

## w/b 27<sup>th</sup> May 2018 THEME: MASKS - ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA

**INTRODUCTION:** As we look at this scripture together we learn about the nature and danger of hypocrisy as well as God needing to take a very direct approach to dealing with it.

**PASSAGE:** ACTS CH 15 vs 1-11 Ananias and Sapphira

*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.*

### LAUNCH

Life can be full of deception. Can you think of a time in your life where you deliberately deceived someone? Why did you do it and what was the result?

Think of a time when you got into serious trouble. Did the punishment fit the crime or was it too soft or harsh? What was the effect on you long term regarding your character?

### DISCOVERY & UNDERSTANDING

As you read this passage what was the deep seated motive for Ananias and Sapphira acting in the way that they did?

Why did God deal with them so severely?

How did the church in Jerusalem respond to this dramatic event? Is there enough fear of the Lord in the church today?

If you were more fearful or in awe of God, how might this change the way you lived your life?

Read these quotes from Jesus:

*"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.*

*"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness."*

Why was Jesus so tough with the sin of hypocrisy and yet apparently far 'softer' with other sinners eg the woman at the well, the woman caught in adultery and Zacchaeus. What was Jesus aiming to achieve by being so rude and direct?

In his sermon Dave suggested we needed to replace a culture of performance with a culture of 'being real and authentic' as well as 'family together'. Do you agree? What are the pitfalls?

## **APPLICATION**

Read the Neil Anderson hypocrisy checklist below (amended - some questions removed due to repetition)

### ***HYPOCRISY TOWARD OTHERS***

Criticizing the failure of others when my problems are similar.

Pretending to care for others while feeling bitter, resentful and angry inside.

Saying one thing with my lips, but thinking differently in my heart.

Saying I love someone when, in reality, I hate them.

Being afraid of what others would think if they knew what I was really like.

Projecting myself as having it all together out of fear of rejection from others.

Asking others to do things I myself am unwilling to do myself

### ***HYPOCRISY TOWARD GOD***

Pretending to be close to God, when not desiring or enjoying a relationship with Him.

Practicing religious activity to be seen and praised by others.

Giving money to gain the admiration of others.

Praying & or fasting to impress others.

Pretending to be excited about service for the Lord, when merely doing it out of obligation.

Pretending to live a holy life, but inwardly wishing I didn't have to.

Saying I love God, but not obeying what He commands in His Word.

Saying I have an intimate relationship with God, but seldom seeking Him in prayer.

Pretending to be morally pure whilst secretly yielding to lustful thoughts.

Discuss each of these in your group and honestly share which apply to you and why. Then together pray the prayer of repentance at the end:

"Lord, I acknowledge and renounce my hypocrisy as evidenced through my evaluation listed above.

I thank you for your forgiveness for my hypocrisy and choose to respond with openness, truthfulness and honesty from my heart from this day forward."