INTRODUCTION

- The divisions of chapters and verses in the Bible were inserted for better identification of text and learning purposes.
  - They were not in the original manuscripts.
  - Acts chapter 5, begins with a “BUT”:
    - This is a connective word.
    - Therefore, we need to read from Acts chapter 4:36 to 5:1-2

Acts 4:36-37, 5:1-2

For instance, there was Joseph, the one the apostles nicknamed Barnabas (which means “Son of Encouragement”). He was from the tribe of Levi and came from the island of Cyprus. He sold a field he owned and brought the money to the apostles.

1 But there was a certain man named Ananias who, with his wife, Sapphira, sold some property. He brought part of the money to the apostles, claiming it was the full amount. With his wife’s consent, he kept the rest.

- There are idioms (sayings) that we use today that originated from the scriptures:
  - “Drop in a bucket”
    
    Isaiah 40:15 NLT
    No, for all the nations of the world are but a drop in the bucket. They are nothing more than dust on the scales. He picks up the whole earth as though it were a grain of sand.
  - “Old as the hills”
    
    Job 15:7 NLT
    Were you the first person ever born? Were you born before the hills were made?
  - “Skin of your teeth”
    
    Job 19:20 NLT
    I have been reduced to skin and bones and have escaped death by the skin of my teeth.
  - “At your wits end”
    
    Psalm 107:27 NLT
    They reeled and staggered like drunkards and were at their wits’ end.
  - “A fly in the ointment”
    
    Ecclesiastes 10:1 NLT
    As dead flies cause even a bottle of perfume to stink, so a little foolishness spoils great wisdom and honor.

DECEPTION THAT STAINED THE CHURCH – “A FLY IN THE OINTMENT”

The first Church was powerful and growing

Acts 2:40-41 & 43

Then Peter continued preaching for a long time, strongly urging all his listeners, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation!” Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church that day—about 3,000 in all. A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders.
In Acts 5:1 & 2, we can say, “there is a fly in the ointment”
  - In another words, something that stinks – a spoiler – something that rots in what is for good!

Deception that stained the Church – “a fly in the ointment”.
  - The sin was hypocrisy, deception and lying.

The work of Satan is to attack the Church
  - If he can’t attack it from the outside, he does it from the inside.
  - He goes inside the Church to corrupt believers

ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA FELL INTO TEMPTATION

- The substance of the sin was hypocrisy – to deceive, by giving the impression they were like Barnabas who gave all that he sold to the Church
  - They wanted the product without the process.
  - They wanted the same recognition and acceptance without paying the price of dedication and commitment.

They did not have to give.

Acts 5:4
Peter said, “The property was yours to sell or not sell, as you wished. And after selling it, the money was also yours to give away. How could you do a thing like this? You weren’t lying to us but to God!”

- Giving must be out of a willing heart

  Exodus 25:1-2
  1 The LORD said to Moses, 2 “Tell the people of Israel to bring me their sacred offerings. Accept the contributions from all whose hearts are moved to offer them.”

- God loves a cheerful giver

  2 Corinthians 9:7
  “You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don’t give reluctantly or in response to pressure. “For God loves a person who gives cheerfully”

- It is more blessed to give than to receive

  Acts 20:35
  “And I have been a constant example of how you can help those in need by working hard. You should remember the words of the Lord Jesus: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’

- Money is not sinful but the love for money

  1 Timothy 6:10
  “For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the true faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows.”

- The source of all sin is Satan

  Acts 5:3
  Why have you let Satan fill your heart.

- All sin is against God
Acts 5:4
You weren’t lying to us but to God!

- When you lie to the Holy Spirit, you lie to God. He is the third person of the Trinity.
  - Illustrations:
    - David and Bethsheba
    - Psalm 51: 4
      Against you, and you alone, have I sinned; I have done what is evil in your sight. You will be proved right in what you say, and your judgment against me is just.
      - Joseph and Potiphar’s wife
    - Genesis 39:9
      No one here has more authority than I do. He has held back nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How could I do such a wicked thing? It would be a great sin against God.
  - Parents hurt when children break the law.
    - The teenaged boy who blogged against the late Lee Kuan Yew – it was the father who apologized for his son’s behaviour.

THE DETECTION THAT SAVED THE CHURCH – THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is God.
He is the third person of the Trinity.

- We see here two gifts of the Holy Spirit in operation
  - The gift of discernment
    - on seeing Ananias
  - The gift of knowledge Peter was able to tell Ananias
    - “you lied to the Holy Spirit and you kept some of the money” (Acts 5:3)

- The Bible says, the eyes of the Lord see all things.
  - Psalm 33:13 NLT
    The Lord looks down from heaven and sees the whole human race.
  - Psalm 90:8 NLT
    You spread out our sins before you—our secret sins—and you see them all.

- Sin has a way of taking your breath – sin kills
  - Acts 5:5
    As soon as Ananias heard these words, he fell to the floor and died. Everyone who heard about it was terrified.

- Then came Sapphira
  - Acts 5:7-11
    7 About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. 8 Peter asked her, “Was this the price you and your husband received for your land?” “Yes,” she replied, “that was the price.” 9 And Peter said, “How could the two of you even think of conspiring to test the Spirit of the Lord like this? The young men who buried your husband are just outside the door, and they will carry you out, too.” 10 Instantly, she fell to the floor and died. When the young men came in and saw
that she was dead, they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. Great fear gripped the entire church and everyone else who heard what had happened.

This was instant judgment as a result of sin.

- Does God judge the Church today?

1 Corinthians 11:29-32

29 For if you eat the bread or drink the cup without honoring the body of Christ, you are eating and drinking God's judgment upon yourself. 30 That is why many of you are weak and sick and some have even died. 31 But if we would examine ourselves, we would not be judged by God in this way. 32 Yet when we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned along with the world.

For the Church to demonstrate the life of Christ and the power of God – it must be sanctified!

Acts 5:11 Holy fear – there was purity

Great fear gripped the entire church and everyone else who heard what had happened.

Acts 5:12-16 The Church demonstrated God's power

12 The apostles were performing many miraculous signs and wonders among the people. And all the believers were meeting regularly at the Temple in the area known as Solomon's Colonnade. 13 But no one else dared to join them, even though all the people had high regard for them. 14 Yet more and more people believed and were brought to the Lord—crowds of both men and women. 15 As a result of the apostles’ work, sick people were brought out into the streets on beds and mats so that Peter's shadow might fall across some of them as he went by. 16 Crowds came from the villages around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those possessed by evil spirits, and they were all healed.

- When the Church is sanctified, it will progress
  - It grew
    - Will the Church be free from persecution?

Acts 5:17-20

17 The high priest and his officials, who were Sadducees, were filled with jealousy. 18 They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail. 19 But an angel of the Lord came at night, opened the gates of the jail, and brought them out. Then he told them, 20 “Go to the Temple and give the people this message of life!”

CONCLUSION

- God will keep His Promise, made when He commissioned us to go and preach the Gospel. He will not leave us.

Matthew 28:19-20

19 Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. 20 Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

- Remember Satan’s strategy.

1 Peter 5:8

Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour.

James 4:7

So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

- Remember sin is serious.
  - When there is quality growth, there will be quantitative growth!