



SERIES: ACTS - WHEN THE WORLD TURNED UPSIDE DOWN
MESSAGE TITLE: RADICAL TRANSPARENCY

SPEAKER: BRAD WILLIAMS
DATE: SUNDAY, MAY 31, 2020

MESSAGE SUMMARY

BIBLICAL TEXT(S): Acts 4:36-5:11

Acts chapter 5 tells a strange tale. As people in the early church are willingly selling their possessions in order to provide for other church members, a husband and wife team get an idea. They sell a field, give some of the proceeds to the church, but keep back some of the proceeds for themselves while claiming to give all. Peter confronts them about their deceit, and they both end up dead.

Though this story may seem harsh to us at first glance, it teaches us an important lesson. Authenticity is central to the success of the church. There can be no true Christian community if people pretend to be what they are not. Hypocrisy is something that will destroy the church from within. This story demonstrates to us the serious danger of inauthenticity.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help lead your group through a progression of engagement with the Bible passage(s) and the speaker's message. These can help your group understand and apply the teaching more profitably

LEAN IN

These are icebreakers and warm ups, mostly just to get the group talking and start the flow of conversation. Choose one and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.

1. What comes to your mind when you hear the word "hypocrite"?
2. Who do you know (or know of) who is a radically generous person?
3. How can you tell if a person is fake or authentic?
4. What was your high/low for this past week (or since the group last met)?
What was the best thing that happened and the worst thing that happened?

LOOK DOWN

These are questions about the Bible passage(s) and observations about what's been read. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max.

1. What do you learn about the Christian community in Acts 4:32-37 that helps us better understand the context of this story?
2. What did Ananias and Sapphira do?
3. How did Peter describe their actions?
4. What happened to Ananias and Sapphira as a result of their actions?
5. How did the church respond to these events?

cont.

CONTINUED:

LOOK OUT

These questions help connect the world of the Bible to today. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max.

1. How do Christians today provide for one another? How is this similar and how is it different from what is described in Acts 4:32-37?
2. Can you think of a modern-day situation where people lie to God (and/or others) in a way similar to what Ananias and Sapphira did (maybe not about money, but any situation where people try to present themselves as being better than they are)?
3. Pastor Brad defined hypocrisy as practicing something on the surface that isn't true in the heart, putting on a false self, and/or pretending to be something we are not. How is this definition similar or different to how you've seen hypocrisy defined elsewhere?
4. How have you seen hypocrisy impact a community or your relationships with other people?
5. Who do you know who is a good example of what living a real, authentic, transparent Christian life should look like?

LOOK IN

These are questions that help you consider personal application. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max.

1. How have you provided for others in the past and/or how have you been provided for? How does God's grace inspire you to be more generous?
2. Have you ever tried to make yourself look better than you are? What happened? How does this story encourage or challenge you?
3. Are there areas in your life where you struggle to be transparent, authentic, or real? Why do you think those areas are difficult for you?
4. Is there anything in this sermon that really hit home with you or was especially convicting? What would it look like for you to embrace this newfound truth?
5. What's something you could do to become a more real, authentic, and transparent follower of Jesus?

LIVE IT OUT

These action steps help apply this week's message to day to day life. Choose one question and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.

1. What's one way that you can provide for someone else this week? If you're in need of help right now, who can you ask this week for assistance?

cont.

CONTINUED:

2. Is there a place in your life where you are constantly trying to appear better than you really are? What's one thing you can do this week to combat this? How can your group pray for you in this venture?
3. What's one thing that you can do this week to put into practice what you learned from this week's sermon?

Thanks to Ashleigh Rich and the ADT team this week for notes and questions, as well as Charissa Burns (@charissaburnsstudio on Instagram) for her illustrated notes, which normally appear on the following page.

acts 4:36-5:11
 When the world turned upside-down
 B4Church • Brad Williams 5/8/2020

In Acts these people were living the gospel so profoundly that it was changing world!

So far in this story the threats against the church have been from the outside, we get to a part of the story where the threat is from the inside. This still happens today. These internal threats are the greatest threats.

We need to be aware of these threats.

Acts 4:36-37 • tells of a man who sold a field and gave the money to the apostles
 Acts 5:1-11 • tells of a man & wife who also sold a field. He came and gave part of the money to the apostles. He had broken a commitment to share among the believers. Peter calls him out on this and he dies, then his wife lied about the sale of the land hours later and also died.

▶ People in the church were afraid. This was quick judgement

- we can try to explain it away or try to make it not be as harsh; HOWEVER, if this story is here in it's harshness IT MUST BE HERE FOR A REASON.

- what is the lesson and what could this possibly mean for us?

The church in Acts was radically generous! —▶ They did what was needed!

THE GRACE OF GOD DOESN'T MAKE US FORTUNATE RECEIVERS, IT MAKES US GENEROUS GIVERS.

The grace of God uproots our hearts idolatry of stuff.

▶ The grace of God pushes us to take care of each other's needs

—▶ You are part of a community, something beyond yourself.

For Peter he knows what it's like to be inauthentic and so he knows how important authenticity is, how important honesty is!

FEWER THINGS WILL KILL THE LIFE OF A COMMUNITY FASTER THAN PRETENDING.

HYPOCRISY WILL KEEP THE CHURCH FROM BEING WHAT IT WAS CREATED TO BE

Hypocrisy is the internal threat.

- Hypocrisy is
- practicing something on the surface that is not true in the heart
 - putting on a false self
 - pretending to be something we are not.

▶ we do this because there is a deep insecurity about who we are and what we are worth. so we pretend we are something else.

- THE GOSPEL IS...**
- An invitation to lay down the pretense
 - An invitation to be authentic.
 - An invitation to be transparent.
 - An invitation to be the kind of church that is PERFECTLY IMPERFECT and turn the world upside down.

↑ This erodes real community! It is destructive to the proclamation of Jesus. Hypocrisy will keep the world from turning upside down.