

FALL QUARTER SUNDAY SCHOOL 2015

THEME: ACTS – EXPOSING GOD’S CHURCH COMMUNITY IN ACTION!

UNIT ONE – “The Gains of their Actions”

UNIT TWO – “The Pains of their Actions”

UNIT THREE – “The Fame of their Actions”

“LESSONS IN GENUINE OR COUNTERFEIT STEWARDSHIP”



**Sunday School Lesson No. II, September 13, 2015
Rev. Frank A Davis, III - Pastor-Teacher**

Lesson Text: Acts 4:34-37; 5:1-11

Required Reading: Acts 4:32 – 5:11

Motto Text: Acts 4:34, *“Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold.”*

Reliable Resources: Union Gospel Press Expositor and Illuminator; Standard Lesson Commentary; UMI Precepts for Living; Word-Search 10 Electronic Library; The Book of Acts by E. C. Gillentine; The Book of Acts in 24 Lessons by E. L. Bynum; Acts, the Church in Action by David Jeremiah

Lesson Introduction:

The newly organized church has been growing by leaps and bounds. Jesus is being preached and many are turning from the basic traditions of historical Judaism to the Messiah of Judaism, Jesus Christ. Because of the preaching of Jesus Christ and the numbers who have received Him (over 8,000 at this point), the religious leaders have threatened the apostles to discontinue preaching in Jesus’ name, but the power of His name and the works that have been manifested are fueling the fire of evangelism.

Now in this week’s lesson we examine the blessings and curses of stewardship. I call the lesson **“Lessons in Genuine or Counterfeit Stewardship.”** We will see how gracious acts of liberal, loving giving leads some to attempt to seek fame and recognition through deception that will lead to their untimely demise. It’s a dangerous thing to be deceptive concerning the works of God. God desires honesty and total integrity in whatever we do as Christians, but Satan desires to disrupt the works of the kingdom. Let us be sure that we as Christians are genuine and not counterfeits in our stewardship!

Anticipated Power Points:

- **Barnabas, the Genuine Steward. Acts 4:34-37**
- **Ananias and Sapphira, the Counterfeit Stewards. Acts 5:1-11**

“LESSONS IN GENUINE OR COUNTERFEIT STEWARDSHIP”

LESSON OUTLINE

I. Barnabas, the Genuine Steward. Acts 4:34-37

Verses 34-35 are described by the Union Gospel Press Expositor and Illuminator in this way: “All the believers were in one accord. Such grace was poured out upon them that everyone shared everything. There was no jealousy or greed among them. Those who owned land and other valuables sold them to help provide support for those who were unable to manage on their own. The money from the sales was given to the apostles, and *‘distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.’*”

Now let me say here, this was not mandatory but the spirit of the new believers was very Jesus-minded and also perhaps because of the circumstances. Note: These people who were in great numbers in Jerusalem, came to celebrate the feasts of Passover, Unleavened Bread, First Fruits, and Pentecost. Now when the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost and the Church came into being, the excitement and the thought of Jesus returning to establish His Kingdom, caused many of this Jewish multitude to stay over their intended time.

With the wonders of the signs, miracles and preaching of the Gospel, along with the great numbers of converts, the resources of the new Christians were taxed. Of course the Temple leaders who rejected the Christ and Christianity, were never going to help support the need of the Christian faith. And so the early Church demonstrated the ultimate in stewardship by their unselfish support of each other. This brings us to exhibit (A), Barnabas the Genuine Steward. Barnabas – meaning, “*Son of Consolation.*” His given name was “*Joses*” or “*Joseph.*” His importance to be singled out seems to be that whenever you visit him in the book of Acts, he is a “*model of mercy, generosity and peace-making.*” (Union Gospel Press). Note: He sold a land possession and brought the money and laid it at the feet of the Apostles for the use of those who had needs.

He simply exhibits true genuine stewardship. This is an excellent quality of a Christian. He demonstrates the heart of Acts 20:35, “*It is more blessed to give than receive.*” Beloved, are you an example of Barnabas, a genuine steward? His stewardship was applauded by the Apostles. This leads us to Exhibit (B)...

II. Ananias and Sapphira, the Counterfeit Stewards. Acts 5:1-11

Much has been said in the circles of the saints concerning this interesting couple. But there is a thing or two I’d like to share to their end.

- A. There is no question about them being Christians; they were just careless saints who made a bad decision in being deceived by the devil. I Peter 5:8 warns us to, “*Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.*”
- B. Their original thoughts were noble, but not mandatory: wanting to sell some land to give a gift for the benevolent efforts of the needy.
- C. They were both in agreement and on one accord, but their plan was fiendish and caused their physical lives an early arrival into Heaven. I John 5:16 says, “*If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.*”
- D. They underestimated the person of the Holy Spirit who is God. He is present and knows everything about everybody. John 16:8, “*And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.*”

Now read and receive the clear absolute truth of this Christian couple who exemplified a counterfeit stewardship in Acts 5:1-10. They had good names: Ananias–“*The Lord is gracious*” and Sapphira–“*Beautiful.*” E. C. Gillentine summarizes the couple:

- “1. Their sin was deliberate. vv. 1-2
2. It was voluntary. vv. 3-4
3. It was deceitful. vv. 3-4
4. It was an act of covetousness—they wanted money and honor. (Col. 3:5-6)
5. It was an act of selfishness.
6. It was a wicked act—evil in principle and practice.
7. It was a sin to be punished and not pardoned.”

The counterfeit stewards Ananias and Sapphira’s plans got them the same end, death! They came in church at different times with the same lie and both died at the feet of the Apostle in the presence of the Holy Spirit!

Closing:

Beloved, what kind of steward are you today, Genuine or Counterfeit? The activities of Barnabas and the couple Ananias and Sapphira brought results of the Church’s boldness and purity. A genuine steward encouraged the Church. The counterfeit stewards’ hypocrisy kept people away from the Church. (Acts 5:11-13). What kind of steward are you?

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Looking Ahead:

September 20, 2015

Acts 5:27-29, 33-42

The Sunday School Lesson is taught each Wednesday at noon at Bibleway. All are welcome!

