

Acts Ch4v32-Ch5v11

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[0 : 00] But I strongly recommend flicking to it, because apart from anything else, you should want to check whether what I'm saying is actually in this text, or whether I'm just making something up to talk to you about this morning.

And I'd encourage you as well to keep it open throughout the sermon, because we'll be referring back to it, of course, throughout that time. And again, being able to understand that when I say, like, let's look at verse 8, we look at verse 8 and verse 8 has something to tell us in that kind of way. So the passage, as I say, is Acts chapter 4, verse 32 to Acts chapter 5, verse 11. Now, all the believers were one in heart and mind.

No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. With great power, the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all that there was no needy person among them. For from time to time, those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales, and put it at the apostles' feet.

[1 : 12] And it was distributed to anyone who had need. Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas, which means son of encouragement, sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet.

Now, a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. 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.

Then Peter said, Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land?

Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied just to human beings, but to God. When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened. Then some young men came forward, wrapped up his body and carried him out and buried him.

[2 : 28] About three hours later, his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. Peter asked her, tell me, is this the price you and Ananias got for the land?

Yes, she said, that is the price. 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.

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.

Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events. Before I start talking about this, let's take time to pray together as we come to look at God's word together.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you for all that is in it, both the easy passages that we like and the difficult passages that are awkward for us to understand.

[3 : 37] As we come to look at this passage this morning, we pray that you would be softening our hearts to understand the message, but also to respond to it. I pray, Lord, that as I speak, if anything is not from you, then it would quickly be forgotten by everyone here.

But Lord, I pray that any word that is from you would be enduring and lasting, not just in our memories, but in our lives and our actions as well. I pray that you will help all of us, including me, to listen, to hear, to respond.

In Jesus' name, I pray these things. Amen. Money. Money is one of those things that tends to grab people's attention, isn't it?

A few weeks ago, I was on a train from Cork to Dublin, and there were two IT consultants across the aisle from me, and they were talking quite loudly about data security in one of their clients. And everyone was doing their best, their absolute utmost, to ignore what they were saying, because they weren't particularly interested, riveting topic though it is. And then something changed.

[4 : 45] One of them said to the other, Yeah, it's probably going to be about 50 grand, isn't it? At that, I looked up. Not so much at them, but at everyone else in the carriage, to see how everyone would react to a number like that just being thrown out casually in conversation.

And a remarkable change had come on all of them. Suddenly, everyone was very interested in this conversation that was being had about data security. You'd think it was the most interesting thing they had heard all week.

We tend to notice when money is mentioned, either consciously or subconsciously, we tend to notice that. And I'm sure that many of you noticed it was mentioned in the passage today.

In fact, money and possessions play a key role in the passage, don't they? And because money and possessions play a key role in the passage, we can't really ignore them as we go through it. And so I just want to take a couple of minutes before we go on to talking about what may be a sensitive topic for some people, to check in on two elephants that people may see in the room.

[5 : 49] And those two elephants ask two main questions. One, how is the preacher qualified to talk about money? The guy up the front, what does he know about money?

And two, does he stand to profit or to gain from talking about money in some way? Is he going to go out and buy a private jet somewhere after the service if you give him all your money, so to speak? Now, as many people will know here, or at least hopefully know, I'm not Johnny Grant. I'm not the pastor of this church. I'm not tall enough. I'm not indeed the pastor of any church.

I work in financial services. And so I have a bunch of qualifications and letters after my name that all have to do with money. I've thrown them up on the screen there. There's a bunch of letters that I don't really like to use.

I'm almost embarrassed to put them on the screen there, but I put them up there for two reasons. The first is to emphasize that none of this is in any way beneficial when talking about money as far as the Bible is concerned.

[6 : 48] So you can see up there, I'm a financial advisor. I'm an actuary. I do financial reporting. Accountant, actuary, financial advisor. What they can tell you or what we can tell you generally is how much money do you have?

What should you do with your money to achieve the goals that you have? And generally, maybe how you should go about investing or spending to achieve those goals, what amount of money you need for certain things, and so on.

What we can't tell you is what you should or should not do with your money. We can't tell you what your financial goals should be or how you should view money in general.

Meanwhile, God says quite a lot about all of those topics in the Bible, and he is a far more authoritative source than any human could be, and certainly far more authoritative than I am.

So who am I to talk about money, that first question? Well, in this context, nobody. I'm nobody. But insofar as my words align with what the Bible says, they will be good. So we'll aim for that throughout this.

[7 : 50] And the second reason I put the qualifications on the screen is to address one second elephant in the room. So as you're probably aware, there are several so-called preachers or pastors in various parts of the world, particularly in the United States where they have these sort of mega churches, etc., who would use, let's say, cherry-picked verses from Scripture to try to get you to give them money to manipulate people into donating large sums of money that they can then use to build or buy mansions or acquire private jets for themselves.

So it's right to be wary of falling into that kind of trap. But in my case, I work in the financial services sector. I'm not now, nor have I ever been employed by a church. And to the best of my knowledge, I have never received any financial reward or compensation or anything like that for any church-related work I do.

So there is no vested interest there. As one final thought before we delve in, I will say to you now that even though this passage talks about money and possessions, at its core, I don't think this passage is actually about money.

It's about something that's a whole lot deeper than that. But in order to understand what the passage is about, we need to understand what the Bible does say about money, both in this passage and outside it.

So with all of that caveat out of the way, let's dive into the text here. We start off in verse 32 of chapter 4. And this first paragraph we have here, from verse 32 to verse 35, showcases some extraordinary generosity, doesn't it?

[9 : 28] At the end of verse 32, we read that the believers shared everything they had. And verses 34 to 35 become even more remarkable. We read that there was no needy person among them, for from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales, put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had a need.

This is extraordinary generosity. You can see that even in our own world today. People don't generally or typically sell property in order to give to the poor and needy. And we might be prompted to ask, well, what causes this? How or why are they being so generous? Well, verse 32 gives us one unifying fact about all of them.

It says all the believers were one in heart and mind. So who are the believers? Well, that may be a bit of a silly question to ask in a church on a Sunday morning.

The Christians are the believers. The believers are the Christians, right? But what do they believe? Well, you can see if you flip back to the end of chapter 2, you can see chapter 2, verse 42.

[10 : 39] They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching. So what were the apostles' teaching? Well, verse 33 of chapter 4, our passage here, gives us the answer. With great power, the apostles continued to testify to what?

To the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. They testified to Jesus' death, yes, but they also testified to his resurrection. And that's what the author actually focuses on both here and throughout Acts. So by the time we get to this passage, chapter 4 of Acts, the author has told us at least seven times that Jesus has been raised from the dead. In Acts chapter 1, we have verse 3.

It says he gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. Verse 22, when choosing who would replace Judas, Peter says that someone must become a witness with us of his resurrection. In Acts chapter 2, we have verses 23 and 24. You put him to death by nailing him to the cross, but God raised him from the dead. It was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. Again, in Acts chapter 2, verses 31 and 32, David spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah.

[11 : 47] God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it. Acts 3.15, you killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. Acts chapter 4, verse 2, the priests and Sadducees were greatly disturbed.

Why? Because the apostles were teaching the people, proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. And Acts chapter 4, verse 9, we have, it is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucify, but whom God raised from the dead.

And then here in verse 33 of our passage, the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. The church was born in the proclamation of the resurrection.

And if you think about it, actually, for a minute, Jesus' death means nothing without the resurrection. Imagine how hollow the gospel would be if he had stayed dead.

We'd be left saying, Jesus was a good man. He never sinned. And now he's dead. That's not the gospel. That's not good news.

[12 : 55] Jesus' death is only good news because of the resurrection that followed. And you can pick out a ton of writing in the New Testament that makes that point. So Romans chapter 4, verse 25, he was delivered over to death for our sins.

And he was raised to life for our justification. Romans 6, 4, just as Jesus Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

Romans 10, 9, so if you may know it, if you declare with your mouth, Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart, what? That God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 1 Corinthians 6, 14, by his power, God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also.

So Jesus' resurrection is tied to our resurrection. It's tied to our ultimate fate. And we depend on Jesus' resurrection just as much as on his death, if not more so.

In fact, later in 1 Corinthians, Paul makes that exact argument. He makes it abundantly clear. He says things like, if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless, and so is your faith.

[14:07] And again, if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile. You are still in your sins. And if we have hope in Christ only for this life, then we are of all people most to be pitied.

And against all of that, Paul just has one simple argument. But he has been raised. And there is so much more that could be said about the resurrection.

It's the foundation of our hope. the resurrection changes our futures if we're trusting in Jesus. But coming back to our passage today, it's also the foundation of everything that happens in verses 32 to 35.

Why do I say that? Well, what happens when you believe in the resurrection? You see a different future ahead of you. And that changes your heart.

The resurrection changes our future and our hearts. If we want to be specific to this passage, talking about possessions and money, what does that mean for our view of possessions and money?

[15:16] What does it mean for our hearts in respect of those sides of things? Because we have to see here that the people's generosity here, giving to the poor and needy, ensuring there wasn't one among them, even being willing to sell property to make sure that was the case.

Well, this is something that flows out of their faith in the resurrection. How do we know that? Well, we're told that the believers did these things to support each other.

But in order to sell property, you first have to have property, don't you? And as these are new believers here in Acts 4, we know that they chose to accumulate this wealth before they became believers.

The only thing that has changed here is that they are now believers in the resurrection. And now they are giving it away. They're selling. They're distributing.

They're making sure that there's no one needy among them. So why does this change them? Well, suppose for a moment that this life is all there is, which is a mortifying thought to begin with.

[16:21] But suppose for a moment this life is all there is. That seems logical to live, drink, be merry. We know how short our lives are.

If this earth is all there is, then it's better to live it with plenty of money. It's better to live it with plenty of comfort, isn't it? And we can be tempted even to rejoice in that wealth and in that comfort.

In fact, in Psalm 119, when the psalmist wants a simile to describe how much he loves God's law, something that everyone will understand, he says in verse 14, I rejoice in following your statutes as one rejoices in great riches.

He wants to talk about how much he loves God's law and the best comparison he can give in terms of earthly joy is having great riches. And even if we know that this is all not going to last, we're ultimately going to die even if we think that's the case and we know that the treasures will ultimately perish and fade away, if this world is all there is, then it makes sense to store up treasure here. Meanwhile, the resurrection changes all of that. Suddenly we're sure of an eternal life that puts this life into context and makes it look pathetically short.

[17:41] And if there is a resurrection to come, if there's new life to come, and we gain access to that through Jesus, then suddenly treasure here doesn't really matter all that much.

It's only around for the tiniest sliver of the eternal lives that we will have. So if you believe in the resurrection, if we believe in the resurrection, then we believe that our genuine faith, to use the words of 1 Peter, we believe that our genuine faith is of more worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire, because it lasts.

We believe that the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead has given us new birth into a living hope and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil, or fade, kept in heaven for us.

And that fundamentally changes how we look at money and earthly treasure and possessions now. As Paul says in 1 Timothy chapter 6, it says, Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant, nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides everything for our enjoyment.

Command them, command those who are rich in this present age to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share.

[19:07] In this way, they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation in the coming age, so that they may take hold of that life which is truly life.

Jesus himself said something similar in Matthew chapter 6. He said, Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth where moths and vermin destroy, where thieves break in and steal, but store up

for yourselves treasures in heaven where moths and vermin do not destroy and where thieves do not break in and steal.

Why does Jesus give that advice? Well, he tells us in the next words. Store up for yourselves treasure in heaven for where your treasure is, there your heart is also.

Earlier I said the core message of this passage I didn't believe was about money. And this is what I mean. It's fundamentally not about money, but it's about our hearts.

This passage is a really practical worked example of one of the things that Jesus taught, which is that money is a real indicator of where our hearts lie.

[20 : 20] Now, money is just an indicator of where our hearts lie. It's not the be-all and end-all in and of itself. But it is a powerful indicator of where our hearts lie. And look at what the author does between verses 33 and 34 here.

In verse 33, he talks about God's grace being so powerfully at work in them. God's grace. God's free gift.

And then he links that in with their not being a needy person among them. So how does that work in practice? Do we see that when God saves people, he creates a money tree for the new believers?

Or do we see that in saving these people, he gives them some sort of new skills or work attitude that means that they're able to improve their financial condition themselves or that sort of thing?

Well, no. God's grace led to there being no needy people among them for or through the means of verses 34 to 35. Those who owned or land or houses sold them.

[21 : 26] They brought the money from the sales. They put it at the apostles' feet. It was distributed to those who had need. God's grace is tied directly into how believers act with money.

I think it was something that Ralph was saying earlier. Real faith or real worship of God leads to a change in our actions. I want to be careful here.

I want to be really careful here. This is not a contradiction of the gospel message. If you're following Christ, then you are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, to the glory of God alone.

And two of the clearest verses in all of Scripture that point to that are Ephesians 2, verses 8 and 9. If you went to camps or clubs as a child, you may know those of us as well. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith.

And this is not of yourselves. There's a gift of God, not by works, so that no one can boast. Saved by grace, through faith. But we can't detach verses 8 and 9 from verse 10.

[22 : 35] Verse 10, which says, we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

And one of those good works, referenced all the way through Scripture, is help the poor. In the law, we read various requirements to help the poor.

If you read the first five books of the Bible, we have, for example, one of the tithes goes towards helping them. Farm owners are forbidden to glean to the edges of their fields so that people can come along and make sure they have food. The poor can have something to eat.

If you look at the prophets, the treatment of the poor is tied to righteousness and unrighteousness. Isaiah 3, we have, the Lord enters into judgment against the elders and leaders of the people.

It is you who have ruined my vineyard. The plunder from the poor is in your houses. What do you mean by crushing my people and grinding the faces of the poor?

[23 : 33] Or Jeremiah 2, verse 34, on your clothes is found the lifeblood of the innocent poor. Ezekiel 16, this was the sin of Sodom.

If you know Genesis, you might think, oh, well, the sin of Sodom was relating to sexual immorality and impurity. Ezekiel 16, this was the sin of Sodom. She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed, and unconcerned.

They did not help the poor and needy. And then by contrast in Isaiah 57, God sets out what he wants from his people. Is it not to share your food with the hungry?

To provide the poor wanderer with shelter? When you see the naked to clothe them and not to turn away your own flesh and blood? In the New Testament, I could point you to the Gospels or to James.

Concern for the poor comes across really clearly in those. But I think maybe the best place to go for us may be Galatians. Because Galatians has one major message from start to finish.

[24 : 32] If you know that book, it is you are saved by grace, through faith, and not by works. That is the summary of Galatians in one sentence. At the start of chapter 2, Paul talks about going to Jerusalem to discuss the message of salvation with Peter, James, and John.

He says that they agreed with his message. They gave the right hand of fellowship to Barnabas and to me when they recognized the grace that was given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

So first, they discussed and agreed the fundamental message of the Gospel. And the only other thing that Paul mentions from this meeting comes in verse 10. All they asked, the only other thing, was that we should continue to remember the poor.

The very thing I've been eager to do all along. Even in the quintessential grace not works letter of the New Testament, Paul can't avoid mentioning helping the poor and mentioning it in the same breath as the Gospel itself.

And in this passage we see this is related to the believers. But this isn't restricted to the believers. We have passages like Galatians 6 which says, do good to all. It says especially to the family of the church, especially to the believers.

[25 : 52] But do good to all is not restricted to the believers. Help the poor. And helping the poor is exactly what the early church did. We see it in this passage here.

But it also continued for years after this. Some of the people in Rooted will have heard me a quote from Mike Duncan before. He's a secular historian who specialised in the history of Rome.

If you're interested, his podcast is like 70 hours on the history of ancient Rome. And describing the Roman citizens' reaction to the great persecution of the Christians in the early 300s AD.

So nearly 300 years after the events of Acts, he writes that the Christians were by the citizens by this time widely viewed as a harmless cult comprised of law-abiding, tax-paying citizens whose most visible public act was what?

Tending to the poor and sick? That was their most visible public act. That's what the early church did. What about us today?

[27 : 00] We have, I would really hope, we have the same faith, the same hope, the same God, the same knowledge of the resurrection. So what should that lead us to? It might be tempting to say, you know, selling property, etc.

This is only something for the mega-rich. If you have property lying around, then, you know, what greater parallel or what easier parallel could you find here? It's not presented as a necessity or required of everyone since that's something that everyone seems to have done voluntarily.

But it's not presented as fanatical or a step too far either. But we also need to recognize that most, if not all of us, fall into the category of rich here.

We all have things that we can give up. If we look globally around the world, we are one of the richest nations in the world. I'm standing up here in clothes, if we include, like, watch, shoes, everything I'm wearing at the moment, I'm standing up here in clothes that I probably paid more for than some people get paid in a year for work.

We have wealth. And we know all too well what need exists in the world, don't we? Close to home in Ireland, we know that over 10,000 people are homeless, each one a story.

[28 : 24] And 10% of the population is estimated to live in food poverty. And we know what's happening with inflation at the moment. We know what's happening there. We can't ignore that.

That's just going to rise, isn't it? Further away from home, we know well from the news what's happening in Ukraine. Similarly, in Yemen, it's estimated that over half a million are at acute risk of starvation.

And that's the number of children, never mind the adults. As James says, suppose a brother or sister is without clothes, daily food.

If one of you says to them, go in peace, keep warm and well fed, but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? So there are some easy questions we can ask ourselves on a personal level, on an individual level.

One of the ones that the charities would often go with is can you give up a coffee a week to help someone in need? Maybe even a coffee a month, given the way things are going at the moment in terms of inflation. We can go deeper than that.

[29 : 28] Do we need as many Amazon packages or takeaways or streaming services or games or cameras or the newest laptop, the best phone, the latest app on our phone that costs just a little bit

extra?

Do we need another trip abroad? Do we need another set of clothes? Do we need a newer car? Do we need a more upper-middle-class lifestyle?

Because we know that this is going to pass away. We may not have property to sell now, but we have extraordinary levels of wealth that previous generations, including those in this text, could only have dreamt of.

And I ask myself these questions too. And please, if you see the love of wealth in my life, please do me a favor and point out the giant plank in my eye. And yet, as we ask these questions, I'm also aware that this is low-hanging fruit.

It's easy to pick. But let's consider it more. Let's think about it. What more can we do here and around the world? What more can we do individually? And what more can we do as a church?

[30 : 39] I do mean that. Let's think about it. Let's chat about it after the service before we leave. Let's plan. Let's make sure it gets beyond the level of thoughts and feelings and gets into action.

Let's do something. I'm going to move on now shortly in the passage, and trust me, I won't be spending anywhere near as long on the rest of the text as they're in those first few verses because that's established the foundation and the rest is basically one example.

But before I do move on, please take a note. I don't mind if it's like a strong mental note or a physical one and a pen and paper or a note in a phone with a reminder set on it, but let's not forget. It can be so dangerous to forget. As Paul writes in 1 Timothy 6, he says, if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. Is that us?

He goes on, those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.

[31 : 50] For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

It's not written down in my notes here, but the passages have just come to me. There's a part, I think it's in Mark's gospel, where a rich young man comes to Jesus and he asks, good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?

And they run down through a list of laws and requirements and eventually they get to the end of it and the guy says, look, I've kept all these since I was a boy. It says, Jesus looked at him and loved him but said, one thing you lack, go sell everything you have, give to the poor and you'll have treasure in heaven, then come follow me.

And it says that rich young man went away sad because he had great wealth, wasn't willing to give it up. let's not wander away for love of money as we also see later in this passage.

In verses 36 and 37 we have one example basically of what's been said in the previous verses. We have a guy called Joseph who's a Levite, the apostles call him Barnabas which means son of encouragement, he sells a field, he brings the money to the apostles, they distribute it.

[33 : 12] Now, if some of you know Matthew 6 well, you might wonder if this is okay. Because Matthew 6 verses 3 and 4 says that when you give to the needy, incidentally, when, not if, when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing so that your giving may be in secret.

And people clearly know that Barnabas has given this money here. So it doesn't seem to meet the requirements on the face of it. But Matthew 6 is more about whether the giving is done in public to be honoured by others as it says in verse 2 of that chapter.

It doesn't look like Barnabas fails this test. But for us, if we're giving, if we're supporting, the best way, the safest way to be sure that we're not doing this to be honoured by others is to do it in secret.

That way we can be sure of our motivations. Having said that, I just want to take a moment to talk about one specific Irish example, particularly for anyone who's earning money here and paying taxes.

In Ireland, if you're a taxpayer and you give more than €250 a year or more than €21 a month to a charity, they can claim almost 45% of that back from the government.

[34 : 26] And all you have to do is sign a very simple basic form. I think people get worried whenever you talk about taxes and forms and, oh, this is going to be difficult. It's literally, what is your PPS number?

Do you want this charity to be able to reclaim the money? Tick. Sign your name. Date it. Send it off. And that gets whatever charity you're given to, whether it's this church or any other, it gets them an extra roughly 45% from the government.

So just something to think about when it comes to mind there. But if we go back to Barnabas here, it is clear that his example acts as a really marked contrast to what Ananias and Sapphira do next.

They sell a plot of land, we're told in verse 2 of chapter 5, and they keep back some of the money. Now, interestingly, keeping back some of the money doesn't seem to be a problem here.

It doesn't seem to be the problem. So much is the fact that they're saying and implying that they're not doing that. So they're saying or implying that they're handing over the full sum. And we get that from what Peter says in verse 4.

[35 : 29] He's berating Ananias. He says, didn't it, didn't the piece of property belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal?

What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied just to human beings, but to God. He had the choice of what to do here. His land was, well, his.

He had been granted stewardship of it by God, ultimately. He could have kept it. He could have sold it and kept all the money if he wanted to. From what Peter is asking here, it doesn't look like either of those courses of action would have been wrong or sinful for him to do.

But what is wrong is the lie. Verse 4. You have not just lied to human beings, but to God. What is that lie?

Well, in effect, it's that they're giving everything to God. We don't see that so much when Peter is talking with Ananias. We see it in verse 8 when he's talking with Sapphira. He asks, tell me this.

[36 : 35] Is this the price that you and Ananias got for the land? He clearly has the money that Ananias left with him. He's saying, is this the price that you received? And the lie is where she says, yes, that is the price.

And there's a lot we don't know about this. We don't know how much money or what proportion of the money or what proportion of their total wealth represented. We don't know why they decided to do this.

Maybe looking back to verse 36 and 37, maybe they're seeing this new name being given to Barnabas and maybe they want a new name for themselves from the apostles. But whatever the case is, you can see the judgment here.

It's really not easy to read. As both of them claim to be giving everything to God, they lie and they fall down dead.

The punishment is death. And here is where I think we come back to our hearts. We saw earlier money is an indicator of where our hearts lie.

[37 : 42] But we see here that our hearts' lies will be revealed. We can't hide stuff from God. This isn't just about money.

There are many other ways in which we could theoretically be claiming to give everything to God throughout our lives. It could be, for example, in church. Maybe the reason we volunteer isn't exactly what it seems to be to everyone or what we make it out to be.

Or at home, what we think, say and do behind closed doors. Maybe only select few know about it. Maybe even only God knows about it. Or it could be when we're talking with certain friends or family from years gone by.

Maybe from before we became a Christian, before we started living out our faith. We're willing to change everything in church and in church and Christian circles. We are on fire for God.

But when talking with these people, we can't show them that we've changed. They'll mock us if we've changed. They'll be like, what's wrong with you? Maybe that's us. Or maybe it's at work.

[38 : 49] Do we claim to work for the glory of God? Have we really given everything to Him in that area of our lives? There might be other ones that come to your head, ways we lie, places we say we're giving everything to Him and yet we're not.

The resurrection changes our future and our hearts. Money is an indicator of where our hearts lie. One indicator, a powerful indicator though. And our hearts' lies will be revealed whatever they may be.

As I wrap up, I'd like to encourage you again to consider and think about your use of and your attitude towards money and possessions. I'd encourage you again to talk about it after the service.

Where can you use it better? Where can we all use it better? But far more than that on an individual level, can I encourage you, don't lie to God. Your lies will be found out.

As the Apostle John writes, if we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. The truth is not even in us.

[40 : 01] But we know that if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to purify us from all unrighteousness.

So let's be honest with God and let's surrender everything to Him. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank You for the resurrection.

We thank You for this foundation to our hope. We thank You that we can see in Jesus' rising again our future being changed.

We thank You that You are changing our hearts and have changed our hearts if we are following Christ. And we pray that You would help us to find those parts of our hearts that are not fully given over to You.

We pray that You would help us in particular to think about how we use money and possessions, whether that is honouring or glorifying to You. We pray that this would lead to concrete steps that we have in our lives but Lord, we also recognise that money is only an indicator of where our hearts lie.

[41 : 17] We recognise that there are so many ways that we lie to ourselves and maybe even lie to You, Lord, and we pray that we would not do that. We pray that You would help us to be honest with You, to recognise the sin in our lives and to come to You with it knowing that You are faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Father, we praise You for what You have done. We praise You for what Christ has done and we praise You for what the Spirit will do in our lives.

As it's in Jesus' precious name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.