

The Seriousness of Sin

Acts 5:1-11

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Peter LaRuffa / Jul 7, 2019

(Communion will be celebrated using gluten-free bread.)

I. You need to know that even believers can be led into deep, dark sin.

A. Satan may not possess us, but he still messes with us.

Acts 5:3 - But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land?"

Luke 22:31,32 - "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail.

B. Even without Satan, our own sinful natures work against us.

James 1:14,15 - But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

We have every reason to believe that Ananias and Sapphira were probably believers (cf. Acts 4:32), but they were still susceptible to temptation, greed & hypocrisy.

II. You need to know how seriously God takes sin, especially the sin of hypocrisy.

Acts 5:5,10,11 - When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and breathed his last...Immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. When the young men came in they found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. And great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard of these things.

Throughout the Bible, God's most severe judgment seems to be reserved for hypocrites.

Matt. 23 - 6 times, Jesus says "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!"

Rom. 2:3,5 - Do you suppose, O man—you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself—that you will escape the judgment of God?... But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.

III. You need to be on the lookout for the presence - or absence - of the discipline of God in your life.

A. God instructs us to not tolerate persistent sin among His people, the church.

1 Cor. 5:12 - For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? God judges those outside. **“Purge the evil person from among you.”**

Matt. 18:17 - And if he refuses to listen even to the church, **let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.**

1 Cor. 5:2,4,5 - And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? **Let him who has done this be removed from among you...**When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.

B. God loves His children enough to discipline them.

Heb. 12:6,8 - For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.”...If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, **then you are illegitimate children and not sons.**

Christians aren't sinless, but a growing Christian should sin *less*. A Christian's response to the presence of sin is to confess and repent. If this doesn't happen, God loves us enough to discipline us in order to prevent sin from persisting among us.

The absence of repentance and/or the discipline of God in a person's life is perhaps one of the surest signs that person is likely not a true, genuine believer.

IV. You need to know there's hope for the hypocrite and any sinner who believes the Gospel and repents of their sin!

Rom. 2:4 - Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that **God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?**

1 John 1:8,9 - If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Prov. 28:13 - Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, **but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy.**

Questions for Community Group and/or Personal Application:

- (1) How have you battled temptation in recent days?
- (2) Are you surprised to see how God dealt with Ananias' and Sapphira's sin? Why or why not?
- (3) Can you recall a time when God loved you enough to discipline you when you were persisting in sin?
- (4) Rom. 2:4 speaks of God's kindness being meant to lead us to repentance. How have you experienced this in your life?
- (5) Consider writing out the lyrics to the song we sang today, *His Mercy Is More*. Play the song, read along, and pray to God thanking Him for the gift of mercy & grace through Jesus Christ.