

# Holiness

Acts 5-7

**What is Luke trying to tell us in these chapters? What is the Lord reminding us in these words?**

- The church is growing > we see the beauty, joy, success, and honor that the apostles and new believers get to walk in
- We have been introduced to the glorious rewards of the church > intentional community, prayer, boldness
- In Acts 5, we see the deception and movement of Satan into the congregation through the actions of Ananias and Sapphira
- So far we have seen the beauty but here we are introduced to the possibility of Satan filling someone's heart and attempting to break apart the church > Acts 5:3
- It came with no precedence, nothing led to the sin of Ananias and Sapphira but the unidentified sin that was already walking in
  - This led to their sudden death
- Acts 5, we see how heartbreaking and daunting it is to be caught in sin > Acts 5:11
- God was not going to let that sin truly infiltrate the walls of His growing kingdom > He appointed Peter to bring that sin to light > Acts 5:3
- The story of Ananias and Sapphira, although horrible and devastating, acts as a reminder to help us understand the heaviness of what it means to be a follower of Jesus and to carry His holiness within > pg. 85
  - "Their sin is imitated in many ways today, we can create or allow the impression that we are people of the Bible or prayer when we are not. We can exaggerate our spiritual accomplishments or effectiveness to appear something we are not. It is too easy to be happy with the image of spiritually without the reality of a spiritual life."  
- Enduring Word Commentary
- The Lord sent the Holy Spirit for a reason and that was not and still is not something to take lightly > "God meant business when He sent the Holy Spirit to dwell in us."
- As children of God, we are called into holiness which means walking closer with Him > pg. 86
- Now that Jesus is no longer physically here with us on earth, we are called to be accountable for our holiness and how that influences those around us > He now constructs His temple in the deepest depths of our hearts and the intimacy we have through a relationship with Him and the Spirit > a strong temple/building cannot stand without a firm foundation which we can find through holiness > Matthew 7:24-27

- We are not meant to walk with the Lord and discover genuine holiness alone > we are given the Spirit and called to be in community> to help guide us along the path the Lord has set before us > Hebrews 12:1-2
- We see what this looks like at the end of Acts 5 > through the boldness and fruit that is flourishing from the lives of the disciples as they walk closely with the Spirit of the Lord, despite the efforts of the Sanhedrin to put a stop to their teachings
  - the apostles are thrown into prison and eventually set free > “The apostles left rejoicing at being considered worthy to suffer for their witness to Jesus’ name, which they boldly resumed despite the Sanhedrin’s threat”
  - Walking with God is not going to be easy and there will always be difficulty > 2 Corinthians 4:8-10,16-18, Romans 8:18
  - As we walk in holiness with the Father, we are able to see the fruit and growth that comes as a result of that > James 1:2-6
- We can observe what it looks like to walk in holiness and complete trust in the Lord through the actions of Stephen in Acts 6 and 7
  - Stephen is appointed by the apostles to be a deacon to assist and serve the congregation due to its exponential growth and expansion over the years > there are too many people and too little time for the apostles to reach everyone and every need of the church
  - Stephen was appointed to be a deacon but through his union with the Holy Spirit he stepped into greater opportunity
  - He spoke the message of Jesus with confidence and full trust in the plan God had for him
  - In his position, He spoke the Word of God with power, he proudly proclaimed the covenant promise of the Lord and it’s evidence through the years, dating back to the Old Testament times
  - Not for a second did Stephen stop to fear the circumstances around him
- Stephen is described as, “a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit” > Acts 6:5
  - My bible commentary reads that “His power was not physical strength or worldly knowledge but the power of the Holy Spirit”
- Stephen walked so closely with the Spirit that he was described as having the face of an angel > Acts 7:15
  - “There was an apparent visible manifestation of the brightness of the glory of God on his face”
- He was surrounded by his accusers with nowhere to turn but heaven where as he was surrounded, “he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God” Acts 7:55

- In the pressing minutes where Stephen's life was on the line he gazed to the Lord Almighty > in a moment where many of us would be incapacitated with fear, Stephen was at ease through the power of love and self control that the Lord has to offer that Paul talks about in > 2 Timothy 1:7
- Stephen understood what it meant to walk by the Spirit in true holiness with the one who created it all
- I know we are not all placed in life threatening situations as Stephen was, but I do believe we are given countless opportunities to die to ourselves each and every day. And every single time we are presented with the opportunity to look to heaven and invite the Spirit to move.
- Like you and me, Stephen was just another ordinary man in the early church congregation. But he had one life transformational thing going for him; holiness
- Like I said before, holiness is directly tied to the deepest place of intimacy with the Lord, and it makes us more and more like Jesus
- That is something that is always available to us and we are always invited to step into deeper intimacy with the Lord
- "Many have little idea of how greatly they can be used of God as they walk in the power of the Holy Spirit" - David Guzik
- The Holiness Spectrum
  - Ananias and Sapphira o - they were not willing to give everything
  - Stephen 10 - he gave everything
  - Acts 7:55 Jesus STANDING at the right hand of God
- As Christians we are given the opportunity to put on the full armor of God by the power of the Holy Spirit > Ephesians 6:10-18
- My illustration from this week
- To be able to put on the full armor of God we need to be able to remove the accessories of this world
- What am I holding back?
- Invite the Lord in
  - Psalm 139