

October 26, 2014

BECOMING THE CHURCH JESUS ENVISIONS

**Keeping Our Lives Focused On Jesus**

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

Something profound happened in the lives of the early church—they became living witnesses to the power and presence of Jesus. The scriptures say they were recognized as people who “... *had been with Jesus.*” Today, we must be a church that bears witness to having been with Jesus. The story in Acts 5 is a reminder to the church of our responsibility to be wholly devoted to the Lord.

1. **We must be the church that looks like Jesus.**

*“All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all.” Acts 4:32-33 (NIV)*

*“His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Ephesians 3:10-11 (NIV)*

*“Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind... 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.” 1 Peter 2:1-9 (NIV)*

2. **We must guard against sin and live with integrity.**

*“But a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira...” Acts 5:1 (NIV)*

*“I will be careful to live a blameless life— when will you come to my aid? I will lead a life of integrity in my own home. I will refuse to look at anything vile and vulgar. I hate all crooked dealings; I will have nothing to do with them. I will reject perverse ideas and stay away from every evil.” Psalm 101:2-4 (NLT)*

a. **Don’t compare yourself to others.**

*“...also sold a piece of property.... but brought the rest and put it at the apostles’ feet.” Acts 5:2 (NIV)*

b. **Don’t compromise on your faith and convictions.**

*“With his wife’s full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself, ...” Acts 5:2 (NIV)*

c. **Don’t get complacent in your relationship with Jesus.**

*“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 to men but to God.” Acts 5:4 (NIV)*

*“I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 3:14 (NIV)*

3. **We must prepare for spiritual conflict and opposition.**

*“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?’” Acts 5:3 (NIV)*

*“Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”* **Ephesians 6:11-12 (NIV)**

**4. We must to welcome God’s purifying discipline in our lives.**

*“When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened.”* **Acts 5:5 (NIV)**

*“No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.”* **Hebrews 12:11 (NIV)**

**5. We must be holy worshippers of the Lord.**

*“Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events.”* **Acts 5:11 (NIV)**

*“Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our ‘God is a consuming fire.’”*

**Hebrews 12:28-29 (NIV)**