

# Great Power and Fear

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[0:00] Well, good morning. It's good to see all of you. For those of you who don't know, I'm Pastor Andrew. I'm the lead pastor here. It's good to have all of you with us today. Those of you who've been around for the past several weeks will know that we're in the book of Acts.

Those of you who have been with us since the beginning of this year will know that we have kind of been in the book of Acts ever since January. But here we are in chapter 5, the very beginning of chapter 5.

I would encourage you, if you have your Bibles this morning, to turn with me to Acts chapter 5. It's on page 913 if you're using our pew Bible. We're not told how much time has elapsed, but we know that this is a burgeoning church movement.

This is the beginning of God's work among a group of individuals who He's leading to salvation. He's drawing out from among His people and setting His affection on them.

And because of His work, the work of the Spirit among them, it's creating this movement of individuals. It's clear that they are devoted to Christ.

[1:09] We find in chapter 2, verses 42 to 47, they're devoted to the apostles' teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of the bread, and to prayers. That this is a church where everything has changed for them.

And it's so abundantly clear. The Holy Spirit is shaping them and transforming them and making them a new kind of people. It's not unlike moving back to the beginning of Israel's history.

Another movement that was taking place. And Israel is there in Exodus. And they've been in the land of Egypt. They've been kind of captives there.

God has called them out. And for 40 years, they have waited. They've waited for a fulfillment of the promise. And just as they're about to enter the land, something significant begins to happen.

God consecrates His people. A generation of individuals, a generation of those who were part of the covenant community have died.

[2:17] They have died off. Their children are now in place. They are there at Gilgal. They've just crossed the Jordan River. They've celebrated the Passover. The men have circumcised themselves to set themselves apart.

And now they're looking at their first objective. The objective of Jericho. They need God's power. They need God's word.

They need God's help. The evidence of God's working among them. Everything is new. A new generation. A new leader. A new land.

A new beginning. And here they are in Jericho. Called to be devoted to the Lord. God gives them some instructions. He tells this group of individuals as they're about to take Jericho.

This is the city for me. You are to devote this city to me. So everything that was in the city belonged to God. Devoted to Him. This seemingly impregnable city was then destroyed.

[3:21] And God allowed them to destroy the city by simply walking around the city. It was an evidence of God's incredible power. After 40 years in the wilderness.

They had now experienced the taste of God's work among them. And imagine how they must have felt. Having experienced. God is here. God is working.

God's power is evident. It's just demonstrated that He can take care of these obstacles. And so the people. Now seeing the next obstacle.

A small city named Ai. Decide. You know what? We've got this handled. I think we can take care of business. So they just send 3,000 men. And in confidence they go to try to defeat Ai.

And yet. You know the story. What happens? They turn and run. It wasn't Jericho. And there was something that has happened now. Joshua is devastated at the destruction that's happening among

his people.

[4:25] He's devastated at the fact that they got conquered. That 36 of these men had died. He praised the Lord. He tears his robe.

And God says to him. Get up Joshua. He tells Joshua that Israel has sinned. Someone has taken what belonged to God. Someone has stolen.

Somebody has lied. Someone has taken these consecrated things. That were devoted to destruction. And taken them to himself.

A search is made. Eventually the search narrows in on a man named Achan and his family. Achan finally admits what he has done. He had seen a beautiful cloak from Shinar.

He wanted it. He had seen 200 shekels of silver. He had seen a bar of gold weighing 50 shekels. He wanted it. He took it. He buried it.

[5:24] Nobody saw what Achan did. But God saw. And the judgment that followed. The judgment that followed Achan and his family was severe.

Not only on Achan and his wife. But his sons. His daughters. His property. His possessions. His livestock. Were all taken out to the valley of Achor.

And judgment fell. A heap of stones. A place of lasting reminder. And I think God was making something unmistakably clear.

If you will be a people who experience and enjoy the power of God. You must be a people who are holy to God. A people holy to God.

So here we come to Acts chapter 5. Another beginning of another great movement. And another great message of God's holiness.

[6:25] The message is embedded in our story. It's clear. What seems to be severe. Is God seeking to establish. Right out of the beginning.

Right out of the gate. A people who will enjoy. The benefits of God's power. His grace among them. The health of a church. That is flourishing.

And growing. Is a church that must be. First holy. You see if a people. Are going to enjoy the benefits. Benefits. Of God's power among them.

God's holiness among them. They must be a holy people. As we find from 1 Peter. It says. Be holy. For I am holy. That's what God has called us to.

And so. And so this morning. As we. As we talk. About Acts chapter 5. It's a sobering passage. In some respects. There is a bit of a measure of.

[7:20] Fear and trembling. Even for me. As I. As I'm sharing this with you. Because. As we consider our lives. As we examine ourselves. We know. That there are areas of our life.

That are out of bounds. Out of step. With what God has called us to. But we also know that God is. Full of grace. God is full of mercy.

God delights. In forgiveness. As Paul will say. Where sin abounds there. Grace abounds. Grace abounds. All the more. The super. Abounding grace.

Of God. God doesn't write us off. When we sin. God. Allows us. To enjoy. Mercy. But sometimes. Even in mercy. There are severe consequences.

And that. By the way. Is also a mercy. A mercy. To Ananias. And Sapphira. A mercy. On the church. And a mercy. Because it continues.

[8:15] To help advance. Not only the cause. But helps to exalt. And continue to exalt. The majesty. And the glory. Of God. We come to our story.

In a man named Ananias. And his wife Sapphira. And here they are. At the beginning. Of this church movement. Having experienced. This incredible work. Of the Lord. Among his people. There are two. Phrases that we looked at. Last week. From Acts chapter 4. Verse 33. Great power. We saw. And great grace.

You remember that? It says in chapter 4. Verse 33. With great power. The apostles were giving. Their testimony. To the resurrection.

Of the Lord Jesus. And great grace. Was upon them all. You want to experience. And enjoy. The great power of God.

[9:08] And the great grace of God. The evidence. Of God's. Of God's. Hand upon your life. His favor. On your life. Great grace.

And great power. Come through. The Holy Spirit. And they come to a people. Who are. Not only recipients. Of God's grace. But seek. To dwell. And live within.

That grace. By advancing. The grace of God. Around them. God. But while this great grace. Was evident. The work of the spirit. Was clear. Now we see here.

At the very beginning. Of this church movement. The enemy. Who tries to come. And corrupt. This movement. To destroy. This movement. From within. And Peter names it.

In our passage. In chapter 5. Verse 3. He says this. Ananias. Why has Satan. Filled. Your heart. To lie. To the Holy Spirit. God's response.

[10:05] To Ananias. Will seem. Very extreme. But it underscores. The seriousness. Of holiness. Among God's people. It highlights. The issue. That threatens.

Every church. Movement. Every church. That desires. To be healthy. Church. That desires. To grow. A church. That desires. To be unified. Is a church.

That must. Be holy. If there's any act. That gets. To the heart. Of grace. That demonstrates. The grace of God. In. In excess.

Perhaps. It is the. The. The. Grace. Of giving. And I just want to. At the very beginning. Of this message. Let you see this. From. From 2nd Corinthians. You don't have to turn there.

I'm going to put it on the screen. I want you to see. How connected. Grace is. To giving. 2nd Corinthians chapter 8. Beginning in verse 1. It says this. We want you to know brothers. About the grace of God.

[10:59] That has been given. Among the churches of Macedonia. For they gave. According to their means. And beyond their means. Begging us earnestly. For the favor.

Which is. The same word grace. Of taking part. In the relief of the saints. Accordingly. We urge Titus. That as he had. Started. So he should complete. Among you.

This act. Of grace. But as you excel. In everything. In faith. In speech. In knowledge. In all seriousness. And in our love for you.

See that you excel. In this act. Of grace. Also. For you know. That the grace. Of our Lord Jesus Christ. That though he was rich.

Yet for your sake. He became poor. So that you. By his poverty. Might become rich. As it is written. Whoever gathered much. Had nothing left over. Whoever gathered little.

[11:55] Had no lack. And then in chapter 9. And God is able. To make all grace. Abound to you. So that having all sufficiency. And all things.

At all times. You may abound. In every good work. For the ministry. Of this service. Is not only supplying. The needs of the saints. But is overflowing. In many. Thanksgivings to God.

Because. Of the surpassing grace. That is upon you. Thanks. Which is also. The same word. Grace. Grace. Be to God.

For this. His. Indescribable. Gift. As recipients. Of God's grace. We have the joy.

Of distributing. Grace. To those around us. And it happens. Largely. Through. The extension. Of grace. And gifts. That come. Through the body.

[12:51] As God. Lavishes. Grace. On us. His extravagant. Grace. Though he was rich. Yet. For your sake. He may. He became poor. So that you. Through his poverty.

Might become. Become rich. And so. When we experience. The abundant. Amazing. Grace. Of God. That's all we can do. To share. And distribute. That grace. With others.

And we see. An example. An example. Of grace. Among this church. Which great grace. Was upon. Them all. Ananias.

And Sapphira. Were recipients. Of great grace. And we're going to see. In our passage today. There are things. About their giving. That are good.

And commendable. And I want to just. Put them. In the forefront. As we're working through. I want us to take note. Of some good things. That we see. God's work. In the hearts.

[13:45] And lives. Of these two. First. We find. That they give generously. They gave generously. Look at this. In chapter 5. Verse 1.

But Ananias. Excuse me. 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. In your own. And after it was sold.

Was it not. At your disposal. Why is it. That you have contrived. This deed. In your heart. You have not lied. To man. But to God. When Ananias.

[14 : 40] Heard these words. He fell down. And breathed his last. In great fear. Came upon. All who heard of it. The young man rose. And wrapped him up. And carried him. Out. And buried him. Last week.

Like I said. We saw this extravagant work. Of the grace of God. Among his people. And one key example. That we saw. Was Joseph. There at the end. Of chapter 4. Verses 36.

And 37. Joseph. Who is 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 then we come to. Chapter 5. Verse 1. What is the first word you read? But. But.

Just for the sake of. You as. Bible students. Take notice. Of contrastive words. This is a way for us.

[15 : 36] To understand. What we can anticipate. What's coming next. Take note. Of words.

Especially. Contrastive words. The word. But. Is here. For a reason.

It's a contrastive word. There's something. That's going to be different. But in many ways. Several things. That are the same. Ananias. They sold a possession. This is a word.

For land. It's a land. It's a word. For property. We find that. Throughout this. This. This book.

Already. In Acts chapter 2. Verse 45. They're selling their possessions.

And goods. In chapter 4. Verse 34. As many as were owners of lands or houses. Sold them. We've mentioned. Briefly. Last week.

That selling property was a big deal. Especially for those who were growing up in Israel. Because. They had inherited this property. It was. It was land rights. It. It had an inheritance in view.

[16 : 32] There were. There was security. That was bound up in property. There was name. There was reputation. To sell lands. Was to divest something significant. It was a good thing.

It was commendable. It led to. Many thanksgivings to God. And I think they wanted to experience. The same. The same joy.

That they saw. Happening around them. They saw. How this distributing. And giving of gifts. And selling property. Helped to. Increase the joy. And thanksgivings.

Of all of those. Who are around them. They're like. We want a taste of that. That looks amazing. How can we take part in that? They've been impacted. By the message.

They. They. They. They were. They were one heart and soul. We saw that in chapter four. The spirit of God. Was. Was working in them. And I think they wanted to leave their mark.

[17 : 28] I think they were inspired by good things. And. Just want to pause for a moment. To. To let you know. It is good to follow. The example of others. It's good.

To be inspired to good things. It's good to. To see what God is doing. And how he's working. In the lives of others. And say. You know what? What a great idea. I think. I want to follow.

That example. You see. They were being generous. They were extravagant. They were sacrificial. They sold a property.

I think. It's even safe to say. They were filled with faith. They were faith filled. In this giving.

Divesting property.

Releasing a measure. Of that security. Extending mercy. It was good. For them. To give. They gave generously. Next. We see.

[18 : 22] They gave properly. And I would say. They gave in the proper way. And I'm pointing. To chapter 4. Verse 35. Notice.

They laid it at the apostles feet. These are the believers there. In Jerusalem. Chapter 4. Verse 35. Notice what Barnabas does. In chapter 4. Verse 37.

It says. He laid it at the apostles feet. The church had determined to express. Their grace giving.

Their consecration. Dedicating the things.

That were gifts. To the fellowship. They were going to. Dedicate it to the Lord. By laying. This gift. At the apostles feet. And notice.

Chapter 5. Verse 2. Ananias. Laid it. At the apostles feet. From the outside. Looking in. Everything was perfect.

[19 : 16] This word. Laid. Is the same word. That's been used. Now three times in a row. It's the same tense. It's the same everything. Of the believers. Of Barnabas.

And now for Ananias. Ananias. Is working through the right process. He's following. The right procedure. He gave generously. He gave properly.

But then we get to verse 3. He gave corruptly. He gave corruptly. So many good things. Are corrupted.

By one. Wrong. Act. Verse 3. Peter says. 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. This deed in your heart?

[20:11] You have not lied to man. But to God. Oh how sin pollutes. The best of actions. You know the verse from James chapter 2.

Verse. James 2. 10. It says. Whoever shall keep the whole law. And yet stumble in one point. He is. Guilty of all. But I did this.

And I did this. And I did this. And I did this. And I did this. But. It gives me. Some ability to do that. I got all of this.

Over here. Look at all of this. This is good stuff. But. It's just this little that. It's okay. Right? No. It's not okay. It's corrupting.

It's polluting. It. Misrepresented. The work of the Holy Spirit. You're lying. Not to man. You're lying.

[21:10] You're lying. To God. How could you do such a thing? Now recount. All of these things together with me. They. Ananias. And Sapphira. They became part of this fellowship.

Which means. They were believers. They had placed their faith. And trust. In Jesus Christ. Alone for salvation. They believed in his death. They believed in his resurrection.

They had placed their faith in him. As their Lord and Savior. That was important. They were of one heart. And one soul. We saw that from chapter 4.

They were connected. They were involved. They were united with God's people. They saw God's work among the apostles. And they were devoted to the teaching. They were devoted to the ministry.

They were devoted to the work. And great grace was upon them. We've said that a number of times already. And because of that. They were determined to take part. In this ministry.

[22:05] That God was doing. In part of this distribution. So they sold a piece of property. They brought the gift to the apostles. They laid that gift.

At the apostles feet. And then. They lied. About. How much they sold. The property for. One. Act. Of corruption. Polluted the whole thing. One. Act. Act. Of corruption. Polluted. The whole thing. You know.

We can recognize. Perhaps. The significance of this. When we think about. Drinking water. The EPA. Regulates. Arsenic. In drinking water. To 10 parts.

Per. Billion. Okay. 10 parts. Per billion. And it's. One part. For a hundred. Million. Okay. So. Basically. What that means.

[22:58] Is. You can have. Ninety nine. Million. Nine hundred. And ninety nine. Thousand. Nine hundred. And ninety nine. Parts. Of pure. Drinking water. And one part.

Of arsenic. And it's. No. Don't touch. It's polluted. It's corrupt. Ninety nine.

Million. Nine hundred. Nine hundred. That should be fine. No. It's not fine. I think we. At times.

Give ourselves. A pass. Along the same. Same lines. We. See. All the good. We think. That the ledger. Of. Of. Of. The things. That we do. For God.

Are going to count. But at a whole. It takes. Is being guilty. Of one. And you're guilty. Of all. Guilty. Of all. You see. God.

[23:51] Was not. Calculating. Percentages. He was not. Calculating. Percentages. Holy. Not holy. No neutral.

Territory. And Ananias. His lie. Polluted. The whole. Gift. However great. The gift was. Polluted. Corrupted.

Was it useful? Sure. I'm sure it was useful. But it corrupted. The giver. Why. Did that matter. So much. Well. In a time. Where the Holy Spirit. Was working.

Among the people. To misrepresent. The work. Of God. Was to. To shame. Or to. To pollute. The glory. Of God. In this way.

Sacrificial sharing. Was going to be confused. Now with showmanship. If Ananias. And Sapphira. Were not held accountable. Satan. Has filled your heart.

[24:47] To lie to the Holy Spirit. Who do you think. You are. Well. Chapter 5. Verse 4. You have not. Lied. To man. But to.

What church? To God. I wonder. If we could get a hold of that. Would that would change for us? If we could recognize.

That every sin. That we commit. Is not just a sin. Towards that other individual. But is actually. A sin to God. What would that change.

For us. Now. Don't misunderstand. God is so full of grace. He is so. Abundant. In mercy. He delights.

In forgiveness. That if we confess our sin. John quoted this earlier. If we confess our sin. He is faithful. And just. To forgive. And to cleanse us.

[25:41] From all. Unrighteousness. Because. He delights. In mercy. Delights in mercy. But he can't let. An unholy.

Contribution slide. Especially the kind of contribution. That was public. And it was giving testimony. To the glory of God. When in fact. It was. A human work.

They kept it back. It's the word. To embezzle. Or to steal. To misappropriate. Misappropriate. It's the only time. In the New Testament. And I. Don't want to overstate.

I'm pretty sure. This is the case. That it's the only time. In the New Testament. This Greek word is used. And guess what? The only other time. It's used. In the Old Testament. The Greek. Old Testament.

Guess where that is? The story of Achan. That's not a coincidence. Because what was devoted to God. In.

[26:38] Jericho. Is devoted to God here. And Achan thought that he could take some from himself. He was taking from God. That which was devoted to the Lord he took for himself.

It came with the same consequences. Death to Achan. Death to his family. He held back. He pilfered. He embezzled. Interestingly enough Ananias' name means God is gracious here is a man who is supposed to embody grace he is supposed to reflect the grace of God who we find the great grace was upon this church and Ananias and Sapphira being participants in that and now Ananias a recipient of grace is now misrepresenting God's grace misrepresenting God's grace God could not let that go Ananias caught up in the flow of satanic thinking is now serving self self-promoting self-congratulating self-deceiving Oliver Wendell Holmes says sin has many tools but a lie is the handle which fits them all yes they gave graciously yes they gave properly but they also gave corruptly and then we find in verse 7 to 11 they gave collectively

Ananias and Sapphira were a team 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 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 they found her dead just returned 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 Peter confronts Sapphira you sell the property for so much yes for so much why have you agreed together Peter says to test the spirit of the Lord how did you think you were gonna get away with that and that's the truth the things we think we're getting away with

God knows God knows oh that God would help us to recognize the significance of holiness to recognize the significance of testimony to embrace and to love the glory of God more than our personal gratification they did this together they were agreed we find that in verse 2 sold a property with his wife's knowledge with knowledge and I find this especially important that we understand the significance of consent see Sapphira didn't act in a sense she didn't sell the property she didn't bring the proceeds she was just a consenting individual but she was just as culpable oh how important it is for us to understand the significance of consenting confirming laughing scoffing at people's wickedness as if it didn't matter and not confronting not addressing not rebuking just haha that's funny

Paul says in Ephesians chapter 5 verses 7 to 12 he says this therefore do not become partners with them for at one time you were darkness but now you are light in the Lord walk as children of light for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord and take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness but instead expose them for it is even shameful to speak of those things that they do in secret don't even talk about what they do don't

don't make it the news story the part of your news feed don't delight in people's sin confront it walk in light in the severe judgment that happens to Sapphira excuse me to Ananias will happen to his wife God is impartial in his judgment how must we learn the significance

[31:27] I just want to pause for a moment how do we handle sin within our own fellowship what are the ways in which we are meant to address sin because as we see here in our passage today the significance of sin do not allow sin to be unaddressed it will have massive implications not just for you but for the body well first we need to handle it personally and I'll go through these quickly you know these verses Matthew chapter 18 verses 15 to 17 says this if your brother sins against you go and tell him his fault between you and him alone if he listens to you you have gained your brother if he does not listen you take one or two others along with you that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses take someone with you if he doesn't hear you directly one on one deal with it personally one on one next deal with it gently Galatians chapter 6 verses 1 and 2 says brothers if anyone is caught in any transgression you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness keep watch on yourself lest you too be tempted do it gently do it graciously and the reason why we do it gently is because of this this third thing we do it humbly because we recognize that we too are just as guilty at times it says there at the end of verse 2 keep watch on yourself lest you too be tempted bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ for if anyone thinks him he is something when he is nothing he deceives himself don't make too much of yourself don't think you're beyond beyond the the same issues of sin don't don't don't don't imagine that you have grown to such a way that you can't also fall finally direct do it directly as we've just seen from Ephesians chapter 5 verse 11 take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness but rather expose them that word expose is the same word translated rebuke it's the same word we get rebuke from 1st

Timothy chapter 5 it says ask for all of those who persist in sin rebuke or expose them in the presence of all so the rest may fear why because we care about being a holy church why because we care about enjoying the blessings of God's grace among us why because we want to participate in the work of God among this fellowship the way that he is helping to establish relationships and help the gospel to flourish among us we do it because we want God's grace and God's glory to be evident here then we come to some results we find some results in chapter 5 verse 5 and then verse 11 it resulted in healthy fear it resulted in healthy fear it says this at the end of verse 5 and great fear came upon all who heard it verse 11 and great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard of these things must be noted that this is the first time the word church is used in the book of

Acts and so the first time the word church is used in the book of Acts I don't think it's any accident for us to see the severity of God taking seriously holiness among his people this was a time of judgment a time of punishment because this was a time of God's extraordinary outpouring of his spirit among his people God essentially says you will not misrepresent the Holy Spirit you will not pervert the spirit's power I wonder how important it is for us to uphold the holiness of God among our fellowship in a previous church that I was at we recognized as a church that we wanted God to do great things we wanted God to grow our fellowship we want to see this great grace we were we were also preaching through parts of the book of Acts and we came to this part we want to see great grace among us and so we did this we prayed for God's holiness

God make us a holy church and guess what God did without soliciting the people without exploring without investigating without examining God allowed us to see these things that have been around for decades begin to show up in our fellowship I won't be I'll be very general there was a marriage that was falling apart of some key leaders in our church that became very clear there was a deacon in our church who had embezzled around fifty thousand dollars over the course of ten years there was another Christian leader in our church who had misappropriated about thirty five thousand dollars of money we prayed oh God we want great grace to be evident here so we know we need to be a holy church and that's what God will do God answers that prayer he delights in making a holy people it starts here by the way it starts personally as God makes a holy person so that when we collectively come together we're a holy church do this for yourself

Paul encourages the church examine yourself test yourself whether you're in the faith whether your life is lining up to the standard that God has set that the Holy Spirit is working in your life to call you to holiness and by God's grace if that is your desire God will reveal areas of your life that are out of step he will forgive your sin as you repent to him and turn away from that sin and he will help to

make you a holy person a sanctified person a set apart kind of person so that we can be the kind of church that enjoys the benefits of holy living and great grace among us well it resulted in a healthy fear but it also resulted in greater grace and I think this is fabulous greater grace now in verses 12 to 16 I'm going to move through these quickly so that we can see them but I want to read this for us and I want you to see the number of ways in which the grace of

[38:32] God is just exploding among this group of individuals it says now many signs and wonders were regularly done people by the hands of the apostles and they were all together in Solomon's portico none of the rest dared join them I like that but the people held them in high esteem and more than ever believers were added to the Lord multitudes of both men and women so they even carried out the sick into the streets and laid them on cots and mats that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them the people also gathered from the towns around Jerusalem bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits and they were all healed wow what a church what a movement greater grace well how do we see this greater grace we see this growing evidence of

God's power that's first that's the first thing this growing evidence of God's power I love how Luke puts this now many signs were done and not just any kinds of signs that now have taken it to another step as you find there in verse 15 so that people are flooding into the streets they're laying their people down and just so that the shadow of Peter might cross upon them and they can be healed from their infirmities that's a different kind of work that's taking place great grace was upon them God was doing a miraculous work God's power was so clear among them but also this growing fellowship verse 12 we find they were all together all together one accord this word again used for the fourth time we see it's not simply an expression of identity it's an expression of a church that a group that was all in they were connected they belonged together it was as if they were one one body assembled across this city this sign of solidarity this work of the Holy Spirit that's what the Holy Spirit does the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace that's what we find in Ephesians chapter 4 that's what the Holy Spirit accomplishes for his people and the more this church is unified the more it expresses this work and power of God's Spirit among them growing fellowship but also in verse 13 a growing reverence a growing reverence we see that in verse 13 none of the rest dare to join them well I hope not after they see what God thinks about holiness they've come to understand who this group of people are they've come to understand what it means to be marked by the Holy Spirit that it comes with great power but also with great severity a great commitment a great standard to holiness but it says the people held them in high esteem they're like you know what those people over there man I'm not seeing a group of people like that before man they there's something happening in that group of people I don't know what it is but I'm kind of keeping! my distance until I figured it out but the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved because of this electric this emphatic obvious clear testimony of this group of individuals of the wonder of who God was it was also a growing church notice this in verse 14 and more than ever believers were added to the Lord did you get that more than ever!

more than the 3,000 of chapter 2 more than the 5,000 of chapter 4 more than however many multitudes were coming to faith as you're working through chapter 2 to 4 now more than ever so many that Luke doesn't even put a number on it it was exploding this church was going bananas that's not what you expect when discipline happens that's not what you expect when sin has to be called out but it was the kind of punishment that God brought on this church for the sake of integrity purity!

[43:05] clarity! clarity! of who he was! so the church is exploding! and I love how it says men and women were being added up to this point we saw 3,000 men and 5,000 men and now multitudes of men and women are part of this number we see that there's also a growing witness you see that in verse 16 the people gathered from the towns around Jerusalem now we're seeing this church and its influence beginning to expand Jesus had promised that you'll be my witnesses in Jerusalem and Judea which is the region kind of just around Jerusalem and here it is the towns around Jerusalem God is doing a work the church is growing the witness is expanding and notice verse 16 this growing compassion growing compassion the people are gathered from the towns of

Jerusalem what are they doing they're bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits and they were all healed there was a sympathy it was an interest in hurting people it was a sense of compassion a hurting with those who were hurting and desiring for God to do a work in their life as

well not just a physical work I'm sure it was connected also to a spiritual work this church was experiencing more than ever this work of God among them truly great grace was upon them all and the adversary however he tried to dislodge this work to corrupt the work and to bring it down hard things and severity and punishment God intervened and God helped the church remain holy so it's testimony it's testimony to a holy

God could continue and the work of God among them could flourish I wonder this morning I wonder what is a work that God needs to do in your life today if you want to experience this morning great grace that's on your life in this overflow of God's grace which leads to extravagant giving and extravagant participation and extravagant unity but preceded all by a commitment to holiness where does God need to do a work for you where does God need to do a work for me today as it relates to being a kind of church that God can show his favor on so we can enjoy the benefits of God's work among us and God's work in this community as he's working personally and corporately to lead a people closer to

Jesus so that we can shine the wonder the majesty the glory of God over this city oh may God help us to be committed to this kind of living father we thank you for this example as hard as it is this example that is embedded in a promise this promise of your working among us the testimony of that work that continues to flourish and of course we see even in our own day the work of God through your Holy Spirit accomplishing your purposes and Lord I pray that you would help us to be committed to be committed to the goal of living a holy life Lord as you're holy help us to be holy not to not to be like perhaps Ananias and Sapphira who had so many good things in place and maybe just one little bad thing was okay may we not make those kinds of exchanges and Lord may we see among our fellowship your work in ever increasing ways we pray in

Jesus name amen God bless you have a great week we know you you you you you you you you  
you you you you you you you you you you