



# Sin in the Early Church

## Acts 5:1-16

- 1. Sin Committed (verses 1-2)**
- 2. Sin Confronted (verses 3-10)**
- 3. Sin Conquered (verses 11-16)**

Nostalgia is that good feeling we get when we think good things about the ways things used to be. Nostalgia may be personal. We get nostalgic about our childhood, when all was simple, and when all was well. We get nostalgic about our high school years, and how enjoyable they were, with all of our friends, with our futures all before us.

We get nostalgic during various seasons of the year. Christmas is a great example. When we hear the Christmas Carols and taste the Christmas cookies, all sorts of memories come flooding our minds. We remember fondly the Christmases that we enjoyed as children. We remember the Christmas time with grandma and grandpa, before they passed away.

We get nostalgic for "the good ole' days," when stores were closed on Sunday mornings, where the question to people was not, "Do you go to church?" but "Where do you go to church?" We get nostalgic for when gas was less than a dollar a gallon, when prayer was said in schools, when nobody had ever heard about COVID-19, and we gathered together without fear of catching a virus from each other.

Overall, nostalgia can be a very good thing. It brings us to think back upon the good memories of our past. Nostalgia often overlooks the hard and difficult matters of our past. It forgets the difficult relationships that brought so much angst in high school. It forgets the difficult Christmases just after a death in the family. It forgets the days of war and depression.

Now, when it comes to the Bible, Christians are often nostalgic about the early church. Christians often envy the times when the church began, when the church began was the "good times." Christians often think that we should always strive toward being like the "early church."

After preaching through the first four chapters in the book of Acts, it's understandable why many would think this. All we have seen so far has been good. It has been so, so good! In Acts, chapter 1, we see Jesus, risen from the dead. He appears to his disciples, alive in the flesh. His resurrection is a demonstration that Jesus has conquered death. He has conquered death for us all!

In Acts, chapter 2, we see Jesus, making good on his promise to build his church. It begins with the giving of the Holy Spirit. Jesus has not left us as orphans (John 14:18). No, he has given us the Spirit to be with us until the end of the age. And when Peter preaches on the day of Pentecost, the church is flooded with people: 3,000 people repent and believe in the Lord!

In Acts, chapter 3, we see the power of the apostles in healing of the lame man. This man, forty years of age, had never walked before, until he met Peter, who commanded him to walk in the name of Jesus Christ. Instantly, he was walking and leaping and praising God! This event only served to bring more growth into the church!

In Acts, chapter 4, we see the numbers of the church grow north of 5,000 people (Acts 4:4). Even though the apostles faced a setback by being brought into the religious authorities for questioning, the way that they handled it only serves to give us a greater view of the early church. The apostles didn't back down, but stood their ground, speaking out with great courage and boldness. It was the religious leaders who backed down. All they could do was threaten them. The people responded in prayer together. God was so present that the place where they prayed was shaken (Acts 4:31).

The early church was experiencing all that Christian community can hope to be. God was blessing their preaching efforts. They was not a needy person among them (Acts 4:34). They experienced great unity, great power, great grace and great generosity.<sup>[1]</sup>

We could only wish to re-live those days. The days right after the resurrection brought on revival and real miracles into the life of the church. Further the church lived in closeness, unlike anything since. So, it's only right to look back at the early church as the glory days. But it all changes at the beginning of chapter 5. It changed with the first word of chapter 5. The first word we read is "But."

This is in contrast to the previous section, that speaks of the generosity of those in the early church. There was not a needy person among them (Acts 4:34). People were selling their houses and land to meet the pressing needs. Case in point was Joseph, who was nicknamed, "Barnabas". He "sold a field that belonged to him and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet" (Acts 4:37). How much better can it get? People in the church had needs. Those with means were selling their property to meet their needs.

Then, we encounter the "But" (in chapter 5:1). The pristine early church, encounters sin for the first time. My message this morning is entitled, "Sin in the Early Church," because that is what we see. Let's see it play out, ...

### Acts 5:1-11

But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, and with his wife's knowledge he kept back for himself some of the proceeds and brought only a part of it and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, "Ananias, why

has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man but to God.” When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and breathed his last. And great fear came upon all who heard of it. The young men rose and wrapped him up and carried him out and buried him.

After an interval of about three hours his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. And Peter said to her, “Tell me whether you sold the land for so much.” And she said, “Yes, for so much.” But Peter said to her, “How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out.” Immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. When the young men came in they found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. And great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard of these things.

This story tells us of the first time that sin came into the church. Particularly, the sin comes in various forms. We see hypocrisy. We see greed. We see deceit. Fundamentally, it was about lying!

All of it serves a reminder to us all, that the early church wasn't as idyllic as we like to think it was. This presses us always to think about the book of Acts as “descriptive” and not “prescriptive.” In other words, the book of Acts wasn't written to guide us in how we ought to do church today. It was written for us to understand the history of the church, warts and all.

At times, we would do well to imitate the example of the early church, but not always. Acts, chapter 5 falls into that “not always” category. But this is just the beginning. In chapter 6, we will see strife in the early church. In chapter 8, we will see those who think that they can purchase the Holy Spirit with their own money. Doctrinal divisions come in chapter 15. We see “a sharp disagreement” affect the unity of the church in chapter 15. Furthermore, when you read Paul's letters that he wrote to the churches, they all include mentions of sin that threatens the church. So, this morning, we will see the entrance of sin into the church. But know that it will not be the last.

By way of outline this morning, our first point is this:

## **1. Sin Committed (verses 1-2)**

We see this in verses 1 and 2. A married couple had seen examples of many examples of people coming with gifts for the apostles to then distribute to those in need. They had a property that they could give. And so, they sold it. Like Barnabas, they “laid it at the apostles' feet” (verse 2). Only, they didn't give it all. They kept back some for themselves. That's what verse 2 says: “and with his wife's knowledge he kept back for himself some of the proceeds.”

Now, on the surface, there is nothing seemingly wrong with what Ananias and Sapphira did. From the standpoint of the congregation, they did nothing different than Barnabas did. They both sold a property. They both came to the apostles. They both laid a large sum of money at the apostles' feet.

Yet, as we shall see, there was a vast difference between the actions of Barnabas and the actions of Ananias and Sapphira. The difference has to do with deceit. It has to do with lying. I say this, because that's what Peter points out in verse 3, ...

Acts 5:3

But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land?”

... this brings us to our second point this morning, ...

## **2. Sin Confronted (verses 3-10)**

In verse 3, Peter confronted Ananias. Essentially, he said, “Why did you lie?” Verse 4 explains the lie. ...

Acts 5:4

While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man but to God.”

Now, before we dig into the content of Peter's confrontation, I want you to notice how Peter confronted Ananias. He did so by way of questions. In verses 3 and 4, he asks four questions: (1) Why did you keep back part for yourself? (2) Wasn't the land yours before you sold it? (3) Wasn't the money yours before you gave it? (4) Why did you think about doing such a thing?

By way of application, I would encourage you, to consider such an approach of asking questions when the occasion comes to confront others in their sin. Rather than pointing the finger and accusing others of sin (which is needed sometimes), a better approach is often to ask probing questions. It allows the Holy Spirit to work in the lives of others, exposing sin for themselves. That's what Peter does here: he asks Ananias some penetrating questions.

These four questions were designed to get at the heart of Ananias' sin. Peter begins by affirming that the sin wasn't in giving only a portion of the proceeds. He affirmed that Ananias was free to keep the land. Further, once he sold the land, the money was his. He was under no obligation to give all of the proceeds to the church.

But here is the sin: He only gave a part of the proceeds, under the pretense that he gave the whole. This was the deceit. Peter points out how bad the sin was. It was not merely a sin against Peter. It was not merely a sin against others. It was not merely a sin against the church. It

was a sin against God, himself, as Peter says at the end of verse 4, "You have not lied to man but to God."

Now, of course, Ananias lied to men. He brought the money from the sale of their land and gave it to the apostles, all the while pretending that this was the whole price of the land. Of course, he lied to men. But Peter says, "You have not lied to man but to God" (verse 4). He says this for emphasis, of how great the sin is. It's not merely horizontal against others. Such deceit is sin against the Lord!

I'm reminded of David's confession in Psalm 51. After his sin of adultery against Bathsheba, and after his sin of murder against her husband, and after trying to cover his tracks, David finally came to the point of repentance when Nathan came to confront him. says this in his prayer to God:

Psalm 51:4  
Against you, you only, have I sinned  
and done what is evil in your sight.

Now, of course David sinned against a husband and his wife, destroying their lives! But the enormity of the sin was such that David felt that it was only against the LORD! These words in the Bible show us the true nature of sin. Certainly, sin is toward others. And sin harms others. Yet, sin is far more than a mere human hurt. Sin, at its core is rebellion against the Lord!

That's what Peter is pointing out here: "You have not lied to man but to God" (Acts 5:4). In other words, there is more going on in the sin of Ananias than meets the eye. In fact, we see this in verse 3, with Peter's first question to him. Peter says, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?" (Acts 5:3).

We see Satanic involvement here. It all makes sense. The church was going so well that it was filling Satan's heart with rage! What better way to destroy the church, than to bring sin into the church.

In Acts, chapter 4, we saw the attacks coming from the outside of the church, as the religious leaders were seeking to intimidate the apostles to keep them from preaching the saving message about Jesus, raised from the dead for the forgiveness of sins. But that didn't work. So, Satan works from within, inciting one of its members to lie.

This is how Satan often works. In that very first sin in the Bible, it was the lies of Satan that tempted Eve to take the fruit. Jesus called Satan, "The Father of lies" (John 8:44) Right here, we see Satan doing the same thing, tempting Ananias and Sapphira with lies. I can only imagine the sorts of thoughts being put into their minds: "It's OK to bring part of the price of the property as nobody will know. Nobody will care. You will be better off! People will see you as generous! You will have some extra money in your pocket! Who knows, the apostles may give you nicknames. 'The generous duo!' How does that sound to your ears?"

These are the sorts of lies that Satan loves to tell. You will be better off if you sin! But listen, church family. This is a lie. Sin is never better. This is because all of your sin is against God. You will regret it. How many of you adults have come to regret your sin? David prayed to the Lord, "Remember not the sins of my youth" (Psalm 25:7). He regretted his sins and wanted the Lord to show mercy. "Remember your mercy, O LORD, and your steadfast love," (Psalm 25:6). Ananias regretted his sin, don't you think? Look at verse 5, ...

Acts 5:5  
When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and breathed his last. ... And great fear came upon all who heard of it.

This is the cost of sin: "The wages of sin is death" Romans 6:23). It's only God's mercy that doesn't strike us dead any time we sin! Your every breath is a gift of God's grace! God's mercy comes to us by Jesus. That's why we need to believe in him! Jesus alone can give us life. "There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12) but the name of Jesus. If anything this story today of Ananias and Sapphira might tell you, it's this: your sin is serious! It calls for your death. Jesus is the only one who is able to save you from that death. And that salvation is freely offered through faith in him! So, believe in him! Trust in him, that you might not face the same fate as Ananias, who fell down dead.

Now, we don't know what caused the death of Ananias. Perhaps it was a heart attack! Perhaps it was God, miraculously striking him dead. We just don't know, because there wasn't an autopsy. Instead, there was a quick burial. Verse 6 tells us that ...

Acts 5:6  
The young men rose and wrapped him up and carried him out and buried him.

This was custom of the day, when the climate was such that corruption and decay and stench sets in quickly, and where are no governmental regulations requiring a coroner to come and verify the death. These young men simply took him out and buried him without a funeral. Well, three hours later, Sapphira shows up. We read in verse 7, ...

Acts 5:7  
After an interval of about three hours his wife came in, not knowing what had happened.

We will see Peter confronting Sapphira. Again by asking questions. The first question has to do with the facts of the case. Verse 8, ...

Acts 5:8  
And Peter said to her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for so much."

Perhaps Peter here showed her the money that Ananias had laid at his feet. Perhaps he simply gave her the number of shekels that he received from Ananias. At any rate, Sapphira tells a bold-faced lie.

Acts 5:8

... she said, "Yes, for so much."

This was all according to their agreement. Verse 2 tells us that it was with Sapphira's full knowledge that "he kept back for himself some of the proceeds." They had it all planned out. They sold the property for, say, \$50,000. They would give only \$30,000 to the church, professing that this was the full price. Not knowing all that had happened beforehand, she kept to the plan. For all she knew, he was in the other room, waiting for her. Not wanting to expose her husband as a liar, she said, "Yes, for so much." At that moment, she was exposed as a liar as well.

Peter comes with the confrontation:

Acts 5:9

But Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord?"

Before we look at the confrontation, I just need to make a theological remark. Notice here how Peter views the Holy Spirit. In verse 9, he sees Ananias and Sapphira testing the "Spirit of the Lord." In verse 4, Peter considers their lie as a lie against God. In verse 3, Peter considers their lie to be against the "Holy Spirit." The only conclusion that you can come to here in these words is that the Holy Spirit is God. He isn't a force. You cannot lie to a force! Have you ever tried to lie to gravity? It doesn't much work. God and the Holy Spirit are one! This is an instance where the New Testament teaches the Trinity. I digress. ...

Acts 5:9

But Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord?"

In other words, how is it that you have thought that this was a good plan? How is it that you talked about these things together, and thought that it was a good idea? This was pre-meditated sin! You thought it through! How could that be a good plan?

At this point, it would be good for us to think a bit about their plan. What were they trying to accomplish? Most prominent in my mind is surely how they wanted to be esteemed by others. Perhaps they saw in the service when the offerings were presented, that people came forward with great gifts and laid them at the apostles' feet. Everyone held those who gave in high regard. Everyone spoke well about those who were generous. I'm sure that Ananias and Sapphira were seeking the same sort of recognition. So, they came forward to give, hoping for the same sort of praise of men.

But this was a bad plan. Do you remember what Jesus said about giving? He said, ...

Matthew 6:1-4

"Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you."

This was exactly the issue with Ananias and Sapphira. They were hypocrites. They wanted others to see them give, that they might receive the praise from all! Jesus said, "They have received their reward" (Matthew 6:2). But these hypocrites were found out and exposed.

These events, by the way, cause us to think about the practice of the apostles of having people come forward to place gifts at their feet. It may just might not be the best practice in the world. It may help to foster hypocrisy. It certainly helped Ananias and Sapphira play the part of the hypocrite. I don't think it's necessary for us to do this. So, don't anticipate any time soon that we move the offering box up to the front and ask you to come and lay your gifts at my feet.

Now, thinking about hypocrisy, how many hypocrites are there in the church? Jesus hates hypocrisy. He hates it when people pretend to be something that they are not!

You say, what is the cure for hypocrisy? Confession. We all sin. There is no denying that. Hypocrisy comes when we pretend to be more righteous than we really are. But when we confess our sins to others, we are no longer pretending, but living up to our sins. All accusations of hypocrisy are thus eliminated.

Sapphira could have done this very thing. When Peter asked her about the price they sold the land for, she could have come clean. Instead, she continued to propagate the lie. Peter pronounces the judgment. Having seen Ananias drop dead, he prophesies the same thing for Sapphira.

Acts 5:9

"... Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out."

Indeed, this is exactly what happened.

Acts 5:10

Immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. When the young men came in they found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband.

And we see the same response as when Ananias died: fear.

Acts 5:11

And great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard of these things.

This is the same response that came after the death of Ananias, "When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and breathed his last. ... And great fear came upon all who heard of it. " This is a good thing. It's good to have a healthy fear of the Lord. This is my last point. I'm calling it, ...

### 3. Sin Conquered (verses 11-16)

Now, I'm not calling it "conquered" in the sense that Ananias and Sapphira conquered the sin, themselves. But, in that Peter (and the church) dealt well with the sin. In this, we can be nostalgic about the early church because they did well in this area. When sin entered it was not allowed to fester in the church. Sin was not allowed to have its free reign. Rather, sin was checked. Further, the people came to understand the gravity of sin in their lives and the devastation that it might bring to the church. That's the sense of verse 11, "Great fear" is a good thing in this instance.

The fear of the Lord keeps us in the path of God. Do you remember when we looked at the book of Proverbs? We learned that "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge" (Proverbs 1:7). A corollary to this is: "The fear of the LORD is hatred of evil" (Proverbs 8:13). Fearing God helps keep you on the right way. "Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul" (Deuteronomy 10:12).

Now, when I think about the story of Ananias and Sapphira, I think of two Old Testament stories. Both of them come right after the glory of God's workings! The first is the story of Nadab and Abihu. They were the first priests assigned to offer up sacrifice before the Lord. They were the first priests established after the law was given to Israel. We read, ...

#### Leviticus 10:1

Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it and laid incense on it and offered unauthorized fire before the LORD, which he had not commanded them. And fire came out from before the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD.

These were the priests, Aaron's sons, offering up their sacrifice to the LORD. But they were doing so in a cavalier manner. God struck them down, then and there.

#### Leviticus 10:3

Then Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the LORD has said: 'Among those who are near me I will be sanctified, and before all the people I will be glorified.'" And Aaron held his peace.

This is the call to honor the LORD and fear the LORD, just like in our text this morning. Some would-be worshipers died. And the people feared the LORD.

The second story that comes to my mind as similar to the story in our text is that of Achan. Achan's sin was covetousness, just like Ananias and Sapphira. Joshua 6 tells the story of the great victory that Israel had in conquering Jericho. Jericho was the first city that Israel encountered after crossing the land to conquer the land. The people marched around the city every day. Then, on the seventh day, they march around it seven times (Joshua 6:15). Then the walls fall down and the people destroy the city. They were under strict orders not to take anything under the ban. All possessions should be destroyed. Any precious jewels should be given to the treasury of the LORD.

But Achan saw the gold and silver and coveted it and took it for himself (Joshua 7:24). The LORD told Joshua that "they have taken some of the devoted things; they have stolen and lied and put them among their own belongings" (Joshua 7:11). When it was discovered that Achan was guilty, "Israel stoned him with stones" (Joshua 7:25). Furthermore, they burned and stoned his family (Joshua 7:25).

Then, after this sin is resolved, the people of Israel went and conquered Ai (Joshua 8) and they conquered the rest of the land (Joshua 9-11). This is similar to what happened after Nadab and Abihu were killed. Israel thrived in the desert, offering up sacrifices in peace with the LORD.

Both of these stories came during times of great victory! Before Nadab and Abihu's sin, they had just been given the law. The people of Israel were thrilled to be given such a law! (See Exodus 24). Before Achan's sin, they had just defeated Jericho in a miraculous way! But sin was in the camp.

In a similar way in Acts, things were going very well! Thousands were entering into the church! There was great unity among the people as they were making great sacrifices for one another by giving of their possessions to meet the needs of the people. Then, sin came into the early church.

The people of God must deal with sin properly. With Nadab and Abihu, they did. They were carried away. Their replacements, Eleazar and Ithamar were instructed in the right ways of God (Leviticus 10:8-20). Achan (and his family) were stoned and burned. Israel then continued in the right ways of the LORD. They conquered the land! Things were going well. That's what we see in verses 11-16. We see the church continuing on in the ways of God, experiencing great blessing of the Lord.

#### Acts 5:12-16

Now many signs and wonders were regularly done among the people by the hands of the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon's Portico. None of the rest dared join them, but the people held them in high esteem. And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, so that they even carried out the sick into the streets and laid them on cots and mats, that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them. The people also gathered from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed.

This takes us back to the way things were in Acts 4. It takes us back to the great things that were happening. Once sin is dealt with, it opens the door for God's blessing again! These verses are filled with wonderful works of the Lord!

We see miracles in verse 12. You need to see these miracles against the backdrop of Ananias and Sapphira. Sin was threatening to derail the church, but it didn't. Rather, ...

Acts 5:12

Now many signs and wonders were regularly done among the people by the hands of the apostles.

We have only read about one instance of these signs and wonders. We have only read about the healing of the lame man in chapter 3. But here we read that this was just one of "many." If you want to know a bit about what these miracles were like, just look to the life of Jesus. Perhaps there were other lame people who were walking once again. Perhaps there were blind people who were now seeing again. Perhaps there were those who were deaf who could hear again. Perhaps there were demon-possessed people being freed from the oppression they were facing. This is the sort of thing that was happening here.

Further, we read about unity at the end of verse 12, ...

Acts 5:12

And they were all together in Solomon's Portico.

Remember, this is where Peter and John were preaching after the healing of the lame man (Acts 3:11). This is where they were arrested, only to be brought before the Sanhedrin to stand trial (Acts 4:1-7). We get the sense that this is where the believers in Christ hung out in the temple. They were comfortable there. They were boldly proclaiming Christ there, defying the commandment of the Sanhedrin.

We read of their reputation in verse 13, ...

Acts 5:13

None of the rest dared join them, but the people held them in high esteem.

People were saying, "I don't want to join them, but I respect them. I don't want to join them, because I'm fearful that I will die on the spot for my sin. I don't want to have any part of that. But I sure to admire them." It's a bit like the persecution in the Soviet Union in the 1900's that I read to you a few weeks ago. During the long years of persecution, the Christians were severely oppressed. They were prohibited from education and job advancement because of their faith in Christ. They were compelled to do the thankless tasks that nobody in the nation wanted to do. However, these believers held great respect, because they were working for the Lord and not for men. There was this esteem for them as honest and hard working people. But few wanted to join them because of the persecution that would come if they did. There was a great cost of being a Christian in those days.

Beyond this, we see the church growing more and more in verse 14, ...

Acts 5:14

And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women.

"More than ever" are words denoting exponential growth. We have already talked about amazing growth in the church. On the day of Pentecost, there were 3,000 added to the church. A bit later, there were more than 5,000. But now, the growth was "more than ever!" It was a great revival that continued on!

Then, we see more miracles coming in verses 15 and 16, ...

Acts 5:15-16

... they even carried out the sick into the streets and laid them on cots and mats, that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them. The people also gathered from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed.

This is incredible healing! If a shadow of Peter fell on people, they would be healed! This is a Jesus-style healing ministry among the apostles. We read that "they were all healed." This is the power of the Holy Spirit working through these apostles.

Here's a good lesson for us. Sin was conquered. Sin can't stop God's power from working. Sin can't stop God's progress in building his church. If we deal with sin rightly and appropriately, God, in his grace, will help us. We will see our church grow in his time and in his way.

So, seeing "Sin in the Early Church," let's be nostalgic. Let's think about what church was like in the early church. Not in the sense that everything was wonderful, but how they dealt rightly with the wrongs that were being committed. It's such an encouragement for us all!

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on January 31, 2021 by Steve Brandon.

For more information see [www.rockvalleybiblechurch.org](http://www.rockvalleybiblechurch.org).

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[1] See my message from last week, entitled, "Community in the Early Church" (<http://sermons.rvbc.cc/sermons/2021-004>).

[2] See my message entitled "The First Wave of Persecution" (<http://sermons.rvbc.cc/sermons/2021-002>).

