

The Lie of Ananias and Sapphira

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[0:00] Hey everyone, yeah we're gonna have a special treat today won't just be me but I will invite him up in a little while we've been going through the book of acts we are on episode five and so far we've had a lot of things happen we had someone the first flight someone ascends into heaven and then we have the first sermon well the spirit fills this Peter and then there is a first sermon that comes and that's when we get the first church and then we saw the first healing through Peter and John but then came the first persecution because they got into trouble because they heal this lame beggar of 40 years and then the Sadducees come the Sadducees who are the wealthy elite aristocrats of society and they say hey you are rocking the boat too much we have a good arrangement for us and our family and our society you can't change that and so they get annoyed because they're sharing the gospel because they don't the Sadducees don't believe in the resurrection they don't believe in the supernatural they'd rather just say hey everything that's good is gonna be here now let's just enjoy what we have in this day and age is kind of their whole premise and then Peter and John they ignore him they ignore them and then they get their own into prison but then they get released out and then they go back to their room maybe a room of this size with this amount of people and they go hey guys we can't be stopped or rather it's not we can't be stopped he can't be stopped we were stood in front of the group of people that put our Lord to death and they couldn't stop him and now they can't stop stop us and so let's pray together not that we would dominate over this group of people not that they would the Lord would remove the threats but that we would get boldness that we would be courageous as we face more and more threats and then the earth shook the room shook and I asked us last week when was the last time they experienced that well there would have been when Jesus was crucified can you imagine just the just the for the kinesthetic learners there just to feel wow the last time this happened was when our Lord said it is done the veil is torn he entered into the holy place and by his blood we enter into that same holy place and so when they prayed again and the same thing happened they would have been filled with courage they would have been filled with boldness to go out and share the gospel so everything's going well right now we're on episode five and everyone's happy no one's died people are getting healed but sadly in episode five things take a turn after the first flying man and the first sermon and the first church and the first healing now we have the first sin and the first death it takes a turn and it's pretty drastic I was talking to uh Josh and Danny last week and they can't be here to be like I can't wait to hear you preach on that and if I'm honest

I wanted to skip it you're like actually acts five does it really exist is it is it there uh because it's a hard one because it doesn't seem to quite make sense on the surface but we continue we continue because I think there's something that the Lord is showing us in this chapter that I want you just to lean in with and just go wow I never realized that and of course because I wasn't too confident in doing it myself I decided to ask for the help of Juju uh Juju who's a smarter man than I am a much shorter man but a much smarter man uh so he's going to be helping me uh open this passage together I you know I did promise that I wouldn't do that I'm sorry anyway anyway um we're going to read the word of the Lord I'm going to ask uh Eunice newly qualified Dr. Eunice uh to come and read the word of the Lord for us uh so can I invite you to stand for the word of the Lord um acts 4 32 to 5 11 now the full member of those who believed were of one heart and soul and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own but they had everything in common and with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus and great grace was upon them all there was not a needy person among them for as many as were owners of the 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 thus 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 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 but 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 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 the deed in your heart and you have not lied to man but to God 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 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 so much and she said yes for so much but 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 immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last when the young men came in and they found her dead and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband and great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard of these things this is the word of the Lord praise be to God thank you please take a seat holy father we we come to you and with every bit we can muster we come to you in fear and reverence and awe your word is living and active it's it's piercing to the very depths of our soul and as we open up your word here

Lord we open ourselves up to you great physician great surgeon there is anything in our hearts that is not of you would you heal would your spirit speak in your name we pray amen so these people they're filled with the spirit they hear a sermon they're cut to the heart then they see all these mighty works and they just filled with reverence and awe and then they're just so happy they're glad and they're generous and they start sharing this is acts two where uh josh gabbs and joe shared a couple weeks ago and then they see a healing happen and then they see their two leaders get dragged in front of the council and then they come back and they're okay and then they pray and the earth shakes what must they be going through it must be like we are in hey this is a new world something's happening here that is so different and how's it different if you look in verse 32 now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own so straight away when they are cut to the heart when they are filled with the spirit nothing they belong nothing they have really belongs to them they are just so open with how they're sharing everything because they're like wait we've just gained the most valuable thing you can have whatever else i have that's the kind of spirit that they have here and they had everything in common let me assure you they did not have everything in common if you look at the church in the bible they would be people of all sorts of all walks of life you look at the church in philippi there was the slave girl and there was the business lady there was they had nothing in common but why does it say it had everything in common because they are of one heart and soul because now they'd seen something that they couldn't unsee their lives were completely transformed and so it didn't matter whether their net worth was here or whether it was here they said it doesn't matter what i have now belongs to you now that was different that was so different and then it carries on and they said and with great power the apostles were given their test giving their testimony to the resurrection of the lord jesus again i said this a couple weeks ago when we're giving testimonies it's not just about what god's done in our lives and how we were this and now they were just saying hey there was someone who died and rose again that changes everything when you're sharing the gospel that's the main part you can share about how the lord has transformed you but you can also you must share that actually the lord died and he rose again that's what transforms you it's the power of the resurrection that transforms you not just because you're becoming a better and better a person over time it's because jesus the son of god came to earth he died and then he rose again that's what transforms everything and so they're sharing that and then it says and great grace was upon them there was not a needy person among them for as many as were the owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles feet and then they give an example of barnabas who did that who sold his field verse 37 sold his field that belonged to him and brought the money and laid it at the apostles feet that society was not really that different to this one here where there were people who had a lot and there were people who didn't have very much at all and that was normal even jesus was there hey the poor will always be with you so they were around everywhere and jesus spent so much time with them but something was happening that was different those who had lots would start

sharing with those who didn't have anything this was a new thing this was a new thing people were selling their own properties maybe there's no better place in the world there's no better people in the world to understand the value of property of real estate and so imagine you are a real estate owner and you say hey i've got some people in this gathering here which actually if it was not the gospel i wouldn't really have anything in common with them but i'm going to share i'm going to sell my piece of land i'm going to sell my house and i'm going to give the proceeds to them do you recognize how different that was when was the last time any of us did that well those of us who have properties anyway this was this was revolutionary and barnabas gets a big shout out because he did it and what he did

was it really good because he he takes his own land he sells it and then he lays it at the apostles feet what he doesn't do is filled with superiority and pride take his ownership his property sell it and say hey i would like you to distribute it into these areas so this person that he just lays it at the apostles feet and says you do with it as you will so often when we give we give with conditions we give with entitlement say hey i would like my money to be used for this that and the other because i know because i'm giving to you the charity you are receiving from me so i am the one who is in the superior position and you are in the inferior one barnabas turns it around and goes hey i'm going to lay it at your feet peter and john you who have no experience of real estate because you were just fishermen i'm going to give it to you you do with it as you wish imagine sitting there in that room with these land house homeowners doing this thing imagine how you would have felt in that moment you'd be like that is incredible what did he just do that did john just sell his car and give it to his pastor that just happened what is going on and it's at that moment just imagine where you wait where you're at as you see that it's at that moment the story turns and we move into chapter five but a man named ananias and sapphire they responded in a different way and it was catastrophic a huge consequence and i'm going to pass the time over to juju thanks james so james has set the scene for us we've seen the spirit moving powerfully amongst the early church and their grounded power to testify to jesus to preach the gospel and to live in this radical generosity where landowners are selling their land and giving proceeds to those in need utterly disclaiming any sense of entitlement over that land to serve those around us and we see the spirit moving in unity of heart and soul within the church and they're of one mind and of one spirit but we see that ananias and sapphire sell their land but they conspire they they cook the books right they say we're going to say it was this much but actually we're holding a little bit back and and and uh and what i want to focus on is why what led them to do that what does that say about the condition of their hearts and minds before i pass before i pass back on james i want to cover uh two points um which in essence are they misunderstood the nature of generosity firstly and secondly what that really reveals is that they misunderstood the very nature of god himself so ananias and sapphire misunderstood generosity you see as i've looked at this passage i don't really think it's about the money per se right you see that they lie to the holy spirit and what does that reveal that that what the issue really was was putting forward false pretenses i notice too right when you look at the passage there's nothing there that suggests that um it was mandatory for the church to sell their land and to give the poor um in fact you see peter say hey look the land remains your own all this while it remains your own so i don't think it's the issue about the money or the transaction right it's the pretense of having given it all when in fact you're holding something back

[14 : 30] it's the sin of false generosity and we know if you look at jesus's life what are the times when he goes off the hardest right it's always against often anyway against the religious elite who put forward pretenses of being more righteous than they really are who there's that famous part in several of the gospels where jesus says you are white on the outside pharisees but inside you are you are dead you're dirty on the inside um the the power of the righteous man who says thank you god that i am not like this sinner right um thank you i pray three times a day or whatever it is we know that jesus god's wrath is is he has something special in store for that in particular and and i think that's what's going on here truth of course is also key to the issues that we see here and there's a spiritual battle peter says as soon as ananias and spire do what they do he says why has satan filled your heart to lie to the holy spirit the spirit's working powerfully amongst the church bringing around bringing about unity in the community but satan is there trying to undermine what is happening and it's that lying to the spirit that we see provokes the response that we see from god because satan's go-to play from the beginning is to misrepresent the words of god and to misrepresent who god is you go way back to the original story adam and eve what does satan say to them when they're given the freedom to enjoy the garden of eve um all of the fruit within but

they're told not to eat of the fruit of tree of knowledge of good and evil and satan says satan plants an idea in their mind that says and he says for god knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like god knowing good and evil what's going on there in that original story in the garden of eve satan is trying to convince eve that god is not for her or adam god is against them he has something out for them he's afraid to share power so there's there's a misunderstanding of who god is that's the second point and you look look at peter's response as soon as ananiacin's fire do what they do he says while it remains unsold did it not remain your own it was yours to give the whole time this land was yours to give there's a failure underneath to recognize that there was freedom here in the community and he says after it was sold was it not at your disposal even after you liquidated the asset after you had the cash it was yours it was yours to give there's freedom here that they misunderstood they felt that they were under compulsion it's deeper than the transaction it's a matter of the heart that just as we were singing just now and if you look at jesus's teaching on wealth he knows that it's always about the heart where your treasure is there your heart will be oh so i think about the story of uh the widow the poor widow who gave an offering in the temple who gave two pennies however much he had jesus says that that woman she was worshiping she was giving all that she had and and it's not about the money it's about what's going on in the heart i also noticed too i was reflecting too on the way that peter responded to them and i think ananias and sapphire had a misunderstanding of god and a picture of him as some sort of harsh cosmic overlord who was out to get uh just demanding all that they had right under compulsion and it reminded me of the parable of the talents uh where jesus is teaching about stewardship and he tells a story of a

rich man who goes on a business trip and leaves talents to his investment managers essentially uh three different servants who take two different approaches two of them are faithful they make a good return on their investment they say master here we've we've we've invested your money please have it back but there's one there's one servant who says says this in the parable master i knew you to be a hard man reaping what you did not sow and gathering where you scattered no seed so i was afraid and i went and i hid your talent in the ground he had a picture of god as a harsh taskmaster looking to take away what was rightfully his and i think it's that same heart issue that we see here with ananias and sapphire and so i just want to invite us to think about that in our thinking around generosity around worship there are a few truths we need to hold intention because it really everything really does belong to god ultimately we know that we see the church uh we see god described as the lord of heaven and earth right everything belongs to him and i'm reminded of what paul says too in first corinthians chapter 4 what do you have that you did not first receive it's all his ultimately we know that to be true but also we need to recognize the freedom that we have that i think james will talk on and and myself as well later in the sharing time there's a failure to see god's generosity his heart for us he wants to relate to us as children um look this is this is mine but i give it freely to you for you to steward for you to use there's discretion there's wisdom there um that's what that's what i see in scripture that's what i hope we can see today um and i hope we can uh reflect on that as we think about generosity worship we see ananias and sapphire fail to see god is generous gracious compassionate and kind but then there's still this elephant in the room which i'm going to pass back to james to talk about thank you julie can we give him a round of applause i had so so much fun uh working on this with him uh this week as we were just looking through this passage both going hey this is a really hard passage what does it even mean because things are going well in the church i mean actually this week i experienced some of that myself in in this church here we had a brother of ours a friend of ours who was in need and just watching his community get around him without him even asking without him wanting it or even knowing how to ask and they just didn't even wait and they just supported him and there was no one in need in that community and i was like that is so good and you see that and you just wish everyone else would have that kind of same spirit because we have we've gained something in eternity that we had no business gaining so it surely means we can let go of everything uh on earth and yet somehow some way we mess up somehow some way even though we get a new chance filled with the spirit cut to the heart and yet somehow you see they have the holy spirit inside them the spirit has come and yet there's still temptation and yet there's still sin because there is still a decision to make every single day and what you see here is as julian said it's not really about the money at all so julian really tackled why did they do what they did why did ananias and sapphire look at them two and go look at barnabas and all these other landowners go oh well if they're doing it look look at all the

accolades they're getting look at all the approval they're getting everyone's just patting them on the back saying hey that was that was really good you you didn't need to sell your building but you did wow and then they look at each other and they go hey maybe we want some of that maybe we you know what it is it's not money it's spiritual pride and hypocrisy is really what it is it's when they look at someone else and go oh actually we want that so they talk to each other and go hey well why don't we do this we'll still sell and i can just imagine making it up by the way and maybe throwing sapphire under the bus here maybe they sell and then she goes hey but what about our kids if we sell this then what do we do about this we should we should save a little bit for his college fund just in case that's the only one or number one two three four plans that we have and so she maybe she's like well i don't know maybe we shouldn't sell all of it maybe we should keep a little bit oh but no one else is doing that okay why don't we just sell it look no one will know if they weren't just trying to lie to the other people who were they lying to they thought they could lie to god and so it's a spiritual pride thing and actually one of my favorite quotes on humility is humility is staying as close to the truth as possible i really love that quote because hey because we've also seen false humility right when when someone is clearly very good at something and then you tell them oh you're so good and they say oh no i'm rubbish oh you're so good on the piano oh no no i sucked oh i suck well that's not really humility either that's pride right but humility is staying as close to the truth as possible which is saying hey yeah god has given me this and not only that i i got parents who were willing to pay for the 10 000 hours of practice and learning that i needed in order to become incredible at the violin and so that's humility pride is taking credit for something that you don't deserve and that's tim keller's quote there it's just when you say oh actually no hey i got here because of me no you didn't we talked about this uh last week there's so much of your life maybe even 95 of your life isn't really up to your control you did not decide which family you were born into you did not decide which city which culture you were born into you did not decide how much hair that you would end up having in adulthood you don't get to decide so much of your life pride is when we think actually we are where we are because of us and so ananias and sapphire were like hmm we can get here but we don't really deserve it tim keller also calls this kind of pride cosmic ingratitude cosmic ingratitude which is what juju was talking about which is when you have a false misunderstanding of god and his generosity to you you will be prone to making these kind of decisions but you can engineer factors so you can appear to be more holy you see why then so julian tackled why did they do what they did i'm going to try and tackle and lord help me here and give me grace here why did god do what he did why did god strike them down immediately without a chance of repentance confession well actually they did get a chance both husband and wife were asked and yet but why did god do that so quickly and how does that work with our christian understanding which is hey you have a million chances you have a million second chances god will forgive you always why this so i'm going to tread carefully here but i think part of it is to do with the context of where we were at in the church persecution as we said last week was just happening so there was an external pressure if the way of jesus if christianity was to continue to blossom and grow and eventually outlive the roman empire the beginning is so important what's the most important integrity the integrity of what that was what is integrity my understanding of integrity is basically you're the same person wherever you are whether you're with your boys hanging out by the football pitch or whether you're in a restaurant whether you're at work whether you're a family you are basically the same person wherever you are that's integrity it's basically you're the same on the inside as you are on the outside and ananias and sapphira were guilty of that and you see it's interesting it says here um this event this martin lloy jones this event was god's gracious warning to the early church if satan cannot destroy the church by persecution he will try hypocrisy god struck down ananias to preserve the purity of his newborn church as i look at it now it was very bad news for ananias and sapphira but it was very good news for us it's bad news for those who are trying to trick their way into the kingdom of heaven it's very bad news if you're trying to deceive god and actually you and i are sat here going thank goodness that happened sorry ananias and sapphira thank goodness that happened because that preserved the integrity of the church how many of us hate being part of something that is filled with hypocrisy and is based on a lie this was the very beginning brothers and sisters if this could happen from the very beginning i don't think it would have got to here does that make sense so in that moment actually it was god's grace that allowed that to happen for the great fear to be seen among the church but hey this is real remember they lived in a time when the romans allowed you to worship any god and to basically just deceive any god and everything's

transactional worship this god and he'll give you a baby worship this god and he'll give you money worship this god and you'll get this and that and that so they would have actually been very used to basically bowing down to gods to get what they wanted but now the first time they see this god and someone tries to deceive this god boom they die yes it was terrifying yes it would have been devastating but the gospel comes as good news to those who are willing to open their hearts up and not deceive the lord it comes as bad news to those who are trying to trick their way into the kingdom of heaven does that make sense not if you're tracking with me and shake your head if you're just like i still don't get it that's why it had to happen they made their decision because of their love of praise and money god acts harshly to preserve the integrity of the church in that moment we're thankful i'm thankful that that's how it started i would not have wanted it to start any other way and it makes me think well what does this mean for us in some ways i'm going to talk about this and i want to bring juju back up but how we watch our thoughts is important i came across this quote from a chinese teacher um who said this watch your thoughts they become your words watch your words they become your actions watch your actions they become your habits watch your habits they become your character watch your character it becomes your destiny watch your thoughts it becomes your destiny watch your thoughts it becomes your destiny watch your pride it becomes the death of you makes me think of james chapter one when desire leads to sin and sin when it's given birth to it becomes fully grown what does it end up as death what we see here is god in his grace seeing that in this big early stage there was sin creeping in and what is sin just the mistrust of god all the way back to the garden of eden that julian was talking about it's just god did god really say that is he really doing what is best for you is he really going to provide for you is he lying to you it's the false misunderstanding of god that causes them to their death the good news for us the inquirer the follower people with hindsight now we're like oh i'm so glad the church started with integrity and it cost and it cost the conclusion is that the spirit cannot be deceived this god is for real he is the real deal imagine just for a second before i bring up julian a few weeks ago when pentecost i asked you to imagine what would it have been like if moises saw the holy spirit descend on people he must have been like guys this is crazy none of us could ever get close to god and now you all have him living inside you how nuts is that i was terrified of a burning bush and now all of you are a collective burning bushes how crazy would that have been imagine if he was here in acts 5 now just a bit of context in leuiticus 8 um aaron uh has his sons they're all getting ready to be priests they're going through this really thorough process of ordination and they're preparing themselves so that they can basically be priests to the israelites and then leuiticus chapter 10 something terrible happens aaron's two oldest sons who are ready to basically one of them will be the successor of the being the high priest they give a strange offering they don't follow the instructions of god and does anyone know what happened to them boom the same thing that happens to ananias and saphira so i can imagine if moises was a fly on the wall in that room in acts 5 and he's just about to see what this couple are going to do they're like don't do it don't do it why because god is a god of grace and mercy but he is also a god of holiness and moises would have understood that because he would have had to console aaron having lost his two sons why because god is holy god is to be feared do not take this for granted jesus was god incarnate he was the word that became flesh and he was filled with grace and truth yes my goodness he's coming back and he's going to be fire in his eyes i think we forget that i think we forget about the holiness of god and then we take it for granted and then we think he'll be waiting for us gently just whenever we start losing our way or whether we'll only go back to him when our health breaks down or when there's a project of work that we really need to succeed so we'll go to god god is so much bigger than that god is so much bigger than that and it's at that moment luke chooses to use the first word ecclesia it's at that moment the church is born well it was born when the holy spirit came but at that moment that's when luke describes now we're the church because we understand who god is now we're at the church because we are filled with fear and reverence and awe and we realize this is truly the god of the universe who cannot be deceived the question is what does this mean for us this is a bit of a crazy story in jerusalem 2000 years ago as we are sat here in admiralty in hong kong what does this actually mean what are some final reflections and how do we apply this into our lives i'm actually going to bring julian back up and we're going to have a little chat to talk about this and as we talk i hope that you'll be able to go well actually how does that apply into my life julian has some incredible reflections for himself as to what this really means and i hope that it'll be able to inspire you to talk a little bit about um to have a think about what really that means for you hey i'm going to give you oh nathan is subtly passing you the mic over there um two thousand years on

what does this mean for you and i as we're sat here listening to this story about a couple who tried to lie to god and ended up paying for it with the gravest of consequences what does this actually mean julian i want to use this for now oh thanks what's the first thing that comes to mind for you well there's this there's that action of there's this idea of holding back right at its core it's we see i mean the gospel demands our very lives jesus wants to be our lord but there's all parts of our lives that we we say lord take it jesus take the wheel right and and have everything but there's always going to be in our walks with the lord a gap between what we profess we say we trust trust jesus with and what we're actually holding on to and that's something i think we're going to unpack and explore a bit together you know sometimes i get asked hey how much do we have to give in terms of tithing now because the old testament was the 10 but now we're in the new testament what does that mean is it really 10 or can it actually be 9.6 because we still round up uh to 10 and it's like hey actually i have good news for you because actually we are in the new testament it's not 10 it's 100 it's everything it's all of your life is what really he's saying now what that looks like is hard and we end up going hey well i'm giving this and i'm giving that hey i'm already doing this i'm already doing this but what you're saying

[34:47] actually it's not really what you're giving that's really the case yeah it's it's it's what you're still holding back and and following jesus is scary it's it demands your everything i mean i thought i was thinking of this classic meme the other day uh when j when they say jesus take the wheel and you're imagining like a scenic drive through the countryside but then jesus takes the car and you know he flies flies off and he's swerving around and it's completely uncomfortable he said jesus what are you doing it's this way and then he turns back and he says no i am the way and and and just reflecting on that roller coaster ride with jesus and and where that takes you and and i have a few examples of what comes to mind um i've been reflecting more on work recently um the lord did gave me a lot of grace what do you do i am a dispute resolution lawyer i work at an international law firm in central um so i'm a solicitor now and and the lord took me on a journey to get me where i where i am where you know it was a tough job market at the time it still is um and i had to learn to surrender that and even the prospect of being a lawyer in the first place and all of these uh uh forks in the road delays and so on so i think that helps me to hold a posture of surrender in my in my workplace i mean thinking about job progression ambition and all of that but there are still times right where you where god puts the question to you like do you really trust me with this julian um and in my context right uh i mean i work in litigation so things get heated and your client might want you to run an argument where you're like i'm not so sure about that like if i run that that could get me into serious trouble i mean obviously there's a line that you have to draw there are people in this room who work in the same field who understand um but you have to be willing to there might be a time in your a few times in your career probably where you have to draw the line and say i'm not willing to do that you've instructed me to put this in that letter i don't think i can do that without compromising compromising my professional conduct and you have to risk losing that instruction losing a big piece of work especially in a time when the economy is this tight right but and you know all sorts of personal repercussions or or yeah a bad reaction you might get from the client but but it's it's at that point you have to decide do i really trust god with my career right now am i going to put take this risk because this is what this is what honors him right now and and i'm working for an audience of one in that context so so that's a personal reflection on work and last week we were talking about how jesus can't be your number one he's going to be your only one what does that actually practically look like uh when we live and i've had it posed to me in the example of you driving your own car um and as you're driving the majority of us drive up and we see jesus uh you know on the side there uh on the side of the road so we swing up and we say hey jesus get in the car now sadly the majority of us will just say hey come and sit in the back seat come and chill and hang out in the back seat you don't really have a say in where we're going but i would really like to have you with me in case something happens at least i know that you can come out and you can destroy whatever's in front of me and then can you sit back in your back seat please uh there are others of us who have literally just put him in the trunk because we're so ashamed to even be seen with him in our car that hey can you just i know that you're the lord of the universe and you gave me this car but would you mind sitting in this lovely trunk that you created uh and then you can stay there because that's probably the easiest for me because i don't really it's inconvenient for me to be seen with you there are maybe hopefully a majority of us here who are well-meaning like no no i really want jesus to be part of my life and so that will be in the form of hey come and sit with me uh in the front uh but in the passenger seat maybe you can hold the map uh and then you can tell me

where to go unless it's somewhere i don't want to go in which case i'm still holding the wheel so it's okay what jesus what it means when jesus is the only one it means jesus thank you for this car i'm just going to step out now i get to sit in the front seat with you but in the passenger seat you take me i have no control and i don't really

care because i actually care more about where you want to take me and that you'll be there with me and that's it and that's how it looks right and there's something beautiful about that heart of submission but there's also something beautiful about being real with god about where we are yeah um which is also faithful to the thrust of this passage where ananias and sapphire were not being real at all with where they really were um and wanted to put forward an appearance of being 100 when in fact they were 40 um and i have been having a conversation recently with a friend at church that really encouraged me again around this this topic of trusting god with our careers taking risks um he uh he's facing some tough choices at work where there are certain procedures going on that he's not sure he can participate in in good conscience um and reflecting on that still a very early stage wanting to build rapport with his colleagues um and so on but this is i think i need to draw the line here um and i was and and wrestling with that and i was i i was having a conversation recently where i was like do you trust god with this like and and the answer i got absolutely was very encouraging because he said um i'm not sure when i get to that moment i trust myself to make the right call i'm not sure i have enough faith in myself to make the right call and i was like i love that because that's being real with where you really are god can use that yeah um it reminds me of that famous uh those famous words from the father with his convulsing son lord i believe help my unbelief if we can be real of god with where we really are i think he can use that and i think he can work with us and what you said to me this week was actually you're reflecting actually if ananias and sapphira came to the apostle and said hey we see everyone's doing some crazy stuff uh but i'm not sure we're there yet but actually we do have a piece of land that maybe we want to sell but is it okay if we give this much i think that would have been okay right then at the least they'd still be alive uh yeah because it because yeah because god treasures really mostly the heart yeah yeah exactly so it's it's that it's that lie that was part of the issue yeah um where if they had said lord we're not we i think we can only give this much i think the outcome would have looked a little different i hope i think so uh i see on the notes there you said i want to talk about my marriage so can you tell us about your marriage i mean i mean if we're gonna draw on the topic between like gap between covenant and commitment hopefully every married couple resonates with this a little bit like i'm not the only one out here where like there's a bit of a gap between your these highest ideals you have like they talk about marriage as the shape of a shape of the gospel this beautiful picture of christ in the church where i said on my marriage day i i will i will love you i will lay down my life for you i will surrender everything i will give up my comfort my preferences right and just think about what you're signing over here um and look i mean i reflect that i mean god has used i mean florence and i have been greatly blessed one one year plus now um but i just reflect on that right that gap between covenant and commitment where your hearts really are um i mean i i talk about here like uh we were gifted a massage chair like a great ogawa massage chair in our living room and i'm telling you now it is like a blessing but it is also a stumbling block people because because like because there are days where i am just done i'm done with work i'm ready to tune now just listen to watch some sports highlights and on the massage chair but something else might be required in that moment um so am i with the point being am i willing just to go that extra mile a little bit anyway right to lay down my comfort so that i can be present husband at home so and and there are some days are better than others let's be real about that i'm not sure i'm hearing a full confession is there any more that you need to what else are you sorry i think i'm trying to say like the under the kind of underlying confession is i'm i'm a bit of a lazy absentee husband sometimes and i'm working on that wow there we go you're welcome florence i love i love talking to him because he has that authenticity and that vulnerability and um

actually one of the final reflections we'll have on this is actually peter it's interesting that he gets to be the guy that throws out i know i mean if you think about what that guy has been through it just adds so much more color to that the exchange that you're looking at in this passage because think about what peter the disciple the rock of the church had to go through to get to where he was there's the famous account at the end of the gospels where jesus says he takes him aside has a little one-to-one before the cross he says peter i have prayed for you satan has demanded that he would sift you like wheat he's he's looking to absolutely rinse you to absolutely cook you right um uh

but but i have prayed for you that your faith might not fail but i have prayed for you that your faith might not fail and what does peter do it's classic peter he says lord i will go with you to the ends of the earth i will die for you and then what happens he's tested and a little girl by servant girl by the fire asks him hey i know you look familiar nope nope not me not me and he denies jesus three times and so there's a there's a gap between covenant and commitment for him that he has to wrestle with and of course there's the beautiful redemption arc in his story where after jesus rises from the dead they have another one-to-one seafood breakfast by the beach um and he says peter do you love me lord i love you peter do you love me lord i love me peter do you love me lord i love you and it's it's many commentators have picked up on that three repetition three times as a way to redeem what happened um with what he goes to and and and and this and we see in acts the spirit moves in him he's a changed man he's a changed man but just to think about his experience between um holding something back and that gap between what he was professing and what he actually did it just adds so much color to what you see going on here because actually out of everyone he was probably the least qualified because he lied and he was he was a hypocrite and he betrayed the lord and so actually in that moment when i can imagine if this happens and he's kind of the one who kind of brings it about i don't think he's standing there going hey yes you down there i think he's i think he's reminded man yeah that could have been me that was me and now i stand here because of grace yeah and only grace uh maybe this is where we'll wrap because it's this topic of grace again that we if you are if you are new to the church and this is your first time and you you've always had this uh preconception of what christians are maybe they're judgmental maybe they're prideful maybe they're hypocrites whatever it might be what i hope you see at the very least in us two here and with the people that you get to speak see is that there is just grace yeah that there is a there is a god who is filled with grace but he is also holy yeah that we are not perfect by any means that actually this doesn't happen because we are trying to be good christians necessarily but it's because the only one who was good died for us who who didn't hold back for us right do you have any final thoughts on on that that's what makes it possible that's what makes it possible for us to sit under grace is that there was one who was the prince of heaven who did not hold anything back who emptied himself died upon a cross taking on the wrath that we deserve so that we can live as free children of god yeah that that's that's what it comes down to and and that's what jesus had in mind when he was praying for peter that day he knew what it would cost him and jesus didn't hold back and he gave himself his whole self for us and actually last week we had the worship team gather and we were talking about favorite worship songs over the years and uh one of them was we're just talking about the song amazing grace which is of course popular amongst all people christian or not uh and one of the things that actually gabe brought up as he was quoting is actually that amazing grace sometimes we look at and we just see grace and we say oh it's so good that we have this grace and we completely forget and we don't sing about the fact that this grace came at a cost that this wasn't free grace this wasn't cheap grace that we were at emily and jay's last night there was a book there which i quoted last week which is the cost of discipleship by d. true bonhoeffer who paid the cost of following christ and the gospel and he said something which is where we'll finish and it says ananias and sapphire wanted the appearance of costly grace without the cost but grace is costly because it demands truth their judgment reveals god's refusal to tolerate hypocrisy among the redeemed another song is in christ alone when the wrath of god was satisfied and there is a holy god who will we will all stand in front of and give an account to do we stand on the only kind of grace that we are able to which is that of jesus not because of what we did but because of what he did can you pray for us oh sure yeah or any final thoughts as well before you pray i think just for me is that tension between understanding the holiness of god the calling on our lives to be all in for jesus but also the freedom that we have and you look at the freedom of the christian uh galatians 5 classic passage on that for freedom christ has set you free stand firm therefore that you may not fall back again into slavery um and it's that freedom that i'm praying i have that i'm praying we all have in our giving in our worship that we reckon that comes from a deep grasp of the gospel i think amazing grace my chains are gone yeah but what am i going to do with this freedom i want to love those around me that that's that's just something i think we just want to bear and that's my heart for us coming away from ananias and sapphire too and the redemption story that actually the lord is still writing in all of us and uh we have julian pray for us and actually we're going to invite his wife uh florence to lead us in a response song uh and again not because of anything that they're great at doing uh definitely not julian but there's but there's grace and there's freedom in that there are no chains anymore and why don't we

come and we what i'm going to ask us to do is as we approach uh this next part and we actually respond in song is and it's going to be singing the song give us clean hands as we bow our hearts as we come towards god and we ask look that god does whatever he wants to do with this church here and with this city and with this kingdom can he fill us with a heart of just integrity and purity and drive out any hypocrisy that we might have julian pray for us yeah yeah all right thanks father we thank you for your word which is a light unto our path thank you for the stories that it tells that show us a picture of your grace and your goodness for us your majesty your holiness i thank you that on the cross these things come together and where your justice and your mercy meet and that we sit under the grace of everything you have done for us on the cross rising victorious over the sin and death that still plagues this world thank you that we can live as people of hope freedom joy give us eyes to just grasp deeper every day the love that you have for us that it might overflow into the community around us help us be honest with you true of you about the places in our lives that we're still holding back there are many rooms in our hearts that you want to fill thank you for your patience for walking with us be glorified in in us in our lives and in this community we pray this in jesus name amen thank you oh god let us be a generation that seeks your face lord would you move in our hearts purify our hearts sanctify us lord mold us to be more like you so we will be clean on the inside and the outside

we can love you with all our hearts soul mind and strength there is any ananias sapphire in us we repent of would you show us anything that is offensive to you any deceit that we are living either we're lying to ourselves or others or worse yet you we repent we're sorry lord forgive us but thank you that there is amazing grace and because of that the chains are gone that you paid the price we thank you in your name we pray amen