



Worship Guide for January 12, 2019

Sermon Notes

No Place for Pretenders

Acts 5:1-11

pre-tend-er: one that pretends; one who makes a false or hypocritical show.

As Jesus neared the end of his earthly ministry, he confronted his opponents and exposed them for the religious pretenders they were. For instance, in Matthew 23 Jesus said, “They preach but do not practice” (v3); “They do all their deeds to be seen by others” (v5); “..you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence” (v25); “you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness.... you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.” (vv27-28)

Pretenders can be a real problem in the church. Even in the most Spirit-filled churches (*especially in Spirit-filled churches*), the evil one is at work. Jesus promised that a Gospel-centered church will face opposition from the outside (John 15:20). Yet opposition to the gospel can also be an inside job. Today's text from Acts 5 shows us how the Deceiver works to bring opposition against the church from within the fellowship. The devil's agents were a husband and wife named Ananias (Hebrew for “*God is gracious*”) and Sapphira (Aramaic for “*beautiful*”). Kent Hughes correctly says, “Few people's lives have contradicted their names more dramatically.” And few events had a more dramatic impact on the early church. May it have the same impact on us!

Before us today, we have two noteworthy examples. Barnabas shines as a living illustration of “great grace” at work. He is one of the most encouraging, mature, reliable, loveable leaders of the early church. Ananias and Sapphira exemplify the exact opposite. They are pretenders, hypocrites with little regard for the truth and even less regard for the Holy Spirit. They are put before us as examples of what not to be, of what to carefully avoid. God wants us to fear hypocrisy. He wants us to fear Him with a holy reverence, humility, and high regard for Christ and His church.

Barnabas: the example of encouragement

Ananias and Sapphira: the pitfalls of pretense

Consequences: the high cost of hypocrisy

Applications:

Weekly Discipleship Guide

Use this guide to help you reflect upon and internalize today's passage and message! Using a journal or a notebook, follow the daily prompts below. We also use these guides to guide our discussions in our Life Groups each week as we seek to grow together in the Word!

Sunday

In your journal, reflect on today's sermon by answering the following:

I never knew:

I was challenged:

I was reminded:

I was convicted:

A question I still have:

A truth I could share:

Know

Monday

Spend some time today doing the following:

Read the sermon passage again.

Select a portion of this week's sermon passage to memorize this week.

Write your selected portion and read it to yourself at least 10 times throughout the day and meditate on that portion this week.

Know > Be

Tuesday

In your journal, spend some time writing about the following:

Read the sermon passage again.

Write a prayer of response, specifically guided by the passage.

(May include adoration, confession/repentance, thanksgiving, petition, etc...)

Continue to meditate on a memorize the selection you chose from yesterday.

Be

Wednesday

Think about this week's questions for group discussion:

In what aspects of the Christian walk are believers in our culture prone to be pretenders? What about your own life?

What criteria should we use in checking our motives prior to engaging in acts of service? What pitfalls should we avoid?

How does participating in community guard against pretension and hypocrisy? What new commitments does this week's passage cause you to want to make in the new year?

Be > Do

Thursday

In your journal, spend some time considering the following:

What insights have you gained while internalizing this week's passage?

How specifically will you seek to apply its truths in your home/workplace/life in general?

Do

Westwood Staff

Gerald Hodges: Lead Pastor

Jonathan Taylor: Associate Pastor

Jim Fulp: Counseling Pastor

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Upcoming Events

January 21 - GriefShare

February 9 - Sportsman's Banquet

April 6 - One Day with God