

# *Living Water Fellowship*

*Worship after Serving*

*17<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost – 24<sup>th</sup> September 2023*

*COME TO JESUS*

**Gathering Song & Welcome:** Christ is Mine Forevermore

**Table Prayer:**

*GROW IN HIS GRACE*

**"First Course" of the Meal**

**Bible Reading:** Acts 4:32-5:11

<sup>4:32</sup> All the believers were united in heart & mind. They felt that what they owned was not their own, so they shared everything they had. <sup>33</sup> The apostles testified powerfully to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, & God's great blessing was upon them all. <sup>34</sup> There were no needy people among them, because those who owned land or houses would sell them <sup>35</sup> & bring the money to the apostles to give to those in need.

<sup>36</sup> For instance, there was Joseph, the one the apostles nicknamed Barnabas (which means "Son of Encouragement"). He was from the tribe of Levi & came from the island of Cyprus.

<sup>37</sup> He sold a field he owned & brought the money to the apostles.

<sup>5:1</sup> But there was a certain man named Ananias who, with his wife, Sapphira, sold some property. <sup>2</sup> He brought part of the money to the apostles, claiming it was the full amount. With his wife's consent, he kept the rest.

<sup>3</sup> Then Peter said, "Ananias, why have you let Satan fill your heart? You lied to the Holy Spirit, & you kept some of the money for yourself. <sup>4</sup> The property was yours to sell or not sell, as you wished. And after selling it, the money was also yours to give away. How could you do a thing like this? You weren't lying to us but to God!" <sup>5</sup> As soon as Ananias heard these words, he fell to the floor & died. Everyone who heard about it was terrified. <sup>6</sup> Then some young men got up, wrapped him in a sheet, & took him out & buried him.

<sup>7</sup> About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. <sup>8</sup> Peter asked her, "Was this the price you & your husband received for your land?" "Yes," she replied, "that was the price." <sup>9</sup> Peter said, "How could the two of you even think of conspiring to test the Spirit of the Lord like this? The young men who buried your husband are just outside the door, & they will carry you out, too."

<sup>10</sup> Instantly, she fell to the floor & died. When the young men came in & saw that she was dead, they carried her out & buried her beside her husband. <sup>11</sup> Great fear gripped the entire church & everyone else who heard what had happened.

## Guided Devotion & Bible Study:

*DYSFUNCTIONAL: DYSFUNCTIONAL COMMUNITIES*

"Second Course" of the Meal

**Offering** (collected during the meal)

**Prayers:**

*The Lord's Prayer:*

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, & the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

*GO IN HIS POWER*

**The Blessings:**

† \_\_\_\_\_, *child of God,*  
*May Christ in you give hope to this town*  
*and glory to the Father. Amen*

**Announcements:**

**(New-ish) Song:** What Love, my God

*SHOW HIS LOVE*

## *FIVE INITIAL OBSERVATIONS FROM ACTS 4*

- 1. Radical unity in the family of Christ*
- 2. Radical proclamation of Jesus Christ*
- 3. Radical generosity because of Christ*
- 4. Radical freedom in Christ*
- 5. Radical honesty for the sake of Christ*

## Group Bible Study/Discussion:

1. Read Acts 4:32-5:11. What questions immediately come to mind? What do you find most challenging? What really strikes you in these verses?
2. Among people you know, what percentage of them are regular worship participants? Thinking of those who do, are they in worship weekly, monthly, or less frequently? Among those who do not, what reason do you think they would give? Contrast that with the behaviour of the earliest followers of Jesus...
3. How would you describe the early Christian community as we see it in Acts 4:32-37 and earlier in Acts 2:42-47?
4. Why do you think the Christian community today seems **(a)** neither so enticing to others nor **(b)** so close in fellowship as that first Christian community? What can you do to change that?
5. Describe in your own words what was happening in vv. 32-37. Where do you think this selflessness was coming from (see vv. 31 & 33)? What was the result?
6. In your own words, what did Ananias & Sapphira do? What evidence was there that they were working together? What might have been their motivation?
7. What did Peter say to them about their behaviour? What is significant about that particularly in the context of what is happening in the early Christian community?
8. Why do you think the Lord judged Ananias & Sapphira so quickly, without giving them a chance to repent? What might have happened to the community if their deception went unchecked? What does this tell you about the character of God & the character of his church?
9. How do you think the "great fear" that "gripped the entire church" (v. 11) may have shown itself in the daily lives of the early Christian community? What do you think the non-Christian community thought about this event?
10. Describe & explain ways in which wealth can be a wonderful servant of the gospel, but a dangerous master in our lives.
11. What would you suggest as the "Take home lesson" of this part of the church's life & witness together? How will you enact that in your own life?