

Welcome church. This is just to remind you that if anyone of you would like to join us for virtual Holy Communion, please be ready with your elements (bread and juice or similar), and also prepare yourself by searching your hearts. Be reconciled with God by confessing your sins as the blood of Christ purifies from all our sins.

1 John 1:8-9

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

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Willerup United Methodist Church

Sermon Notes

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Which Ananias Will You Be?

There are three men named Ananias mentioned in the book of Acts, but we will study about the two who were Christian disciples.

Acts 4:32-Acts 5:11 – Ananias and Sapphira

³² 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. ³³ 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 ³⁴ that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought

the money from the sales ³⁵ and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need.

³⁶ Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means "son of encouragement"), ³⁷ sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet.

5 Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. ² 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.

³ 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? ⁴ 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."

⁵ When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened. ⁶ Then some young men came forward, wrapped up his body, and carried him out and buried him.

⁷ About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. ⁸ Peter asked her, "Tell me, is this the price you and Ananias got for the land?"

"Yes," she said, "that is the price."

⁹ 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."

¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events.

1. Ananias and Sapphira

Meaning of Ananias – the cloud or mercy of God,
His spouse, Sapphira – beautiful.

They both were disciples of Christ, and saw Joseph Barnabas bringing the money earned through selling of his land and putting it at the feet of the Apostles. There were others who also did the same. The money was distributed to anyone who had need. Acts 4:34-37.

Ananias and Sapphira also sold a piece of property.

What did they do?

- a. With his wife's full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself.
- b. But brought the rest and put it at the apostles' feet.

Peter questioned them

"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?"

How does Satan enter into the hearts of people and disciples?

John talks about Satan's characteristics.

John 8:42-47

Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I have come here from God. I have not come on my own; God sent me. ⁴³ Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. ⁴⁴ You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. ⁴⁵ Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me! ⁴⁶ Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me? ⁴⁷ Whoever belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God."

- Murderer from the beginning,
- Not holding to the truth, there is no truth in him,
- He is a liar and father of lies.

1. Satan entered Judas Iscariot

Luke 22:1-6

Now the Festival of Unleavened Bread, called the Passover, was approaching, ² and the chief priests and the teachers of the law were looking for some way to get rid of Jesus, for they were afraid of the people. ³ Then Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot, one of the Twelve. ⁴ And Judas went to the chief priests and the officers of the temple guard and discussed with them how he might betray Jesus. ⁵ They were

delighted and agreed to give him money. ⁶ He consented, and watched for an opportunity to hand Jesus over to them when no crowd was present.

John 13:27

²⁷ As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him. So Jesus told him, "What you are about to do, do quickly."

A. He enters into the hearts of those who have greed.

- Judas joined with others to get rid of Jesus.
- He discussed with the priests and officers how he might betray Jesus.
- He agreed to receive money.
- Consented and watched for an opportunity to hand over Jesus to them.

B. Satan enters in the heart of those who have pride and arrogance.

Jesus says to Simon Peter

Luke 11:31-32

"Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat. ³² But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers."

Peter, I have prayed for you, for Satan tried to possess you.

C. Cain allowed Satan to enter into his heart when he gave in to anger and hatred. Genesis 4:4-5

Genesis 4:2-16 – Cain and Abel

Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil. ³ In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD. ⁴ And Abel also brought an offering—fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, ⁵ but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.

⁶ Then the LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? ⁷ If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it.”

⁸ Now Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let’s go out to the field.” While they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

⁹ Then the LORD said to Cain, “Where is your brother Abel?”

“I don’t know,” he replied. “Am I my brother’s keeper?”

¹⁰ The LORD said, “What have you done? Listen! Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground. ¹¹ Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. ¹² When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth.”

¹³ Cain said to the LORD, “My punishment is more than I can bear. ¹⁴ Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be

hidden from your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.”

¹⁵ But the LORD said to him, “Not so; anyone who kills Cain will suffer vengeance seven times over.” Then the LORD put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him. ¹⁶ So Cain went out from the LORD’s presence and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

The Lord spoke about Cain’s anger, frustration, and depression.

- warned him that sin was crouching at his door,
- sin desires to have Cain
- God warned him to master it. His response was negative, he did not listen to the counsel of God.

When Cain was questioned about the murder, he replied “Am I my brother's keeper?”

God dealt with him, Look at your hands? What have you done?

The Bible says Cain went out from the Lord’s presence. 4:16

D. Many a time we think nobody sees us. Man may see outwardly but God knows the heart and mind.

Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account. Hebrews 4:13

You have trusted in your wickedness, and have said, “No one sees me.” Your wisdom and knowledge mislead you when you say to yourself, “I am, and there is no one besides me.” Isaiah 47:10

Whatever you do in secret, will be revealed from the house tops.

E. When David fell in covetousness, lust, adultery and murder, God questioned him through his prophet Nathan. (2 Samuel 11-12)
David then says,

“Search me O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” Psalm 139:23-24

F. When Pharaoh in Egypt and Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon had visions, there were people nearby who had the Spirit of God living in them, like Joseph and Daniel. (Genesis 41, Daniel 2)

“I cannot do it,” Joseph replied to Pharaoh, “But God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires.” Genesis 41:16

“But there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries ...” Daniel 2:28

So here Peter through the Holy Spirit knows what is being done by Ananias. He was baptized by the Holy Spirit. The spirit of God was dwelling in Peter and he was able to see the heart of Ananias and his spouse Sapphira. Peter was bestowed with many gifts but one of them was discerning of hearts.

So Peter questioned them.

How did you allow Satan to fill (enter) your heart?

The Greek verb which was translated here “to fill,” *kypke*, has been shown by many examples to signify to “INSTIGATE,” “EXECUTE,” “IMPACT.”

Their motive – the desire of gaining a reputation as generous and self-sacrificing givers without parting too much of their property. They had yielded to the prompting of the arch-deceiver. (God blesses the cheerful

giver.) They opened the gateway of their souls at his suggestion. They sinned against their own souls, the apostles and Christ.

Christ's people should guard themselves carefully against the temptation to sin.

God expects the first fruits and a cheerful giver.

No hypocrisy or greed is acceptable. God still sits over the treasury of the church and jealously guards His honor from all reproaches that may cast upon it by the people's gifts. No plot can be so secret as to escape the all-seeing eyes of God.

The result was death.

2. ANANIAS – The other disciple

Acts 9:10-19

In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, "Ananias!"

"Yes, Lord," he answered.

¹¹ The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. ¹² In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight."

¹³ "Lord," Ananias answered, "I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your holy people in Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name."

¹⁵ But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. ¹⁶ I will show him how much he must suffer for my name."

¹⁷ Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit." ¹⁸ Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, ¹⁹ and after taking some food, he regained his strength.

His mission was to baptize Saul.
He was one of the devout.

Acts 22:12

"A man named Ananias came to see me. He was a devout observer of the law and highly respected by all the Jews living there.

Tradition says that he became the Bishop of Damascus and was later martyred.

His character;

- a. Good report – among the Jews
- b. A Christian disciple who found the Messiah
- c. Intelligent – wise unto salvation. He kept himself acquainted with all that concerned the welfare of the church.
- d. Timid – disputed to shrink from meeting with a "ravening wolf" as rumor affirmed Saul to be. Vs. 14

- e. Courageous – ready to yield when he clearly understood Christ’s will.
Vs. 17
- f. Sympathetic – Vs. 17
- g. His calling was like Samuel’s: 1 Samuel 3:9 – “Speak Lord, thy servants hears.” Acts 9:10 “Yes, Lord.”

Ananias prayed for Saul and later baptized him.

Acts 9:17

He was sent by Christ.

He was given a mission

He was instructed to lay hands on him so that Saul was filled with the Holy Spirit.

He was sent that he may see again, and have his eyes opened.

Later Paul talks about the mission he received through Ananias.

Acts 26:17-18

“ ... I am sending you to them (*Gentiles, his own people, religious leaders*) ¹⁸ to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.”

What kind of disciples are we? Like Ananias of chapter 5 or chapter 9?

Let us pray and prepare ourselves for Holy Communion.

Acts 2:46-47 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

1 Peter 2:9-10 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

1 Corinthians 11:23-28

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, ²⁴ and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." ²⁵ In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." ²⁶ For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

²⁷ So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. ²⁸ Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup.

Benediction: The Lord bless and keep you; the Lord make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace.

Numbers 6:24-26 NKJV