WONDERS THROUGH THE NAME OF YOUR HOLY SERVANT JESUS.'

³¹ AFTER THEY PRAYED, THE PLACE WHERE THEY WERE MEETING WAS SHAKEN. AND THEY WERE ALL FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT AND SPOKE THE WORD OF GOD BOLDLY.

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 WAS **NO NEEDY PERSON 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.

ARE THE SCRIPTURES MERELY HISTORICAL RECORDS, OR A TEMPLATE FOR TODAY?

MANY BELIEVE THAT THE WESTERN CHURCH HAS EXCHANGED THE POWER AND IMPACT OF THE EARLY CHURCH FOR A FORM OF GODLINESS WHICH DENIES ITS POWER — WHAT DO YOU THINK?

THE CHURCH IS CALLED NOT SIMPLY TO TALK ABOUT THE KINGDOM BUT TO SHOW PEOPLE WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE. Do YOU AGREE?

THIS PASSAGE SHOWS A STRONG LINK BETWEEN THE INNER LIFE OF THE EARLY CHURCH AND ITS OUTWARD IMPACT ON SOCIETY. IS THIS TRUE OF CHRIST CHURCH?



WHAT IS A COMPLACENT APPROACH TO SIN
KILLING IN OUR COMMUNITY?

IT'S EASY TO THINK HOLINESS IS ABOUT BIG GESTURES, BUT MAYBE IT'S THE LITTLE THINGS THAT COUNT THE MOST? PETER CONDEMNS ANANIAS, NOT BECAUSE HE LIED TO THE COMMUNITY (HE DID) BUT BECAUSE ULTIMATELY, HE LIED TO THE HOLY SPIRIT. IT'S A REMINDER THAT EVEN WHEN WE THINK WE GOT AWAY WITH IT, OUR HEAVENLY FATHER SEES EVEN WHAT IS DONE IN SECRET.

MARK PARSONS

... WHEN YOU PRAY, GO INTO YOUR ROOM, CLOSE THE DOOR AND PRAY TO YOUR FATHER, WHO IS UNSEEN. THEN YOUR FATHER, WHO SEES WHAT IS DONE IN SECRET, WILL REWARD YOU. MATTHEW 6:6

² THERE IS NOTHING CONCEALED THAT WILL NOT BE DISCLOSED, OR HIDDEN THAT WILL NOT BE MADE KNOWN. ³ WHAT YOU HAVE SAID IN THE DARK WILL BE HEARD IN THE DAYLIGHT, AND WHAT YOU HAVE WHISPERED IN THE EAR IN THE INNER ROOMS WILL BE PROCLAIMED FROM THE ROOFS. LUKE 12

*REPENT, THEN, AND TURN TO GOD, SO THAT YOUR SINS
MAY BE WIPED OUT, THAT TIMES OF REFRESHING MAY
COME FROM THE LORD*

ACTS 3:19

WE MAY STRUGGLE BEING HONEST WITH EACH OTHER,
BUT CAN WE AT LEAST BE HONEST WITH HIM?

MARK PARSONS