

## SERMON: Pentecostal Purity – The Fear of the Lord

**Text:** Acts 5:1–11

**Series:** *From the Outpouring to the Overturning — Acts 5 Mini-Series: Characteristics of the Pentecostal Experience*

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### Introduction

Don't forget the journey we are on ... Remember – on the Day of Pentecost, the Spirit of God didn't just visit a group of believers – He invaded their lives ... He didn't come to give them goosebumps nor something they could enter into their spiritual journal – He came to remake them into a completely new creation ... There is a purposeful intent behind the Baptism of the Holy Spirit – the recreation of a fallen being – into the expressed image of Jesus Christ ... Christianity has turned this original Pentecostal experience into something that would be completely foreign to these early disciples ... This is why it is essential that a group of believers recapture its original meaning and intent ... For if we don't – this present-day world will never be turned upside down for Jesus.

So, we have been examining this new creation – this *kainos* race of humanity ... I'll be honest – I want to function daily as they did ... I want to flow with and in the Spirit as they did ... I want to impact our community as they did ... And what we are discovering is the foundational development and impartation of what the Spirit had placed inside each person – who has had a true Pentecostal experience ... Let me throw this in here – a critical truth we discovered last week ... This Pentecostal experience – this infilling of the Spirit and impartation was not a one-off event ... This experience – this event – occurred more than once.

Here are a couple of foundational – transformational truths – we all need to get a deep revelational understanding of ... **First** - - **As you think** – from the depths of your programmed being – you will create your pathway in this life ... Because of this divine law – here is the **second** truth – **we need to awaken** – to what we became when we were born again – and what we are being transformed into – when we experienced the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Let me help with the “awakening part” ... The purpose of examining these early believer’s lives – is to discover the impartation that occurred through their experience ... See – you don’t know; what you don’t know – so we are on a journey of discovery ... It is undeniable that these believers were radically changed by their divine encounter ... The question becomes – what are those manifestations that occurred because of their impartation ... But – deeper than that – as we are not to simply looking to mimic manifestations ... We need to discover what occurred in the depths of their soul – that awakened them – which caused them to realize – what had been deposited inside of them – as a result of their experience.

As we come to Acts 5 – we discover a sobering and humbling empowerment that was placed inside of them – which was an impartation of Purity ... Now catch this - - This text is not about a minor mistake (*someone lying*) or an overreaction (*people died for lying*) ... It is about the terrifying beauty of a people – so alive in the Spirit – that deceit and deception – is exposed in their presence ... The same Spirit who gives us tongues of fire – also burns away the deceptions and lies that want to hide in our hearts ... Today, I want us to step into this moment – not as historians looking at an ancient tragedy ... But as disciples asking, “Do I carry this same Holy Spirit fire – that produces this same Fear of the Lord? ... Has the Spirit so purified me that what I am in public – I am exactly the same before Him in private?”

### Transition Sentence

Now – let’s walk into this passage with reverence – because in Acts 5:1–11 – we are stepping into a spiritual environment unlike anything - ordinary religion can produce or comprehend ... This is clearly an atmosphere charged with the Fear of the Lord ... Understand this - - This fear was not just an inward reverence hidden in each individual heart ... It was a manifested Presence – that surrounded this entire community ... An atmosphere of holiness that was so tangible – that deception itself – could not thrive nor survive within it.

### The Atmosphere of Pentecostal Purity

## Acts 5:1-2 Living Bible

But there was a man named Ananias (with his wife Sapphira) who sold some property ... 2 and brought only part of the money, claiming it was the full price. (His wife had agreed to this deception.)

**Catch this critical point** - - When the Spirit was poured out – and the building shook - - He didn't just once again fill each individual - - He literally saturated the environment / atmosphere with His Presence ... The early church was now living in an atmosphere that was charged with the Holiness of God ... Ananias and Sapphira – most likely unknowingly – walked into that holy atmosphere carrying a secret agreement to misrepresent themselves ... On the outside, - their offering looked generous – but their hearts were out of alignment with truth and holiness ... This is the mystery – and the danger of – a true Pentecostal atmosphere ... Within that environment – the inner life cannot remain hidden ... His Presence exposes the real condition of the heart – and that condition sticks out like a sour thumb ... The deception of Ananias and Sapphira wasn't about money – as some may believe ... Their deception – if allowed to stand – would have fractured the integrity of the kainos community ... The Spirit exposes the heart – not to punish – but to preserve.

## Reflection

In such an atmosphere, - the soul cannot pretend ... Just as darkness is dissolved by the rising sun – so deception collapses – when exposed to the brilliance of God's holiness ... This is why the early believers lived with such awe and wonder ... They understood they were not just attending a meeting ... They understood they were living and breathing in the very atmosphere of Heaven ... Holiness was the very air they breathed – and the Fear of the Lord was the generator of that atmosphere

## Application

A Kainos being does not treat the Presence of God as some background detail – as “Oh isn't it wonderful to feel His presence in this place ... Isn't His presence so warm and comforting” ...

No ... We must learn - - and be aware of - - and be in awe of - His holy atmosphere ... We must allow it to continually align us – within and without.

### **Acts 17:28 The Voice**

For you know the saying, ... “We live in God; ... we move in God; ... we exist in God.” ... And still another said, “We are indeed God’s children.”

### **The Confrontation of the Spirit**

#### **Acts 5:3-4 Living Bible**

But Peter said, “Ananias, Satan has filled your heart. *(why did you let Satan fill you with the idea - that you could deceive the Holy Spirit?)* ... When you claimed this was the full price, - - you were lying to the Holy Spirit. ... 4 The property was yours to sell or not, - as you wished. ... And after selling it, - it was yours to decide how much to give. ... How could you do a thing like this? ... You weren’t lying to us, - but to God.”

Peter’s words cut right past the surface of Ananias’s actions – and laid bare the real issue - - the conspiracy of the heart ... This situation was not about a bookkeeping error ... It was about introducing deception – into a community – that had been birthed out of a Pentecostal experience ... Peter was once again – looking through the eyes of the spirit of discernment – saw right into Ananias’ deceiving heart ... Just as he looked into the soul of the beggar and saw faith to be healed ... Peter – looks into the soul of Ananias and sees a lying – seared consciousness ... Seeing with the eyes of discernment is a key gifting that is imparted through the Pentecostal experience.

**Catch this deep spiritual truth** ... Peter is resonating in harmony with the Holy Spirit that indwells him ... He is now able to see with the eyes of the Spirit – to discern the soul’s condition of Ananias ... Peter confronts a condition – not a demon *(why did you let Satan - fill you - with the idea - that you could deceive the Holy Spirit?)* ... The condition Peter was addressing was that of the idea of lying – which Ananias’ allowed to be placed in his heart ... Peter exposed this condition of heart for the protection and purpose of Kingdom advancement

... In the cripple man – kingdom advancement was healing ... In this situation it was for purity of community and instillation of the Fear of the Lord

### **Reflection**

The confrontation of the Spirit was both tragic and merciful ... Tragic because the wickedness of a heart was exposed ... But not only exposed – I believe the heart was seared – which didn't allow for repentance – as repentance was never offered as an option ... Merciful because it reminds us to be aware – and on guard – against the schemes and wiles of the enemy of our soul

### **Application**

As a new creation being – we need to learn to identify spiritual confrontations' ... Both when the enemy of our soul is seeking to fill our hearts with ungodly lies ... And secondly – when the spirit is warning us – internally or through another kainos being – that the direction we are heading could be dangerous ... The Spirit always seeks to keep us walking in the Light – as we are children of the Light.

## **The Cleansing Fear of the Lord**

### **Acts 5:5-11 Living Bible**

As soon as Ananias heard these words, - he fell to the floor, dead! ... Everyone was terrified, - - 6 and the younger men covered him with a sheet and took him out and buried him. ... 7 About three hours later his wife came in, - not knowing what had happened. ... 8 Peter asked her, "Did you people sell your land for such and such a price?" ... "Yes," she replied, "we did." ... 9 And Peter said, "How could you and your husband even think of doing a thing like this - - conspiring together to test the Spirit of God's ability to know what is going on? ... Just outside that door are the young men who buried your husband, and they will carry you out too." ... 10 Instantly she fell to the floor, - dead, - and the young men came in and, - seeing that she was dead, - carried her out and buried her beside her husband. ... 11 Terror gripped the entire church and all others who heard what had happened.

The sudden deaths of Ananias and Sapphira were not acts of random judgment ... They were a holy sign from God – declaring that His Presence is among His people ... And His presence was not to be taken in a casual manner ... Catch this - - They both approached the man of God – and their offering to God – as a common or unholy thing ... Let's dig deeper

### **Leviticus 10:1-3; 8-10 Easy-to-Read Version**

Then Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu made a mistake. ... They took their incense dishes and put some fire and incense in them. ... But they did not use the fire that was on the altar - - they took fire from some other place and brought it to the Lord. ... This was not what He had commanded ... 2 So fire came from the Lord and destroyed Nadab and Abihu, - and they died there in front of the Lord. ... 3 Then Moses said to Aaron, "The Lord says, 'The priests who come near Me must respect Me. ... I must be holy to them and to all the people.'" ... So, Aaron did not say anything about his sons dying.

8 Then the Lord said to Aaron, ... 9 "You and your sons must not drink wine or beer when you come into the Meeting Tent. ... If you do, - you will die. ... This law continues forever through your generations. ... 10 You must be able to clearly tell the difference between what is holy and what is not holy, - - between what is clean and what is unclean.

Notice – the death of Ananias and Sapphira resulted in great fear throughout the church and local community ... This fear was one of trembling awe – a clear manifestation – that God Almighty was in their midst ... This fear was not meant to drive people away from God ... This is a fear which produces a deep reverence that anchors our soul in Him ... This fear purifies the heart and is designed to keep the believer's community undefiled from the world ... In a culture that treats His Presence lightly and at times irreverently ... Acts 5 reminds us that the fear of the Lord is an impartation from the Pentecostal experience that: One – anchors our soul in Him ... Two – creates an atmosphere that purifies – and allows us to thrive as a child of God.

### **Reflection**

The fear of the Lord is the soul's joyful awareness – that we are in oneness with Him – and that we are utterly holy ... This fear reminds us to keep our hearts guarded against the wicked

philosophies of this world ... This fear reminds us to protect our community against the infiltration of the wickedness of this culture ... This fear reminds us to never treat the things or persons of the Kingdom as common or unclean.

### **Application**

As new creation beings – it is essential that we cultivate this holy fear daily ... Not from a spirit of dread – but realizing that this type of fear keeps us walking in divine harmony with the indwelling Spirit ... This harmony will awaken us to the truth that we are pure – and blameless in His sight

### **Conclusion**

The account of Ananias and Sapphira presents itself as a holy mirror, asking each of us: What have I allowed into my heart that is out of alignment with the truth?... What cultural foolishness have I allowed the enemy to plant into my mind that I now consider to be truth?

Our Pentecostal experience – was not the birthing – of a casual, lukewarm faith ... The Pentecostal experience birthed a kainos being – a new creation humanity – marked by power – perseverance – and purity ... Purity – speaks to a life – that is so transparent before God – that there is no gap between the inner man and outer man ... Where there is no shadows, darkness, nor deception between the heart and the lips

The fear of the Lord in Acts 5 was not meant to make us recoil in horror - - it was meant to keep us advancing in holiness ... Purity is a wall of fire that guards our heart and mind – from this world's philosophies and the devil's devices ... The fear of the Lord – reminds us of Who He is and who we are ... This is our divine assurance of our unity with Him.

If we are going to be a people – who turn our world upside down for Jesus - - we must first let the Spirit turn us inside out ... We must allow the fear – the fire – to remove our secret

agreements with deception, - - cleansing the hidden motives, - - and establishing truth in the deepest places of our being.

So, let me leave you with this final thought ... A soul searching prayer that you should say daily ... “Holy Spirit, let the fire of Pentecost burn so purely in me today – that my very life becomes part of the atmosphere of holiness”

### **Closing Prayer**

Father, we stand before You – in the light of Your holiness ... You and You alone are God – and there is none other ... By Your Spirit – You see into the deep – inner chambers of our hearts ... Nothing is hidden from You ... This morning, we have discovered the power of Purity ... I ask that You would ignite the flame of Your Spirit in our heart ... Burn away the residue of deception – religious and worldly philosophies – the comfort of compromise – and the pride of arrogance.

Today, we welcome the impartation of the Fear of the Lord ... Let that holy atmosphere that this fear brings – always rest upon us and around us ... May this holy atmosphere rest upon our homes – be present within our gatherings – and be an ever-present witness to the world ... May we be a people of faith and truth without mixture – holy and blameless ... May the purity of our lives and the power of Your Spirit work together to turn our world upside down for Your glory. In the mighty name of Jesus I pray - - Amen.