

"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." v.10

God took Ananias and Sapphira's betrayal of unity seriously because Christ is building His community through the sending of the Holy Spirit.

And great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard of these things. v.11

The **whole church** (ἐκκλησία) was gripped with great fear!

How did this community grow?

The Church was faithful to God in unity before the people, and trusted God in obedience to His Word, while God caused the growth.

"Now many signs and wonders were regularly done among the people by the hands of the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon's Portico." v.12

The apostles were doing wonderful deeds; not just Peter.

"None of the rest dared join them, but the people held them in high esteem." v.13

The people were highly esteemed – highly spoken of by others!
The people around them saw their unique characteristics.

"And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, so that they even carried out the sick into the streets and laid them on cots and mats, that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them. The people also gathered from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed." vv.14-16

The preaching and teaching of the apostles led to more conversions by the hand of God through the Holy Spirit's work.

The new community was attracting people from towns around Jerusalem.

God was supernatural affirming this community and the apostles' message.

The Church is the community through which Jesus works (his arms and feet) within this age.

Unity is created by God in this community, but the members are to maintain it.
God's mercy is real...but so is his judgment.

How can members of this local church participate to grow in our unity?

How can we participate in the growth of the body of Christ, the Church?

Sunday, August 16, 2026
Chan Ling, Intern

ACTS—The Confident Witness of Jesus Christ
No. 13 | Witnessing in Jerusalem, pt. 5
Acts 4:31-5:16

Review

Acts is a theological history written to Theophilus to reveal how the early church was born and how it grew, developed, and progressed over first 30 years.

Primary Theme:

- Jesus and his continuing ministry through his apostles.
- The Holy Spirit empowering believers for faithful gospel proclamation for the growth of the universal church in different circumstances, different people groups, and different geographical locations.
- Those who hear and believe the witness of Jesus Christ can and should be confident in following the way by having confidence in God's word and truth.

Witnessing in Jerusalem, pt. 5

4:32–5:16

Overview

(3:1-8:3) Witnessing in Jerusalem

(3:1-5:42) Witnessing in the temple and from house to house

(3:1-4:31) Boldness in Opposition

(4:32-5:16) Esteem in Community

(5:17-42) Rejoicing in Suffering

Previously

The early church demonstrated their resolve for faithfulness to speak the Word of God with boldness by taking action.

What kind of community was the early Church in Jerusalem?

The early Church was esteemed in their community for their characteristics.

The early Church was united and committed to a common mission – disciple making.

"Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul," v.32

ESV **Ephesians** 4:1 I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called,² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love,³ eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.⁴ There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism,⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all

and through all and in all. ⁷ But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift.

The early Church was committed to taking care of one another's personal needs from a pure love in an orderly manner.

"...and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common." v.32

Some sold their property...as other believers had needs.

Though it is not a command, it is an opportunity to display brotherly love.

"There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need." vv. 34-35

Apostles had authority over how to distribute the proceeds; they assessed the believers' needs and administrated as was fitting.

The early Church was committed to continuing the ministry through the apostle's testimony of Jesus Christ with boldness.

ESV **Ephesians** 2:20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,

"And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all." v. 33

ESV **Ephesians** 4:8 Therefore it says, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men." ... ¹¹ And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, ¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, ¹⁴ so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.

Why are these characteristics fundamental to this particular community?

The Church is built by God and therefore it must reflect God's character.

Barnabas served as a positive example.

"Joseph, who was also called by the apostles Barnabas (which means son of encouragement), a Levite, a native of Cyprus, sold a field that belonged to him and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet." vv.36-37

He gave willingly and selflessly for the benefit of others.

Ananias and Sapphira served as a negative example.

"But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, and with his wife's knowledge he kept back for himself some of the proceeds and brought only a part of it and laid it at the apostles' feet." vv.1-2

Peter's confrontation of Ananias reveals ...

1. Ananias was deceived by Satan.
2. Ananias chose worldly gain.

As the new community began – Satan also began to work!

"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?'" v.3

What was the motivation of Ananias and Sapphira lying?

Peter continues,
"While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man but to God." v.4

"When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and breathed his last. And great fear came upon all who heard of it. The young men rose and wrapped him up and carried him out and buried him." vv.5-6

His death is not a judgment pronounced by Peter but by God.

Those who were witnesses responded with great fear.

The judgment of Ananias affirmed the holiness of God.

Peter's interaction with Sapphira ...

"After an interval of about three hours his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. And Peter said to her, 'Tell me whether you sold the land for so much.' And she said, 'Yes, for so much.'" vv.7-8

Sapphira confirmed by her answer that she was part of the plan.
"Peter said to her, 'How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out.'" v.9

It likely refers to a rebellion against God's mercy.

A rejection and ignorance towards God's loving-kindness.