

Cell Notes Acts of the Apostles

June 7th 2009 Acts 5

Read **Acts ch 5**. The story of Ananias and Sapphira is pretty chilling. However, if we believe that 'all scripture is God breathed and useful for teaching.. correcting and training in righteousness' (2 Tim 4.16), there is something to be learned here.

The early Christians understood that Jesus meant them to share their goods and to ensure that all were cared for. (Look back to **Acts 2. 44 - 47, 4.32**) But this sharing was not forced. It was the fruit of transformed hearts. So, it is important to note here that the couple do not come under judgement for keeping some money for themselves, but for lying to the church, pretending that they were handing over the whole proceeds of the sale while keeping back a sum for themselves.

Peter's harsh treatment particularly of Sapphira is hard to swallow. Maybe we will never understand it. What is easier to understand is why the matter was so serious. If the couple's attitude and behaviour had stayed unchallenged it would have poisoned and spoiled the beautiful, powerful and amazing thing that God was doing among these people.

The Holy Spirit was able to move in and through the Church so powerfully because they held nothing back from God or one another, and did not give in to fear or greed. Even after spending a night in prison, the apostles obeyed the voice of the angel and went right back into the temple precincts and continued to 'speak to the people all the words of this life' (5.20)

We, by contrast, have become used to a situation in which the behaviour of A & S is the norm, and the full hearted life of faith, generosity and sharing we read about in Acts has become a dream.

Do you think God is drawing us back into a way of life closer to the life we read about in Acts? Is he challenging you in some particular area of your life?