

Acts 4:32-5—Empowered for Authenticity

- **Intro**

- **Recap:**

- Up to this point we have seen the promise of Christ to his people that they would carry the gospel from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth.
 - Then we see Jesus send the Spirit, the power source, by which these people will be fueled to accomplish the task.
 - Then we've seen how the believers in Jerusalem are gathered together in the first ever local church that is marked by unity and generosity and gladness and compassion and boldness. These people are in lockstep together and God is working miraculously through them in spite of rejection and persecution.
 - To say the least, the church at Jerusalem HAS GOT IT GOING ON!

- **2 Traits of A Spirit-Filled Community (v.32-35):**

- **Unified in Belief**

- v.32—"the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul."

- **Unified in Practice**

- v.32—"no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common."

- v.34—"There was not a needy person among them"

- **THIS IS A GOSPEL-TRANSFORMED CREW**

- The gospel has loosened their grip on STUFF and TIGHTENED their grip on people!!

- **The Big Threat to a Spirit-Filled Community (5:1-11):**

- **The threat to drift toward hypocrisy**

- Ananias sees Barnabas sell this land and give it all away and instead of seeking the Lord for a heart of generosity like that, he chooses to seek the approval and applause of man by pretending.

- v.3—"lie to the holy Spirit"

- v.4—"Why is it that you have CONTRIVED this deed in your heart?"

- This is Ananias saying, "I saw Barnabas do this. Now, I am going to SCHEME it up so that it looks like I am a certain way but actually get to keep some of this for myself." AND GOD KILLS HIM FOR IT!!

- **Why we fall into hypocrisy:**

- **We've forgotten what the gospel says is true of us.**

- We forget that what grace says is, "you are a sinner in need of a Savior," and begin to think that now we are good people and have moved on from that.

- **WE ARE IN PROCESS!! THAT IS FREEING....BREATHE!!!**

- **At the Core—HYPOCRISY = ACTIONS - HEART**

- We are doing things and saying things without any concern for where our heart is or actually seeing it be transformed.

- Essentially, what Ananias is doing here is just this. He doesn't say, "Gosh, I have a wicked heart. God, make me a man of generosity. Take my hands off of my stuff and help me live open-handedly." Rather, he just says, "Oh, I saw Barnabas do this. I'll just do it too."

- **We've strayed away from walking in the true gospel community.**

- **Kind of community that allows us to deal with our sin and weakness and then walk along side us in encouragement and accountability and love.**

- **Proverbs 27:17—as iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.**

- These aren't romantic sparks...these are the sparks of deep biblical community where we are walking and growing together!
- Hebrews 3:13—Exhort one another everyday, as long as it is called 'today', that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.
- SIN IS SO OFTEN NOT OBVIOUS—IT IS DECEITFUL. And WE are the first to be deceived by it.
- **The Warning from Ananias and Sapphira**
 - This story serves as a SIGN, much like the healing miracles, of God's promise of judgment to those who share in the same hearts as these people!
 - While it may be virtually impossible from the outside to distinguish the truly repentant heart from a seasoned faker...NOTHING IS HIDDEN/SECRET FROM GOD!
 - We WILL NOT find ourselves before him having successfully tricked him!
 - Matthew 10:27—there is a day coming when all the secrets of our life will be brought into such clear light before God that it will be like they are being shouted from the rooftop!
 - **GOSPEL DEFINITION**—in Christ we are KNOWN and LOVED
 - We are more wicked in God's sight than we ever realized, yet more loved and accepted than we ever dreamed!!
- **Gospel Response to Hypocrisy**
 - **Repent of the Veneer**
 - We will never grow in our knowledge of the Lord and his word if we never actually admit we have a need there.
 - We will never grow in our battle against lust if we never admit that we have a problem there.
 - We will never grow in our battle for contentment if we never truly acknowledge our weakness there.
 - **Embrace Authenticity**
 - We will ONLY do this to the degree that we agree with what the gospel says of us—that we are imperfect sinners in need of a Savior who have been RESCUED from our sin and are in process of becoming like Jesus!
 - It is that truth that frees us from scheming and lying and pretending. It is this truth that reminds us that until Jesus comes again or we breathe our last, WE ARE NOT PERFECT and its not just ok, it is expected!
 - It is this truth that causes us to press into CHRIST who is constantly shaping us.
 - It is this truth that causes us to press into COMMUNITY that will be the grace of God to us to walk with us, support us, encourage us, call us out and walk toward maturity together with us!