

# Stepping Out Into God's Purpose

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[ 0 : 00 ] This morning is from the New Testament in the book of Acts. In the New Testament, Acts chapter 4, and we're starting at the end of Acts 4, verse 36, and continuing through chapter 5 to verse 11.

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 and 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, 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?

[ 1 : 46 ] 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, 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. Amen. Amen. Thanks, Elaine.

Thank you all. Thanks for your prayers, Paul. All glory to the Lord, eh? Praise God. Amen. So, the higher you are, the harder you fall.

The view from the top is amazing, but the fall is long and hard. You ever hear little lines like that?

[ 3 : 13 ] Often in reference to those who aspire to do great things. To those who aspire to reach the top.

The top in their profession. Or be the best at a sport. Or the greatest at an art. And why?

Why do people get so caught up in achieving these high statuses? Not always, not always, but often.

It's because the last person to achieve the highest place in my sport, or in my career, was glorified. They were held in the highest esteem. Everyone loved them. And people can so easily fall fault to secretly saying, I want to be seen like that.

[ 4 : 29 ] Our world is full. Our world is full. Full of such people. From world leaders wanting to be the best leader ever.

Because they're thinking, hey, when Winston Churchill or Abraham Lincoln led their countries in this way, with this approach, everyone loved it.

And they're still talking about them today. I want that. To all of our X-factor aspiring folk. Thinking, look at the way Michael Jackson or Whitney Houston was adored, admired.

I want that. Sports players. Look at the way George Best was adored. I want that. And of course, us. In our jobs.

In our everyday lives. Look at how the CEO has the whole company in her hands. I want that. Or look at how the family down the road is loved.

[ 5 : 35 ] The community worker on the other estate is glorified. The church next door is better. The charity director, who the council loves and gives them all the money. Look at the way they're treated.

Even simpler things. Look at the way people talk about her bacon. Or his parental skills. I want that. I want that. I want to be seen like that. People so easily fall into this.

And sometimes it can be deadly. Sometimes it can destroy. Destroy. Friendships. Friendships. Marriages. Churches. Charities. People. And what not. Because. Either their climb was too much. Or when they got there. As the saying goes. The fall really was much, much harder. By the end of chapter 4.

[ 6 : 43 ] Of Acts. The church. Is in a truly great place. Fine living.

Great community. Companionship. Lots of lives are being transformed. Lots of kind. Godly. Generous people.

And the fourth chapter. Finishes with that. Verse 36. By what we've just heard. Read so wonderfully. Joseph. Joseph. A Levi from Cyprus.

Whom the apostles called Barnabas. Which means. Son of encouragement. Sold the field. And brought the money. And put it at the apostles feet.

Wow. Look at this. This guy Joseph. Is looking good. This guy Joseph.

[ 7 : 43 ] Is held in esteem. To the point. Where the apostles. Have changed his name. Something of course. Seen.

As a real Jesus achievement. For it was Jesus. Who first. Changed people's names. As a credit. For their personality.

For where they were going. For their achievements. And here. Peter and co. They carry it on. With Joseph. To Barnabas.

As a way to. Recognize. The great. Generous. Encouraging. Disciple. That this guy. Truly is. So they've.

Changed his name. Promoted him. He looks brilliant. Everyone's talking about him. It's even put in the scripture. What he did. And so.

[ 8 : 43 ] Chapter five. Begins. By taking the time. To point out. The other side of it all. Ananias. And Sapphira.

They are looking on. Looking at how Barnabas. Has reached the top. Looking at his new. Awarded name. Looking at how everyone is talking about him. And they find themselves. All too easily.

Thinking. A bit of that. Would be nice. Hey. Why can't we too. Be held up like Joseph there. Just imagine what names we might be given.

And together. They decide. Yeah. Look. We have a field. A small field. Not worth much. Maybe 50. But yeah.

[ 9 : 42 ] Let's sell it. Make some money. Bring it to Peter and co. And we too. Will be held. In high esteem. We too.

Will be seen. As great. In the eyes. Of all the church. So. Up in the market. It goes. And I think. I think.

Here's what happened next. In the process. Of sales. And legal work. They discover. That this field. Is worth. A little bit more. Than we thought. It's worth a hundred. It's worth double. And they pause a second. Well.

When we decided. To sell. And give the takings. To the church. We had that 50. On our minds. So.

[ 10 : 38 ] We could put the other 50. To good use in our home. So yep. We will stick. With 50. To the church. And use the other 50. For ourselves.

No problem. Now. To be very. Very. Very clear here. That was absolutely okay. That was okay. In the eyes of God.

They were not committing a sin. By deciding that. In the Old Testament. All God says. Is 10%. So 10 pounds.

Would have been it. In the New Testament. Under the New Covenant. Holy Spirit. Through Paul. Teaches each one of us. That we. Should seek the Lord.

And without reluctance. Or compulsion. Decide with the Lord. How much we give. And don't give. Whether under. Or over 10%.

[ 11 : 34 ] So the problem here. Is not. The amount at all. God was in full favor. And full support. Of them saying.

We will give the church 50. And use 50. For the home. And I need to be. Very. Very. Very clear here. You should never. Ever. Feel any pressure.

From anyone. As to how much you give. That's between you. And God. In fact. If you feel pressure. As Paul says. If you feel under compulsion.

Then it's not from God. So Ananias. And Sapphira. Were at this particular point. They were in good standing with God.

Always good. 50 to the church. 50 to the home. No problem. But here's what I expect. Then happened. They think.

[12:33] About good old Joseph. Becoming Barnabas. And how he was admired. Having given all. Of his proceeds to the church.

The whole pot. And they wrestle back and forth. We want. What Barnabas got. You know. Some people will find our names hard to say.

Which I'm probably pronouncing them wrong right now. So a new name would be nice. Probably thinking. And they land on a decision. Stick to the 50-50.

50 to the church. 50 to the house. But tell. Tell Peter and co. That's how much we got. You know. Since we started talking about this.

To our home group and whatnot. We mentioned. We expect to get 50. So they only expect to receive 50. So. It will not be a problem.

[13:32] And then we'll be up there with Barnabas. Everyone will love us. So a field is sold. 100 comes in. 50 goes one way. Tucked away. For the home life.

And the other 50 laid at the feet of Peter. Remember Peter? We said we had a field worth 50. Well here it is.

The whole entire lot. All for the church. Ananias takes a boy. Ready for the big applaud. Peter says. Ananias. And he waits for it.

Ananias. Your new name is. He waits for it. But. That doesn't come. Instead. The brutal. Hardcore. Words. How is it that Satan. Has so filled your heart. That you have lied. To the Holy Spirit. And in line. With what we've been saying here.

[14:28] Peter says. Look. Didn't it belong to you. Before it was. Sold. And after it was sold. Wasn't the money yours. For your disposal.

What made you think of doing this. And the fall was deadly. Literally. Three hours later. The wife is finding her way. To the apostles.

Again. Approaching the door. Thinking. My husband's been in there. Three hours. Getting all the glory. On top of the world. And the fall again. Deadly. Literally. To climb.

To the top. To get all that glory. And even more so. It had cost them. Absolutely. Everything. And Peter's question to them.

Think of doing such a thing. Is the big learning outcome here. We already know. Ananias and wife. Used it as a slicked tactic.

[15:29] For self-promotion. God has a strong word. Hypocritical. The early origins.

Stem from. First century. Greek. And it was. Hypocrite. At one point. Translated. Actor. Back in Greek.

And the first century. Actors. Wore masks. Hypocrite. Is one then. Who put a false face on. And this married couple. Were. In the hope.

To be seen. And to look. Good. Clear. To do a good thing. Is a good thing. To do a good thing.

To be seen. Is not fact. To do good. To be seen. Is a very. Very. Very. Serious. I. And an ass. And his wife.

[16:29] I wonder. Have you ever paused. Taken a moment. Which offences. Which sins.

Really troubled Jesus. Jesus. Jesus made a big deal about. Which ones. Jesus spoke about. So. Else. Well. Depending on how well. You personally know Jesus. You may. Or may. The sin. Jesus addressed. Most. Challenged.

Most. Pointed out. The sin. That Jesus. Kept his. Horsest. Words. For. Was. Prideness. Was. The position.

Of. The heart. Jesus. Was. Continuously. Troubled. By. Proudful. Hypocritical. People. Just a few. Examples.

[17:25] Are. A plank. In one's eye. As a way of addressing. Hypocritical. Behavior. Who judge. And. Jesus. Is. Always. Talking. About.

Pharisees. And. Others. Who attend. To their animals. Or glee. Appearing. To rest. Even. To the point. Of talking. Against. Looking. Of. Looking. Of. Jesus.

Talks. About. Those. Religious. Leaders. Parading. Through. The temple. In. Notch. But. Inwardly. They are. Sin riddled. As. The rest. Of us.

Jesus. Talks. Long. Eloquent. Prayers. To look. Good. Jesus. Talks. About. Those. Who fast. And. Talks. Jesus. Talks. About.

Those. Who give. Just. Like. Our. Couple. Today. By. Others. That. May. Make. Them. Look. Good. And. Jesus. Is. Clear.

[18:20] And. They. Get. Is. Their. Only. Reward. Ironically. Those. With. Sincere. Good. Works. Out. Of. A. Genuine.

Love. For. God. And. For. People. With. No. Expectation. Will. Receive. Even. Greater. Rewards. Ironically. They. Will. Receive.

Them. From. God. Listen. The. The. The. Term. Hypocrite. Does. Not. Apply. To. Those. Who. Try. Jesus.

Had. All. The. Time. In. The. World. For. Such. People. I. His. Relationship. With. The. Falling. About. But. Then. Taking. This. Morning. Reading. And.

Applying. It. To. Life. Today. Those. Who. Do. Good. For. Insincere. Reasons. And. For. Personal. Gain. Because.

[19:11] Truth. Is. This. Is. Still. Happening. With. Everyday. People. Across. The. World. Hypocrites. Say. One. Thing. We're. Out. And. About. To. Be. In. Good. Favor.

But. Have. Very. Within. Their. Hearts. And. That. Is. The. Very. Thing. Jesus. Is. Hated. Most. And. As. He. Approached. His. Crucifixion.

It. Became. An. Even. Bigger. Hot. Topic. And. Actions. Are. In. This. Area. Predominantly. The. Sheep. And. The. Goats. Me. Included. Who. Present.

Ourselves. Out. There. As. Good. Clean. Hardworking. Christians. For. People. And. Never. Help. People. We. Are. The. Worst. Of. Included.

Who. Claim. We. Believe. In. Him. We. Follow. Him. But. About. Him. We. Are. The. Worst. Of. Sinners. And. In. His. Most.

[20:09] Extensive. Criticalness. He. Grabs. The. Word. Hypocrite. By. The. Horns. And. Says. Let's. Turn. To. It. Matthew. Chapter. Twenty.

Verse. Thirteen. So.

He's approaching the cross. Time is short. And. He's desperate. To drive home. The single most important thing. And.

So. He says. Whoa. Whoa. Whoa. Seven times. He says. Verse. Verse. Thirteen. Woe. To you. Teachers. Of the law. And. Pharisees. You. Hypocrites.

You. Shut. The. door. Of the kingdom. Of God. And. People's. Faces. Now. Fast. Forward.

[21:14] To. Twenty. Twenty. Twenty. And. He says. You. Hypocrites. Who. Make. Your. Church. Your.

Way. Of. Life. Your. Act. Of. Worship. So. High. Standard. That. You. In. Effect. Prevent. Ordinary. Everyday. People. Coming.

In. You. Intimidate. People. From. Coming. In. Woe. To. You. Because. God. Knows. The. Real. You. He.

Knows. The. Real. You. Verse. Fifteen. He. Says. Woe. To. You. Teachers. Of. The. Law. You. Hypocrites. You. Travel. Over. Land. And. Sea. To. Win. A. Single. Convert.

And. When. You. Have. Succeeded. You. Make. Them. Twice. As. Much. A. Child. Of. Hell. As. You. Are. Fast. Forward.

[22:09] To. Twenty. Twenty. Twenty. And. He. Says. Woe. To. You. Who. Are. Telling. Who. Are. Pretending. To. Others. To. New. Christians. And. Others. That. You. Don't. Sin. When. We. All. Know. And. God. Certainly.

Knows. You. Do. You. Do. We. All. Do. Verse. Sixteen. Woe. To. You. Blind. Guides. You. Say. If. Anyone.

Swear. By. The. Temple. It. Means. Nothing. But. Anyone. Who. Swear. Is. By. The. The. Temple. Is. Bound. By. That. Oaf. You. Blind. Fools. Fast.

Forward. To. 2025. Woe. To. You. Christians. Who. Blindly. Emphasize. Your. Own. Little.

[23:03] Man. Made. Traditions. And. Ways. Over. The. Bible. And. Hope. To. Falsely. Impress. Woe. Be.

Very. Warned. Verse 23. Woe. To. You. Teachers. Of. The. Law. And. Pharisees. You. Hypocrites. You. Give. A. Tenth. Of. All. Your. Spices. But. Neglect.

More. Important. Matters. Fast. Forward. To. 2025. Woe. To. You.

Christians. Who. Are. So. In. Every. Last. Detail. Of. Theology. Faith. Scripture. You. Know. It. Inside. Out.

All. 66. Books. Every. Verse. Oh. Brilliant. But. You. Have. No. Concern. For. Justice. Mercy. Forgiveness. You.

[ 23 : 56 ] A. Hypocrite. Woe. To. You. Jesus. Says. Verse 25. Woe. To. You. Teachers. Of. The. Law. And. Pharisees. You. Hypocrites. You. Clean. The. Outside.

Of. The. Cup. And. The. Dish. But. Inside. They. Are. Full. Of. Greed. And. Self. Indulgence. Fast. Forward. To. 20. 25. Woe.

To. You. Christians. Who. Work. Hard. To. Keep. Up. Appearances. And. Look. Good. Where. Again. We. All. Know. And. God.

Knows. What. Are. You. All. Like. Inside. Jesus. Problem. Here. Is. Not. Necessarily. That. Any. of. Are. Doing. Something. His.

Problem. Is. When. We. Hypocritically. Do. Everything. To. Look. Like. We're. Not. To. Look. Like. We. Have. No. Issues. We. Have. No. Temptations. We. Have. No. Struggles.

[ 24 : 50 ] And. That. Makes. Others. Feel. Inadequate. That. Makes. Others. Feel. Like. They. Can't. Reach. The. Christian. Standard. They. Can't. Be. A. Christian. Because. They. Can't. Be. Like. You. When. All. The. Time. Is. You. Not. Living. Truthfully. But.

Others. Can't. Come. In. Because. Of. The. Picture. You. Giving. Them. Therefore. His. Teaching. Is. That. We. Be. Honest. We.

All. Have. Our. Problem. Are. Yes. We. All. Struggle. With. This. And. Of. That. We. All. Need. God's. Help. To. You.

Hypocrites. You. Like. White. White. Toons. Which. Look. Beautiful. On. The. Outside. But. On. The. Inside. Are. Full. Of. Bones. Fast.

Forward. To. 2025. A. Bit. Similar. To. The. Last. One. But. The. Big. Difference. Being. Actually. Having. The. Audacity. To.

[ 25 : 49 ] Act. And. Look. Spiritual. To. Cover. Up. Sin. Woe. And. Day. Jesus. Says. That. A. Line. Crossed. In. Verse.

27. Woe. To. You. Teachers. Of. The. Law. Pharisees. You. Hypocrites. You. Build. Tombs. For. The. Prophets. And. Decorate. The. Graves. Of. The. Righteous. And. You. Say. If. We.

Had. Lived. In. Those. Days. With. Our. Ancestors. We. Would. Not. Have. Taken. Part. Fast.

Forward. To. 2025. Woe. To. You. Christians.

Who. Acknowledge. The. Errors. Of. The. Church. In. The. Years. Gone. By. Errors. Both. Nationally.

And. Locally. In. Your. Church. And. You. Pretend. To. Have. Learned. From. It. You. Pretend. To. Have. Learned. From. The. Past. But. Your.

[ 26 : 41 ] Actions. And. Your. Attitude. Show. The. Opposite. Woe. Woe. Woe. Jesus. Had. Very. Very. Very. Strong. Words.

For. Hypocrites. Words. He. Never. Used. For. Any. Other. Sinner. Woes. And. Warnings. He. Never. Used. For. Any. Other. Sin.

Even. Calling. Them. Snakes. And. Vipers. Which. Is. Hardcore. For. Jesus. As. We. Have. Been. Taking. Time. To. Recognize.

Here. We. You. Me. Myself. We. Are. All. Similar. To. The. Pharisees. Like.

The. Pharisees. We. Don't. Always. Practice. What. We. Preach. Like. The. Pharisees. We.

[ 27 : 35 ] Look. For. Loopholes. Around. God's. Demands. Like. The. Pharisees. We. Seek. Unwarranted. Approval. Like. The. Pharisees. We. Do. Things. For. Show. So.

Let's. All. Take. Jesus. Words. To. Heart. Asking. What. Do. We. Need. To. Do. To. Change. So. That. Jesus. Woes. Do.

Not. Apply. To. Me. The.

Biggest. Issue. To. Jesus. Is. The. Possession. Of. One's. Heart. We. Are. All. A. Sin. Riddle. As. The. Next. And.

That's. Why. Jesus. Died. For. Us. And. So. To. Pretend. We're. Not. Is. A. Massive. Hurtful. Offense. To. Jesus. It's. A. Mockery. Of. His. Death. And.

[ 28 : 29 ] Why. He. Had. To. Die. Hence. Why. Today's. Passage. Appears. Tricky. Upon. Looking. At. It. But. When. We. Look. In.

We. See. That. What. God. Was. Doing. Here. Was. Dispelling. That. In. The. Next. Two. Thousand. Plus. Years. For. The. Church. To. Come. Hypocriticalness. Has. To. Be. Dealt. With. First. Informers. And. Hitting. The. Head. Straight. Away. Which. Is. Why. We. See. This. Massive. Incredible. Act. So. Early. In. The. First. Century. Church. That. No. Other. Sin. Is. Like. With. Hypocriticals. Ananas.

And. Sapphire. Dealt. With. Before. The. Next. Two. Thousand. Years. With. Church. Unravels. And. So. Calls. Us. Two.

Men. Who. Were. Certainly. Not. Hypocrites. They. Had. Nothing. They. Lost. Their. Temper.

[ 29 : 31 ] Openly. They. Attacked. Openly. When. They. Fell. In. Temptation. They. Wrote. About. It. And. Told. You. They. Truly.

Wore. Their. Hearts. On. Their. Sleeves. Their. Sins. Their. Failures. Their. Temptations. Their. Problems. Their. Issues. Were. Very. Very. Very. Clear. For. Everyone. To.

See. And. They. Are. The. Two. That. God. Used. Most. All. Their. Failures. And. Problems. Were. Out. In. The. Open.

Wrote. About. And. They. Are. The. Two. That. God. Used. Most. David. God's. Greatest. King. The. Descendancy. Line. Of. Jesus. Himself. The. Pivotal. Character.

In. The. Center. Of. The. Old. Testament. And. Peter. Jesus. Number. One. Disciple. And. So. The. Whole. Of. The. New. Testament. Leads. The. Church. And.

[ 30 : 23 ] That's. Because. Over. And. Above. All. Their. Open. And. Public. Sins. And. Failures. They. Were. People. After. God's. Own. Heart. First.

And. Formously. They. Just. Wanted. God. And. That. Was. All. God. Needed. And. Wanted. Honesty. About. Life.

No. Hypocriticalness. And. After. God's. Own. Heart. And. So. In. Spite. Of. Their. Issues. And. Sin. They. Were. Greatest. King. And. First.

Century. Church. Leader. Well. The. Final. The. Final. Message. Outcome. Is. Very. Very. Clear. Let's. Do. It. Also. Let's.

Be. Honest. About. Our. Our. Failures. Our. Temptations. Our. Struggles. Our. Depressions. Our. Problems. With. Those. We. Trust. Find. People. Within. This. Fellowship.

[ 31 : 16 ] Who. You. Trust. And. Depend. Upon. And. Have. That. Journey. With. Work. Hard. To. Ensure. Jesus. Woes. Don't. Apply. To. You. And. Me. Live. Honestly.

No. Hypocriticalness. And. First. And. Foremost. Go. Everything.

Else. For. You. And. He'll. Use. You. For. Great. Stuff. Let's. Pray. Lord.

Jesus. Thank. You. For. The. The. Deep. Message. Lord. Within.

This. Passage. And. Thank. You. For. So. Early. On. In. The. Church. Making. A. Big. A. Shirt. Of. It. And.

[ 32 : 13 ] I. Pray. Lord. That. We. Here. At. West. Hills. Baptist. Church. Are. Able. To. Learn. From. It. And. Follow. According. To. This. Teaching. Give. Us. Wisdom.

Give. Us. Guidance. Give. Us. Help. And. I. Pray. Lord. That. In. The. Week. Ahead. Lord. We. Are. Able. To. Learn. More. From. This. I. Pray. That. In. The. Week. Ahead. Lord. That.

Our. Christmas. Stuff. Really. Begins. To. Unravel. That. We. Live. Out. Your. Light. We. Live. Out. Your. Message. We. Live. Out. Your. Great. Teachings. Openly. And. Honestly.

And. I. Pray. Lord. That. This. Christmas. Time. We. Show. You. For. First.

And. Former. In. Your. Name. Jesus. Amen. Yet. Not. I. Please. Do. For.

[ 33 : 31 ] For. Heaven. Mounted. To. Give. He. Is. My. Joy. My. Righteousness. And. Freedom. My. Steadfast.

Love. My. Deep. And. Peace. To. This. I. Hold. My. Hope. Is. Only. Jesus. For.

My. Life. Is. Holy. Bound. To. His. Oh. How. Strange. And. Divine. I. Can. Sing. All. Is.

Wine. Yet. Not. I. But. Through. Christ. In. Me. The.

Night. Is. Dark. But. I. Am. Not. Forsaken. For. By. My. Side. A. Savior. He. Was. Stay. I.

[ 34 : 29 ] Labor. On. In. Weakness. And. Rejoicing. For. In. My. Need. His. Power. Is. Displayed.

To. This. I. Hold. My. Shepherd. Will. Defend. Me. Through. The. Deep. Head. Play. The. future's. sure, the price it has been paid For Jesus bled and suffered for my pardon And he was raised to

overthrow the grave To this I hold, my sin has been defeated Jesus, now and ever is my King  
All the chains are released, I can say I am free and non-high, but through Christ it's been paid With  
every breath I long to follow Jesus For he has said that he will bring me home And day by day I  
know he will renew me Until I stand rejoining for the throne To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus All  
the glory evermore to him When the race is complete, still my lips shall repeat Yet no lie, but  
through Christ it's been me

To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus All the glory evermore to him When the race is complete, still  
my lips shall repeat Yet no lie, but through Christ it's been me Yet no lie, but through Christ it's been  
me Yet no lie, but through Christ it's been me Yet no lie, but through Christ it's been me Go forth in  
pure hearts Remembering, O the depth of the riches Of the wisdom and knowledge of God How  
unsearchable his judgments and his paths

Beyond tracing out Who has known the mind of the Lord Or who has been his counselor Who has  
ever given to God That God should repay them For from him and through him And for him are all  
things To him be the glory forever and ever Amen Amen Thank you.

[ 38 : 58 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.