

*Sometimes we forget the most important people...*

- For example: a wedding
  - Trying to please everyone except the bride and groom
- Other examples?
- What happens when we gather as a church for worship?
  - We have gathered in God's holy presence

**Not just a friendly gathering...**

**Acts 5:1-16**

Chinese: page 1770

Spanish: page 1390

Brown: page 1094

Green: page 746

*The Beginning of the Christian Church*

**The church grew in numbers,  
yet they encountered opposition from authorities  
So they prayed...**

“Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to **speak your word with great boldness**. Stretch out your hand to **heal and perform signs and wonders** through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”

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.

*Acts 4:29-31*

*The Beginning of the Christian Church*

There were no poor people in the church

Because rich people sold land or houses, gave the money to the apostles, who then gave the money to the needy

Barnabas was honored for doing this

***Acts 5:1-16***

1-2: Ananias & Sapphira: A joint deception

3-6: • It seems: they saw the praise Barnabas received

7-11: and they wanted some of that praise

12-16:

Chinese: page 1770

Spanish: page 1390

Brown: page 1094

Green: page 746

***Acts 5:1-16***

1-2: Ananias & Sapphira: A joint deception

3-6: Ananias: confrontation and God's judgment

7-11: • Peter is not the main figure. God is  
• Judgment was God's choice

12-16: • There is a huge difference between  
defiance and repentance when caught in sin  
• “a broken and contrite heart,  
you, God, will not despise.” *Psalm 51:17*  
• God's severe judgment of Ananias is actually  
evidence of His amazing patience at other times

- Satan is...
  - An evil spirit who opposes God
  - He was created good, but then rebelled against God
- Satan is attacking the church
  - In obvious ways: Persecution
  - In subtle ways: “As a wolf in sheep’s clothing”
- Satan uses people (prompting, guiding, ...)
- Yet human responsibility stays the same
  - God knows our hearts that need no coercion to sin
  - All are accountable to God
  - “God is not mocked” whether or not we see his action

- Attacks by Satan can be...
  - Spiritual, such as evil spirits
  - “Merely human”
    - But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. “Get behind me, Satan!” he said. **“You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.”**

*Mark 8:33*

*Acts 5:1-16*

- 1-2: Ananias & Sapphira: A joint deception
- 3-6: Ananias: confrontation and God's judgment
- 7-11: Sapphira: confrontation and God's judgment
- Peter gave her a chance to repent
  - 12-16:
    - Honored her independence
    - Getting caught doing wrong doesn't change the heart
      - Regret is not confession and repentance
    - To test the Lord = intentionally doing wrong while hoping He won't respond

*Acts 5:1-16*

- 1-2: Ananias & Sapphira: A joint deception
- 3-6: Ananias: confrontation and God's judgment
- 7-11: Sapphira: confrontation and God's judgment
- Who would want to visit or join that church??
- 12-16:

*Acts 5:1-16*

- 1-2: Ananias & Sapphira: A joint deception
- 3-6: Ananias: confrontation and God's judgment
- 7-11: Sapphira: confrontation and God's judgment  
Who would want to visit or join that church??
- 12-16: Power, awe, and growth
- Amazing miracles!
  - "Salutary fear": healing & protecting fear of God
  - Continued growth
  - Believers brought people to the presence of God

*The Big Idea*

**When Christians gather as God's people**

**powerful**  
**they gather in the presence**

**of God**  
**the holy**  
**& healing**

At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps  
 and punish those who are complacent,  
 who are like wine left on its dregs,  
 who think, '**The LORD will do nothing,**  
**either good or bad.**'

*Zephaniah 1:12*

When we gather for worship, we can be...

- More concerned about people than God
- More concerned about people's opinions than God's
- Not expecting God to do anything
- Treating sin as a small thing

**complacent** = uncritical approval of self  
**on its dregs** = 'unmoved' wine that goes bad

At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps  
 and punish those who are complacent,  
 who are like wine left on its dregs,  
 who think, '**The LORD will do nothing,**  
**either good or bad.**'

*Zephaniah 1:12*

- We should expect more from our worship gatherings
  - We gather in the presence of the all-powerful,  
 all-knowing, all-holy God
  - who is living and active in the world today

At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps  
 and punish those who are complacent,  
 who are like wine left on its dregs,  
 who think, '**The LORD will do nothing,**  
**either good or bad.**'

*Zephaniah 1:12*

- We should expect more from our worship gatherings
  - Holiness of God
    - Take sin seriously: not merely denial, regret
  - Healing from God
    - Expect heart change by the hand of God

At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps  
 and punish those who are complacent,  
 who are like wine left on its dregs,  
 who think, '**The LORD will do nothing,**  
**either good or bad.**'

*Zephaniah 1:12*

- We should bring people to encounter God
  - Power of God's presence among His people
  - Not the worship team, or the preacher, or the friendly people, or the meal, or the...
  - We bring people to encounter God!

- Isn't it arrogant of us to say that coming to church is coming to a place of God's presence?
  - How dare we say that coming to church is anything less??
  - If God is not here, it is not a church
  - If God is here, His presence is holy and healing

*The Big Idea*

**When Christians gather as God's people**

**powerful**  
**we gather in the presence**

**of God**  
**the holy**  
**& healing**