

Lying to the Holy Spirit (Part 10)

by Jim Cymbala

The sermon emphasizes the importance of honesty and sincerity in our relationship with God, illustrated through the story of Ananias and Sapphira's deceit.

Duration: 23:23

Scripture: Acts 5:1

Topics: "Deceit"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of reading and obeying the word of God without picking and choosing what to believe. He highlights the dangers of deceit and lying, especially during times of revival when God is actively working. The preacher uses the story of Ananias and Sapphira from Acts 5 to illustrate the consequences of lying to the Holy Spirit. He emphasizes that lying to the church is ultimately lying to God. The sermon concludes with a call for revival and a need for genuine, committed Christians in the church.

Transcript

I want to talk to you about the strangest meeting they ever had in the New Testament. And then we'll just pray about something we've never prayed for. I've never been in a meeting where we're going to pray about what we're about to pray for individually for ourselves.

So the early church is in operation, and God is pouring out a blessing, and the church is growing in Jerusalem. And the Bible says that Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, who's the apostles called Barnabas. Remember, we learned about Barnabas a few weeks ago, how he went from a man who made a gift to a prophet and teacher and called an apostle with Saul of Tarsus, Paul.

Listen, Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, which is an island in the Mediterranean whom the apostle is Jewish, called Barnabas, which means son of encouragement. He sold a field that he owned, and he brought the money, and he put it at the apostle's feet. That's the last verse.

It really should be combined with the next chapter, so let's just imagine it. So a man named Barnabas sees needs in the church. Everyone's sharing.

There's a spirit of love. Nobody's giving any directives to telling people what to do. This is all being done spontaneously by the spirit.

And he has a piece of land, and let's say he sells it for \$10,000, and he brings it, and he lays it. He says, I sold the land. Here's the money, and he lays it at the feet of the apostles.

Then the very next verse, which is a new chapter, but remember the chapter headings are not inspired. They were added later, and sometimes they're in very bad spots, and it breaks up the thought if you stop reading. So he does that, and people are being helped, and then we hear about the strangest meeting in the history of the church.

Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property, and with his wife's full knowledge, he kept back part of the money for himself, but he 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? Now just stop there for a second. How would Peter know that? That is an example in the Bible of what is called the spiritual gift of the word of knowledge.

God revealed to Peter that the guy was dumping \$8,000 at the feet, but he sold the property for \$14,000. Now he didn't have to bring anything in. Nobody told him to do this, but he said, I've sold this piece of property.

He and his wife cooked this thing up. Now we saw what Barnabas did, so now we're dropping here. We sold the property.

Here it is, \$8,000, but Peter, by the Holy Spirit imparting to him knowledge, says, How did Satan fill your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, not even lie to the church? You're lying to the Holy Spirit. Boy, you talk about confrontation. You talk about user-friendly, seeker-sensitive.

How would you like to go to that church? You leave an offering, and someone says, Oh, by the way, before you go back to seed, Satan has just filled your heart. You're a lying little devil. What did you do that for? And you go, What? What kind of church is that? Where's the love of God? Well, our concept of the love of God and the love of God are two different things.

God wants to protect the integrity of the church. Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? In other words, didn't you own that property? Did anybody force you to sell it? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? Couldn't you do whatever you wanted to do with the money? Did anybody force you to give the money? No. What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied just to human beings, to the church.

You've lied to God. And when Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. Now there's a service for you.

And great fear seized all who heard what had happened. Then some young men came forward, because they bury people right away in Israel, still to this day, right? And they wrapped up his body. That word could actually mean the wrapping clothes that they would wrap him in, and carried him out and buried him.

About three hours later, his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. Oh, Sapphira now is on the burner. Peter asked her, Tell me, Is this the price you and Ananias got for the land? Yes, she said.

That's the price. Peter said to her, How could you conspire to test the Spirit of the Lord? Listen, the feet of those who buried your husband are at the door, and they're going to carry you out also. At that moment, she fell down at his feet and died.

And 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. That's not our concept of church, is it? Some of you are reading this and going, that that could happen in the Christian church? Yeah, it's in the book.

Do I get an amen? It's in the book. Now, I didn't pick this passage out. When you read the Bible, you don't pick what you want it to say.

You have to read what it says and then say, God, what's the lesson of this? First of all, notice that when the Spirit is really moving, it gets very dangerous to be lying and fooling around when God is really working. At times of revival in history, the slightest deceit and stuff has brought about strange, sudden judgments from God, like here. God is patient.

God is all those things. But here, you know, if someone said, how'd the meeting go today? Well, we had 11 saved, four got baptized, and two died. What? Yeah, two died.

Who? Ananias and Sapphira. Why'd they die? They lied to the Holy Spirit. So now let's analyze this.

What's the lesson? All scripture is inspired by God and is profitable. What's the lesson? I mean, this sounds foreign to us. Most people would say, that's not Christianity.

Well, it must be Christianity. It's in the early church here. So can you imagine how those people must have been walking before the Lord after that happened? Right? Somebody asked you a question and you wanted to exaggerate a little bit.

No, no, no, no. You better mean what you say and say what you mean. Great fear was on the church because it was either get in or get out, but don't fool around.

We probably need that kind of revival today, don't we? Because what the church is being inundated with is half-baked people who are not Christian, but they're not all out for Satan. They're just, they're lukewarm. And the whole thing, you can't tell one from the other.

So what's the lesson? So let's just analyze it and I'll close. So Ananias and Sapphira talked about this before it happened. They conspired.

It was a conspiracy. And they said, maybe it happened this way. Did you see how everybody admired Barnabas when he dropped that offering down? We got a piece of land and there are needy people in the church.

Let's sell it and give part to the church. No, but we want to look good. So let's say it's everything that we got for the land, but let's hold six grand back for ourself.

We'll sell it for 14 and we'll give eight. They won't know. And we'll look like, wow, how spiritual are these people? Barnabas laid down his gift.

Maybe theirs was greater and it'll get by and everyone will look at us and admire. In other words, we're going to try to seem like something we're not. We're going to try to fool the church and God that we're sacrificing something we're really not sacrificing.

And Peter said to them, who told you to do any of this? Nobody gave you an order to sell any land. You sold it. But in selling it, why did you have to lie and make it look like you were giving everything when you were not giving everything? And it cost them their lives.

So they conspired and what they did was they practiced something called deceit. And this is where I want to end. They had guile.

They were playing the church. They're trying to play God, playing as they say in the street, don't play me. They were trying to get over on the church, get over on people.

They were trying to give an appearance which was not reality. And that play acting cost them their life. Do you remember in John 1 or 2 when it was Nathanael, wasn't it? And they brought him to Jesus and Jesus said, ah, here is an Israelite in whom there is no guile.

And he said, how do you know me? I saw you when you were under that tree. Another word of knowledge. But Jesus looked in his heart and whatever his imperfections were, he wasn't an actor.

No guile means you're not an actor. When Jesus was talking to the woman at the well, she said, when he said, go get your husband. And she was with the seventh guy and wasn't even married to him.

And she said, I don't have a husband. He said, yeah, I know. You've had six husbands or whatever and the one you're with now is not your husband.

And suddenly she shifted to a religious question about where to worship in Samaria where Brother David took me or in Jerusalem. And Jesus said, the day is coming when Jerusalem won't mean a thing and neither will Samaria. For the father isn't seeking any locations for people to go to.

For the father seeketh those who will worship him in spirit and in, and the word truth there does not mean truth in the Bible. It means sincerity. And that's one of the hardest things for our little wicked hearts to let go of because we're all born actors.

We like to seem better than we really are. When I used to go to PS92, we had substitute teachers. Do you remember the days of substitute teachers? I remember those poor creatures that came in that were substitute teachers.

We used to just destroy them. That was horrible. In every grade, especially in junior high school, but what you would do, they would leave the room and you would be tearing the room apart, but you'd have a guard, somebody watching the hallway and saying, the teacher's coming back.

And then you'd go, take out your notebooks and you'll all be writing. Were you writing? Were you studying? No. You were tearing the room apart, throwing stuff at your friends, but you led on.

You were something that you were not. That was natural. No one taught you that.

You just acted. That's what they did. They acted.

You don't hear many sermons about that. But the father is seeking those who will worship him in spirit. Now that word means with the innermost being, it could be capital S by the help of the Holy Spirit.

Paul says, we are the true circumcision who worship by the spirit of God. The true people of God are the ones who worship by the spirit of God, not by some other kind of code. Or it could be small s, but truth there means sincerity.

The father is looking for people in this room who will worship him in truth and absolute openness and sincerity, that you never lie to God, you never hide anything. Just think how ridiculous that is, hiding something from God. Just think of that.

Here, God's looking at me and I'm telling him something and I'm holding something behind my back as if he can't see it. But why we do that is because we get used to doing that with people. We seem like something we're not.

And why it gets quiet? Because we never hear anything about that. But it's very true in the Bible that this is important thing. It seems like the one prerequisite to walk with God is you cannot be an actor or an actress.

There's just no actors and actresses in the Bible. See, what made David a man after God's own heart wasn't that David never made mistakes. David made huge mistakes, but the course of his life was what you saw was what you get.

He wasn't some maneuverer. You ever meet people, you know, in sociology, you learn about that in psychology, the looking glass self. You're with people and you are estimating what they want you to be like, what they think is great.

So that's the persona that you project, not who you are. You're covering up who you really are and you're trying to project who you are, what they think you should be, so you can get accepted by them. And to God, all of that is just rubbish.

It's garbage. It's horrible. Because when you talk to Jesus, there was not one ounce of guile in Jesus.

No acting. No. When he looked at you and spoke to you, boom.

That was Jesus. You never had to look at him. I wonder what he meant by that.

What he thought he said. You got the pure vanilla, real. So that's something we have to guard against because that's how Satan makes inroads.

That's how people backslide. All backsliding begins with acting. You want to seem like you're something you're not.

Someone asks you about, so how are you doing with the Bible? You haven't read the Bible in seven days. But you, oh, I read something last night. Oh, it was good.

That was good. What book was it in? I don't know. Book of Hezekiah.

There is no book of Hezekiah. What kind of book is that? That's how it all begins. Come on.

Am I speaking the truth? It all begins when you try to portray you're something other than what you are. And what God is looking for is the person that says, have mercy upon me, oh God. For anyone who says he has no sin, he's a liar.

The truth is not in him. He's acting. Now, one other passage, which is, this is the passage that God used to help bring David Berkowitz, the son of Sam, mass murderer, to him in a cell in Sullivan County Correctional Facility.

Puerto Rican guy there went up to David Berkowitz and told him David had killed those seven or nine women, depends who you go by. And someone had got close to killing him who was working in the library and delivered some books to his cell and wanted to make a name for himself. And he had a razor hidden in his hand.

And when he delivered the book to David Berkowitz, he slashed him and he cut him. He has a vicious cut on his neck. I saw it when I talked to him in Sullivan County Correctional Facility.

And the doctor said that the cut went like the width of a paper away from the jugular vein. So he's out in a yard walking and this Puerto Rican brother in Christ walks up and says, hey, did you know that Jesus loves you and has a plan for your life? And he said, get out of here, would you? He was Jewish by birth, adopted by other Jewish parents. His parents gave him up and he's adopted by these other Jewish parents.

Didn't know anything from anything, went to Vietnam, began to smoke weed, opium, just went bonkers. Came back, joined a satanic cult and would study the satanic Bible and worship Satan and open up to Satan. This is why he's such a strong Christian now that he's found the Lord, because he understands the spiritual realm that who you yield to, you become controlled by.

And he set over a thousand fires and journaled every one of them. And they were getting directions from Satan, they thought or claimed. So this guy says, no, Jesus loves you and has a plan for your life.

And he goes, you don't even know who you're talking to. If you know who you're talking to, you wouldn't be talking trash like that. He says, no, I know who you are.

You're Berkowitz, your son of Sam. Jesus still loves you and has a plan for your life. He says, leave me alone.

So no, I'm going to bring you something next week. So he meets him in the yard the next week and he gives them New Testament with Psalms. He says, but listen, you're Jewish.

Start reading in the Psalms first. They're written by a guy with your name, David. And he goes, really? Guy named David wrote this stuff? He says, yeah, read it.

And he came to Psalm 32. And Psalm 32 says this, blessed are those whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed are those whose sin the Lord does not count against them.

And now what's the last line? And in whose spirit is no deceit. How blessed is the man? You see, the first blessed Psalm is Psalm 1. Blessed is the man who walketh not in the way, right? But because all of us have sinned, the next Psalm is for the sinner because we've all sinned. Oh, how blessed is the person who has sinned, but God doesn't count it against them because he's put his faith in God.

How blessed is the one who every transgression that he's committed has been wiped away and washed away. And how blessed is the person who's not an actor, in whose spirit there's no guile. You know, the Bible says the heart is deceitful and wicked.

Who can know it? Have you ever caught yourself lying to yourself? People say, I can't believe that person. I don't like that person anymore. I found out they lied to me.

How about yourself? How many times have I lied to myself? You know how you lie to yourself? This is what holds people back. They want God to forgive them of their sin, but they want to go back and it's still in there. They don't hate it.

They want forgiveness. They don't want to have hell hanging over them, but they already got a plan. There's a way to hook up again with her.

There's a way to hook up with that guy again. There's a way to get some weed, smoke that weed. Even though I get convicted, I shouldn't be doing that.

See, that's the trickiness. There's guile. And when Jesus saw Nathaniel, he said, wow, he's a true Israelite.

There's no acting in him. Does he make mistakes? Yeah, but what you see is what you get. People who sin and make mistakes, but who are sincere, get further with God than people who don't fall in a sensational way, but they're tricky.

They're tricky. They're letting on something they're not. They're actors.

They're actresses. They're self-righteous. The guy who makes mistakes and comes to God and says, yeah, God, it's me.

I'm a mess. Help me. God says, I will help you.

But the one who says, look, I'm not that bad. So the other people need God, but I just need a little help around the edges. Then that person has a hard time getting any progress with God.

So how about it tonight? How many want to get rid of all acting in your life? Come on. Lift your hand. Come on.

Want to get rid of all guile. Come on. All deceit.

Listen, what did Ananias and Sapphira do that was so bad? All they did was they connived. All they did was they ran a scam. They sold the land.

They gave a lot. You could say, yeah, they gave something. Something's better than zero.

No, but they pretended to give everything. And God said, don't you dare do that in my presence. Don't you say you gave everything when you gave just part.

If you want to walk close to God, we got to be honest with God. Don't you want to walk close to God? Listen, making mistakes isn't the worst thing. It's what you do after you make the mistake.

If you connive, if you plot, if you make excuses, but if the person that just comes way open, no guile. I was reading the other day and it spoke to me, lectures to preachers by a great man of God. He said, after you preach, don't go ask people what they thought of the sermon because you're just looking for a compliment.

You're not interested what they thought. You just want to hear him say, man, that was good. So don't bother.

Let somebody else praise you. Don't try to set it up. That's guile.

That's trickery. How many believe God is interested in those things? Amen. God wants us to be honest.

Don't be looking for compliments. Just be honest before God. God, I did it for you.

Let's close our eyes. All right, every lady in the building, just turn and get another partner and begin to pray for one another out loud. God, take away all guile, all deceit from my life.

Every brother, find a brother. Come on, let's all pray. God, make us real.

God, by your grace, make us real. Give us a sincere heart, Lord. Take away all deception, all cover-ups, all exaggerations, God.

Let it be like it is, God. Help us to say what we mean, mean what we say. Save us from the sin of Ananias and Sapphira, God.

Make us like Nathaniel, no guile, no guile. Blessed is the man who in his spirit there is no deceit. Keep us honest, we pray in Jesus' name.

And everyone said.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/24/SID24085.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/jim-cymbala/lying-to-the-holy-spirit-part-10/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net