**Unleashed - wk 5 - Drop Dead Fred**

**Acts is Jesus: The Sequel - It is Luke Volume 2**

**A narrative - the what now? - Childlike wonder -**

**Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, (locally) and in all Judea (geographically) and Samaria, (demographically) and to the ends of the earth.” (Globally)**

**The HS invaded the way they lived, and it affected everything!**

**Acts 4:32 All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. (It was desperate times) 33 With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. 34 There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales 35 and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need. (Selling & Sharing - completely committed to the kingdom and looking out for each other)**

**What a cool environment. Some say - Why can’t we do church like that… Are you sure? Selling and giving everything**

**Remember Acts is sometimes descriptive not prescriptive!**

**Not saying - We are supposed to sell everything and live in a commune**

**Why communal life? Left everything, no jobs, looked down on, living communally just to survive. They struggled next 30 yrs.**

**Is saying-when God’s grace is working in us we take care of each other**

**In times of crisis, everyone chips in.**

**Acts 4:36 Joseph, a Levite (religious background) from Cyprus, (Med. island) whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means Son of Encouragement),**

**Barnabas - some believe he's Acts 1 - Barsabus. Been w/ them from early days of Jesus. Later mentors new follower (Paul). He was an encourager in many ways. My Fav Acts Character.**

**So, Barney 37 sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet. (sales & shares – all in. Barney Loves you! Why mention this?**

**3 THINGS GOD CARES DEEPLY ABOUT**

**1 - God cares deeply about our heart – and giving reflects our heart**

**This is not about the dollars - but the devotion. It reveals the heart.**

**Sadly, teaching on giving has been used to milk and manipulate people - but that is not the majority - 85% of pastors are broke.**

**Some Thoughts about Giving**

* **When the Holy Spirit is moving in a heart, generosity follows**

**A sign of spirit filled living. (Acts 2:42-47) The HS changes how we view our possessions.**

**The heart is loosened in relationship to things - and tightened in relationship to people. A tight grip on stuff is a sure sign that you need to get alone with Jesus and let the HS work in you.**

**Generosity is a reflection of Christ in us. It follows a follower.**

* **Generosity breaks the hold of materialism and selfishness**

**It's almost impossible to white knuckle this world when generous**

**Barnabas - was not married to his materials - but saw them as a vehicle for life change and to help others and advance the Kingdom.**

**Culture does not teach us to be generous. Mints (pass out) look at the box - share side vs. not to share. God gives us all things to share - everything! If I give you a box of mints and tell you to share it… what if you did – what if you didn’t?**

**This is not just about giving at church - this a lifestyle of generosity**

**Being a giving person begins in the little stuff (tip, slice, stranger)**

**2 Co 8- First gave themselves to God then sacrificially to those in need**

**What if we all gave generously? Faithfully here and out there**

**What if we lived generous lives? Saw need and gave as able**

* **Generosity is a reflection of a grateful heart**

**Giving is a heart issue - God all I have is yours - I trust you deeply**

**2 vrs introduce a major NT character using the vehicle of his heart, giving. Freedom from things and a deep love for people and the poor.**

**Gratitude brings freedom – in many areas of life.**

**One being obsessed with possessions.**

**People in the community were like - cool Barnabas, that's encouraging Others - look at me, too. What follows is a stark contrast of generosity**

**A bizarre story often skipped - some think it shows God in a bad light**

**Luke gives the truth, even if it is uncomfortable - no cover up**

**A couple try’s faking their spirituality. Sometimes we do the same, trying to convince people we're stronger than we really are, have more, or know more than we actually do.**

**A STRANGE DAY AT THE CHURCH**

**Acts 5:1-** **Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. (Cool - just like barney) 2 With his wife’s full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles’ feet. (looking for the prominence and reputation like Barnabas) 3 Then Peter said, “Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart (heart issue) that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? (word of knowledge) 4 Didn’t it belong to you before it was sold? (You didn't have to do this, your choice) And after it was sold, wasn’t the money at your disposal? (you could give what you want - that would've been fine - but) What made you think of doing such a thing? (Why lie about it?) You have not lied just to human beings but to God.”**

**BTW - that is one of the proof texts of the HS as fully God**

**5 When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. (whoa – Peter was likely surprised too) And great fear seized all who heard what had happened. (uh yeah…) 6 Then some young men came forward, wrapped up his body, and carried him out and buried him. (the youth took him - plays out like a bad joke) 7 About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. 8 Peter asked her, “Tell me, is this the price you and Ananias got for the land?” “Yes,” she said, “that is the price.” (Lies just like Ananias) 9 Peter said to her, “How could you conspire to test the Spirit of the Lord? Listen! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also.” (knock knock - apparently it takes 3 hrs to dispose of a body) 10 At that moment she fell down at his feet and died. Then the young men came in and, finding her dead, carried her out and buried her beside her husband. (I can only imagine what these guys were talking about as they carried her out - dude! Never lying!) 11 Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events. (1st death in the community is by God's hand - judgment always begins with the house of God)**

**They are the exact opposite of Barnabas.**

**This was an issue of hypocrisy not finances.**

**Hey, how was church today? Well, a couple came in for counseling, lied and now they're dead. If that happened more often that would help the counseling process - It'd speed things up.**

**We don't always understand why God does certain things... unique for the NT - Sadly I think there is still plenty of people faking it in churches/**

**2 - God cares deeply about our integrity**

**Problem was not they did not give all, but they lied and acted like they gave it all**

**The did not need to lie about it - but they were trying to look good and impress people (If God still responded today like he did then - this place might be empty)**

**Why was God so harsh? It’s only a half-truth, white lie- little deception.**

**A warning that phony Christians will be exposed and judged.**

**God despises hypocrisy - hundreds of verses on lying - Satan is even called the Father of all lies - God opposes the liar!**

**Proverbs 6:16 There are six things the Lord hates, seven that are detestable to him: 17 haughty eyes, (arrogance) a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, 18 a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, 19 a false witness who pours out lies, and a person who stirs up conflict in the community. (Notice several are issues of deception)**

**Proverbs 12:22 Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, but those who act faithfully are God's delight.**

**Proverbs 19:9 - A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who breathes out lies will perish. (You can not expect to succeed living lies)**

**Peter says - you could have given what ever you wanted... why lie about it?**

**They sought celebrity status - to be known as a super spiritual.**

**Their sinful attitude does not have a place in the church.**

**Sin is a serious and deadly matter to God. Honestly most would find God’s actions offensive, but that reveals our attitude towards God holiness. It is not why did they die – but why do we remain alive.**

**We live by his mercy – we breath by his mercy.**

**God is low to anger. But his patience is designed to lead us to repentance, not to become bolder in our sin. (Heb 2:3)**

**If we are going to stand up out there - we better be the real deal in here**

**3 - God cares deeply about the church**

**This is big - possibly the reason for God's quick response**

**This community was the foundation of what Jesus promised (Ma16- I will build my church and the gates of hell won’t prevail) Acts is our foundation**

**God was sending a clear warning - Don't mess with my model. God was protecting the foundation of the body of Christ.**

**v.11 Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events. (first time in Acts ecclesia is used - this is the first mention of - church)**

**The Bible is a projection of a community - not just individuals (God often judged a people based on a person) they rise and fall together - His community will not be dragged down by two people seeking fame.**

**How did they lie to God - God knows all things. Perhaps they didn’t really believe the HS was present or real at all. “They’ll never know.”**

**They lied to their community - God loves His church so much - and sees this personal - it was as if they lied to God himself**

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**Many see God in the OT as fire and NT as flowers (Pic) nowhere does it describe God has a loving flower- but always a fierce, holy, loving God.**

**Similar events happened two other times on the OT -**

**2 Sam - Uzzah - falls dead for touching the Ark without reverence**

**Joshua 7 - Achan - falls dead for keeping things devoted to God**

**In both they were corrupting the community and disrespecting God . God won't have it . Same God in the OT as the NT.**

**God wants to make it clear, we are diff from the world - we are not here to look good - but to love and look out for each other.**

**God may not take a life anymore, but he will take the life of a church**

**God may not kill someone, but he will kill a church and let it die - If it's not built on integrity, generosity, and a passionate concern for others.**

**God was working the NT church – it is important to know that - Revival is often accompanied with judgement. They walk together. In the gospels the message was, repent for the kingdom of God is at hand.**

**Two things to avoid like the plague in church**

* **Pretending (this is about playing…)**

**They looked like Barnabas on the outside - but not on the inside.**

**Pretending's been around a while - Proverbs 13:7 One person pretends to be rich, yet has nothing; another pretends to be poor, yet has great wealth.**

**Pretending condemned the religious of Jesus day (hypocrisy)**

**Pretending killed Ananias and Sapphire (hypocrisy)**

**Pretending will shrivel your soul**

**People are obsessed with image - looking better than they are, Presenting a person you're not (Social Media alert).**

**This story reminds us, we can’t hide from or lie to God**

**You might fool others – but you can’t fool God. No hidden rooms.**

**Usually the pretenders eventually - come to light**

**The closer we grow in Jesus, the desire for approval of others diminishes - we are secure in Christ - I care what you think - but I care more about what God thinks.**

**We also tend to - Pretend everything is fine when we need help...**

**Proverbs 12:9** **Better to be a nobody and yet have a servant (people that care for you) than pretend to be somebody and have no food. (not admitting need)**

**We can always be honest with God - he loves the honest broken heart**

**There's no pretending in the bible- the characters & heroes reveled warts and all**

* **Projecting**

**There was never the assumption they had to be like Barnabas in this.**

**Telling someone to walk their walk like you walk your life**

**Projecting will harden your heart to others and theirs.**

**God gives us each passion and hearts for particular things but...**

**On fire for overseas missions – student ministry - kids - homeless shelters - abused family ministry - teen moms - cancer awareness - fill in the blank - and look down on others who don't feel the same way...**

**“What - I sold my field but you didn't sell yours?”**

**Romans 14:1** **As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions. (on non-essential issues) 4 Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand. (v.10 we will all stand before God one day) 12 So then each of us will give an account of himself to God. (Their are clear issues – and gray areas... don't project your convictions onto another - discuss them, examine the Word, and follow the HS)**

**Pretending and projecting will kill a church**

**Leaves people feeling like they never measure up.**

**Acts 5:11 Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events. (a healthy fear - they began to honestly evaluate what God wanted of them and took it serious - they got God's perspective)**

**Look what follows – miracles, signs, and wonders.**

**What results we find out next week**

**In the mean time - let's be generous people - here have a mint.**

**Barnabas – Encourage**

**Ananias – Gracious and merciful**

**Sapphira – Beautiful**

**Acts 5:12 The apostles performed many signs and wonders among the people. And all the believers used to meet together in Solomon’s Colonnade. (public court at the Temple) 13 No one else dared join them, even though they were highly regarded by the people. (they were avoided out of fear from the authorities) 14 Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number. 15 As a result, people brought the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and mats so that at least Peter’s shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by. 16 Crowds gathered also from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those tormented by impure spirits, and all of them were healed.**

**Interesting thought - Some think all giving should always be secret - look at Barnabas, his was known for it and it was used to encourage others.**

**Important thing is not if someone knows, but why they know. Are you looking for the praise of people? If you give to impress- it’s fake / but if you give to assist - it's the kingdom**

**Are you seeking the praise of man or to praise God? Matt 6:1-4 - Beware of doing things to be seen & impress others (prayer & fasting (pray in secret) - does that mean that we are not to pray publicly? Jesus encourages us to and Jesus did. This is about trying to impressing others, to be "seen" as righteous / LK 21:1-4 (widows - Jesus pointed it out to encourage us)**