

Series: You Are Sent.
Sermon #7: I'm All In.
Scripture: Acts 5.1-16

GOOD MORNING MERCY CHURCH! Last weekend if you missed it here at Mercy was fantastic. Our Providence Rd Campus was slam packed and there was just a great spirit of celebration. Ya'll it was awesome. And I want to say I just really sense these past few weeks in particular that the Lord is moving in a fresh way in our church. I've been praying that a spirit of refreshing would come to us from the presence of the Lord. The way we've renewed our commitment to prayer, the way I see you caring for one another...ya'll there is something really good the Lord is doing among us. That culminated in 14 people baptized on Sunday morning! Can we at both campuses thank the Lord!

The Lord is moving and I believe a big reason is because of our collective willingness to say YES to the vision God has given us to see a gospel awakening happen here in Charlotte that gets carried to the ends of the earth. Keeping our YES on the table has meant choosing sacrifice over comfort many times for our church. When our providence Rd campus was given to us...the comfort choice would be to move everyone there. But as we saw last weekend, there would be room in that facility for no one else to come join what God is doing among us. So thank you for continuing to model gospel sacrifice and we as elders are continuing to look at the next steps for how we can steward what God is doing here to provide the best way to facilitate you bringing your friends and family. So that we are READY for that

moment that God brings your 1...your 1 person far from God but close to you...We want to be ready for your 1 and their 1. CAN YOU IMAGINE if over the next 12 months each of us got to kneel beside the baptism tank while our 1 professed faith? That was a sweet part of last Sunday. Almost everyone baptized had someone ready to get soaking wet as they hugged them when they got out. Because the gospel goes forward through people. We want to be ready to see God say YES to those prayers.

You are a wonderful church to pastor and certainly this has been a good albeit somewhat odd story the Lord has written for us. And your encouragement and spirit of unity with which you continue to follow the Lord together is awesome. AND by the way, I'm going to talk A LOT more about where we believe God is taking us on October 27th. That's vision day for Mercy Church. You should be here every weekend but especially that weekend.

I want to quickly address a new step we are taking this weekend. We are one church that meets in two locations and right now for the first time our sermon is being viewed live by both campuses at the same time. Thanks to the hard work of our A/V ministry led by Jack Guthrey we are now able to live stream our sermon to our Independence Campus. So, Providence Rd I am here with you in this room right now and that is our plan for our 9am service. And As Pastor Rashard just shared with you at our Independence Campus you are receiving this in real time. THEN, I'll be driving to Independence to preach live there at 10:45 and our 10:45 here at

Providence Rd will receive the sermon by video as it has up to this point.

We believe this is the best, most faithful next step for us to take to continue moving forward as ONE church in this mission to see a gospel awakening in our city.

God's word is our authority and the preaching of God's word drives the church forward and so for the sake of unity together on our mission we are sitting under the same preaching of God's word. This also allows our pastoral and staff teams at both campuses to devote their time to making us into the disciple making, missionary sending church God calls us to be!

Ok we have got a lot of ground to cover this morning so let's get right to it!

If you are new to Mercy we are in a series of sermons where we are looking into the book of Acts. The title of the series is "You are sent." And that you is both singular and plural. We could have titled it "ya'll are sent" but some of you are still new to the south and we wanted to ease you in. The theme we are seeing time and time again is that the church was not a building, it was a people. A group of people bound together by the gospel of Jesus and by the presence of the Holy Spirit. And now they are sent by God to live together as God's people AMONG the rest of the watching world. They are to love each other like Christ loved them and they are to testify to what God has done in their lives. That's what last week was all about. That we as

Christians have this joy that GOD HAS MOVED through us. He has saved us. He has freed us from sin. And we have seen him move in the lives of other people. Those baptisms were a fresh declaration that WE SAW GOD MOVE AGAIN. The joy of freedom in Christ is the single greatest thing in the world and we want to share that with others. And we said if nothing else what the book of Acts is showing us is that when God is moving among his people he doesn't move just once. So when he moved in the early church they got on their knees before him and said THANK YOU GOD...WE BELIEVE YOU WILL DO IT AGAIN. That's what we are doing in our prayer night on Thursday. Hope you'll fast all day and then join us for that on Thursday.

Today we pick up in Acts chapter 5. And are going to see him move again. But it's a very different move. So far in Acts we've seen God provide, we've seen him heal, we've seen him give boldness, we've seen him save. And we come to Acts chapter 5 and what we find is a moment of failure and tragedy. And I believe in it we find a warning from God that should sober us as we walk through it.

So, let me walk you through what happens and then talk about what this should mean for us.

1 But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property.

The reason the "But" is there is because this is a contrast to what happened at the end of Acts chapter 4. ALWAYS good when you are reading the bible and you see something that seems to be connected...that you go

back and understand the connection. Don't just skim God's word to check it off your list. DIG INTO IT! There's a method we use called the GRIP method to help you if you need it (Jessica can we make this method visible somehow? Social image / post on website?).

34 For there was not a needy person among them because all those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the proceeds of what was sold, 35 and laid them at the apostles' feet. This was then distributed to each person as any had need. -- Acts 4:34-35

This is what happens when the gospel gets a hold on a group of people. They became the most generous people on earth. Providing for one another. There was a beautiful common concern for one another as brothers and sisters. These Christians had each been awakened to the truth that God had met their greatest need in Christ. And so now the things they used to hold tightly to, they could hold looser. The way I've heard it described is that the gospel loosened their grip on their things and tightened their grip on each other. That's what happens when you really understand the gospel. You see that Jesus did that for you and I. That's philippians 2. Though he was rich yet for your sake became poor. He emptied himself for us. That's why generosity to me is such a revealing indicator of the gospel working on people. Because the more you are fixing your eyes on Jesus, the more generous you will be. That's the context. Joyful generosity in the church.

1 But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property. 2 However, he kept back part of the

proceeds with his wife's knowledge, and brought a portion of it and laid it at the apostles' feet.

The action looks a lot like what was happening. That's Luke's whole point. To show us that two people can do what appear to be the same things and yet...there is one word difference. The church was bringing ALL of their proceeds. Ananias brought a *portion* but...and the problem is...he wanted it to look like he had brought all of it.

3 "Ananias," Peter asked, "why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the proceeds of the land? 4 Wasn't it yours while you possessed it? And after it was sold, wasn't it at your disposal? Why is it that you planned this thing in your heart? You have not lied to people but to God."

Ananias and Sapphira weren't under ANY obligation to do this. The property belonged to them. And even in selling it, they didn't HAVE to give *all* the proceeds. What they chose to do is to SAY they were giving ALL the proceeds, 100%, to God when they weren't. He's saying this deception...IT ISN'T GENEROSITY AT ALL! IT'S PRIDE. I want to appear to be something im not.

Notice that "filling" language? Up to this point "filling" was a word reserved for what the Holy Spirit does. And Peter is saying instead of allowing the Spirit to fill you, you are allowing the very enemy of God to take up residence in you. Satan is filling you and you are allowing him to. You are granting him access to the place reserved for God. And THAT is what led to you lying to God. Of course you would lie to God. You've

welcomed in the father of lies. And maybe you didn't realize it Ananias but you've lied to GOD!

5 When he heard these words, Ananias dropped dead, and a great fear came on all who heard.

Yes, you heard me. The second Ananias heard these words, he dropped dead. He didn't have a heart attack. We aren't going to try and explain the clear meaning of this text away. God brought an immediate death sentence on Ananias for his deception. How does that hit you? Does this sound fair?

6 The young men got up, wrapped his body, carried him out, and buried him.

We have this group of awesome people who serve our church as ministry residents. They raise their funds to be on staff And sometimes they have to do some pretty labor intensive work that isn't glamorous. They always do it with joy So I try to encourage them that at least they haven't had to do this yet.

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

Ok let's pause here for a second. Because its not a main part of the sermon but it's a reality enough that I want to bring this up. So let me ask:

- To our women here today...what should this woman have said here? There is a clear, good teaching in scripture that wives are to submit to the leadership of their husbands. Is that what she's supposed to do?
- What would you have done? You and your husband privately agree to misrepresent

yourself. And then you get called in and asked about it.

- Here's what I want to say: Submission to your husband NEVER means following him into sin. EVER. Sometimes it may mean following him into a *mistake*. Like a decision to move for a job that maybe you don't agree with. But never into sin.
- And I say that for both of you because sometimes a message can be communicated to women that when you get married you relinquish all responsibility for your life and you just follow your husband.
- But listen a day will come when you will stand before God for YOUR LIFE. Like Sapphira you will be called to account for your choices. Do not EVER substitute your husband for the Holy Spirit.
- You are responsible for your obedience to God, for your involvement in church, your generosity, and for your part in whether or not your kids are in church.
- To all spouses, especially men: Your sin never affects just you.

"Yes," she said, "for that price." 9 Then Peter said to her, "Why did you agree to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out."

10 Instantly she dropped dead at his feet. When the young men came in, they found her dead, carried her out, and buried her beside her husband. 11 Then great fear came on the whole church and on all who heard these things.

Ok now that you've heard it, I want to ask a few questions about this that I think will help us draw out what we are supposed to take away from it. That's a good way to read the bible in general. Ask questions.¹

The first question obvious to us as the reader is

Why did Ananias and Sapphira do what they did?

As the reader when I first saw this it was like that moment watching a movie or reading a book or looking at your friend's Instagram account after they posted that thing...and you are like MISTAAAAAKE! And your instinct is to say "man, what a bad idea" like you wouldn't do it.

But the reason they do this is two fold. They love the praise of people and they love money. Since they see people giving stuff away and this generosity is being celebrated they think...well we want that praise. BUT, we also want our money. How can we have both? We'll keep our money and lie to the people so they will then praise us.

This is a direct contrast to the people at the end of Acts 4 who were filled with the SPIRIT. The spirit led them to give away their money to bless others. Ananias and Sapphira were filled with Satan which led them to be stingy with their money and deceive others.

See their lies are symptoms of much much deeper problems in their heart. Think of it like how warmth on your forehead means there is likely an underlying infection. DO you have a temperature? Can't treat it with just a cool rag on your head. A cool rag or some ibuprofen is temporary relief from the symptom but it doesn't cure the underlying problem.

Sins like lying are the symptoms of deeper problems that create lies. For me a deep problem I've dealt with for years is one seen here. The need for the praise of people. And that underlying problem will lead to things like lying & deceiving & misrepresenting myself & working way to much in order to maintain an appearance & reputation that people will celebrate. The Sin problem underneath that need for praise: I wasn't satisfied with the love of God for me. I was going through the motions of my faith without allowing the power of God's love to actually change me.

Once I began walking in the love of God, walking filled by God's spirit, I stopped needing people to praise me so much. God's love really is enough for me. This is massive because I still let people down and that still hurts when I do. It's not that I've stopped caring about people, its actually that now I'm better able to care for people because I'm less focused on what they think about me and more focused on how I can help them.

¹ A big thank you again to Dr. J.D. Greear for the structure on this half of the sermon. His 3 simple questions were really helpful to me in drawing out the message of this text. "A Church's Sin and the Amazing Grace of God" preached at the Summit Church in 2013 as a part of the SENT series.

Almost all sins are symptoms of this root sin of unbelief. You don't need to JUST quit lying. That's the cool rag. Eventually the effects will wear off. You need to deal with the underlying problem. You need to grab hold of the love of God.

Listen you are either filled with the Spirit which leads to a heart filled with joy and a life marked by generosity. Or you are filled with Satan which leads to a heart that loves money and the praise of people that leads to manipulation, envy, lies and all kinds of anxiety.

Why Does God Strike Them Dead?

If I was new to the bible I might think this is a bit of an overreaction from God. Like does the sin of lying about the amount you are giving justify the punishment of immediate death? So if you are feeling this way let me give you a little bit of context.

First, these people had been really close to the activity of God. And as N.T. Wright says, whenever you are close to the activity of God, the seriousness of sin increases. This is why whenever someone was to approach the temple they had to go through a serious cleansing routine because every single blemish would be magnified. It's why Moses had to take his shoes off when he encountered God at the burning bush. It's why Isaiah saw God in a vision and immediately fell down and said "woe is me for I am unclean." Your proximity to God intensifies the seriousness of your sin. Well, Ananias and Sapphira had seen God move in an undeniable way. The Spirit of God was moving here at the start of the church and in this act God was protecting his church from the

enemy's attempt at attacking the church from the inside.

BUT, what you also see is a demonstration of how God feels about all sin. In the death of Ananias and Sapphira we see a foreshadowing of the future judgment God is bringing to all sin. If you believe God was too harsh with Ananias and Sapphira, you do not understand the holiness of God. The better question is not why did he take their lives but why has he spared our lives? And the answer is the grace of Christ!

Which leads me right to our last question:

What should we learn from the death of Ananias and Sapphira?

1. You can hide from people, but you cannot hide from God.

I recognize how impossible it is for me on my own strength to distinguish between someone who comes in here really dependent on God and walking in the Spirit and someone who is working with different motives. Ananias and Sapphira were clearly actively involved in their local church. Probably appeared to be faithful members. But deep down was not a love of God guiding them. It was a love of praise & money that they had never really dealt with.

And that led them to a really awful place where they had become imitators. Outwardly doing the actions that would make them appear to be followers of Christ but all the while internally pursuing empty desires that would ultimately corrupt them. I think this is often a sign that someone has never truly been converted by

God. We think that talking about the grace and glory of God is the same thing as having been transformed by them.

Let me ask you: What are you hiding? There is this moment in the book of Joshua where a guy named Achan hides some things he had stolen. They are in his tent under some stuff where no one is gonna look. One tent out of thousands. He goes about his routine not doing anything that would tip anyone off. To everyone else he looks like a regular part of God's people. But in secret? He's directly violating God's command. He's hiding.

And God revealed Achan's sin. And Achan was put to death. Very similar to what happens here.

Listen here's the scary part: Ananias and Sapphira knew God knew. They just didn't care. The opinion of people and the love of money SO CONSUMED them they just forgot that God's opinion of them was the only one that mattered. Is this you?

- Tell you one way I see this: I see it in dating couples who have no problem sleeping together but don't live together. That way they can PRETEND to live holy lives...hey we don't live together we wouldn't want anyone to THINK we are compromising our integrity. But then you still want to satisfy your desires so you sleep together. You are in a FRIGHTENING place. By the way I'm not advocating moving in together. IF that's where you are one of you needs to move out or you need to get married. My point is:

Are you More consumed by what people think than what God thinks. MAYBE today is the day of freedom for you to STOP TRYING TO PUT ON A FRONT and finally allow God in. Maybe the secrets of your heart can finally be laid bare today and you can experience grace instead of pretending to.

2. You cannot manipulate the blessings of God

Ananias and Sapphira try to get the blessing of generosity through APPEARING to be generous but actually just being manipulative. They try and undermine God. And I can only say that sewing the seeds of empty deceitful religious behaviors will yield empty, corrupted fruit in your heart. God is not going to bless your deception. Listen I don't preach much on money and that's ok the Lord provides. But I want to make sure that here in CLT where money and appearance means a lot to a lot of people: DO NOT DARE give money to this church under any other motivation than obedience to God because he calls believers to give to the church to carry out his mission together. If you give out of guilt hoping you can buy God off, we don't want that. If you give hoping it will give you special influence, we don't want that. THAT is an offense to God and as a church we'd rather just be poor and holy than wealthy and compromised. Now many of you don't give and need to start giving. But you need to do it as an act of joyful faith. Others give just like this couple did. I beg you don't lie to God. Dive into his love for you and then give YES. But give FROM a place of joyful worship.

Parable of King, Farmer, & Nobleman

3. FEAR is a part of worshipping God

I think this is what makes this scene so difficult to many of us. It's how many times fear is brought up. Verse 5 & verse 11...FEAR comes upon everyone. B

We like a God that is loving and generous and warm and cuddly. And God does reveal himself as a father who embraces us lovingly. BUT, he's also revealed himself to be infinitely holy. And the only way that we can fully understand his love for us is through seeing how mighty and holy he is. To say it simply: a love for God actually grows best out of a fear of God.

And I don't mean terror or panick. I mean the reverence and awe kind of fear.

27 The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, turning people away from the snares of death. -- Proverbs 14:27

When we rightly see the Lord for who he is...an awe & humbling comes over us that causes us to turn away from what Solomon called the snares of death. The lies of the enemy. It turns us away from our sin and turns us towards God. God's holiness...instead of pushing us away, actually draws us close. The presence of God what must I do to be saved? And then we hear that this holiness pours itself out in LOVE towards us! That's what drew people in. Notice the result of all this fear was verse 14 - the Lord adding multitudes to their number!

One of my favorite book series is C.S. Lewis' chronicles of Narnia. There is a scene in Lion, Witch, & Wardrobe where Susan is talking with Mr. Beaver. She thought Aslan, who represents God, was going to be a man. And Mr. Beaver tells her he is a lion. And she says "I shall

fear rather nervous about meeting a lion." "Is he safe?" And Mr. Beaver chuckles. SAFE? Who said anything about safe? Of Course he isn't safe. But he is good. When you see God rightly there is a fear that simultaneously pushes you back and pulls you close. There is power that you know you need. Transforming, life giving good power. But its power you cannot control. You can only kneel before the lion. And trust that the lion won't destroy you because the Lion said he wouldn't.

Listen I love joking around you know that. But let's make sure we understand who we are gathering together to worship Mercy Church. We are gathering together in the presence of a holy God. So Holy that our sin has no chance of surviving in his presence. By his grace: He has made us to be safe in his presence through punishing Christ for our sin. But that doesn't change how holy he is. And only when you understand his holiness can you appreciate his grace.

There is this little verse all by itself in Acts 9 that depicts the simultaneous reality of fear and comfort we are to have as believers

31 So the church throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and was strengthened. Living in the fear of the Lord and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers. -- Acts 9:31

4. God takes sin very seriously

Sometimes we mistake God's patience for being a lack of concern. R.C. Sproul said it this way

*“God is indeed long-suffering, patient, and slow to anger. In fact, he is so slow to anger that when his anger does erupt, we are shocked and offended by it. We forget rather quickly that God’s patience is designed to lead us to repentance, to give us time to be redeemed. Instead of taking advantage of this patience by coming humbly to him for forgiveness, we use this grace as opportunity to become bolder in our sin. We delude ourselves into thinking that either God doesn’t care about it, or that he is powerless to punish us. The supreme folly is that we think we will get away with our revolt.” R. C. Sproul, *The Holiness of God**

If Jesus really went through everything he did to save us. The cross. The nails. The lashes. And we flippantly neglect it...what is it going to be like to stand before God one day?

Let me ask you: Where are you hiding? Where are you being flippant with your sin?

Are you a hypocrite? Where you would surely say in here on Sunday morning that Jesus is Lord...but what does the rest of your life say?

One counselor said you are only as healthy as your secrets. And I believe that’s true. TODAY. TODAY you need to turn from them.

I’ll close with this: Because of the amazing grace of God...it is not our sin that is fatal for us. It is our refusal to confess our sin that is fatal.

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 -- 1 John 1:8-9

The great irony of the gospel is that if you confess your sin he will release you from it, but if you deny it, he will hold you accountable for it.

So, after our service today you need to come talk to somebody. I’m going to lead you in a time of confession in a moment, but you need to make talking to some one your next step. Don’t let WHAT OTHERS think about you stop you.

Listen the great news is that The Lord kept moving. His grace was greater than their sin. And he continued to move through them. Which is great news for us. As long as we are quick to confession, his grace is available to us in abundance.

the path to seeing God bring an awakening to Charlotte starts with an awakening in each of us. And awakenings always begin with the exposure of sin in the camp. God is already stirring this up. I’ve has more meetings recently than at any time in our 4 year history and its been members bringing sin to light so it can be dealt with. PRAISE GOD for that courage.

Let’s turn to him again now and find grace.

THE BENCH

Ok Let's put this in perspective. This is the first time Luke tells us about sin in the church. The first time we see sin in the bible is Genesis 3. It's called the original sin. Where a married couple hid their sin from God, and then the husband tried to deceive God when God called him on it. The original sin of the church is a married couple hiding their sin from God's church and then the husband tries to deceive God's church about it. When the original sin happened...sin entered the world, corrupted everything...the couple got thrust out of God's presence and would now one day suffer physical decay and ultimately death. The original sin in the church would have allowed sin enter God's new creation, the church. And this time God said no. And he brought the same judgment on sin he's always brought. This time he did it instantly. And ananias and saphira died. Because God is WITH his church AND has a purpose for his church and right here at the start of the church he's saying his church is holy, sacred, and he will bring his power to bear in protecting it from original sin. There is a big huge warning sign being put up for those who would try to come in and deceive God's people.

Lying to God's people is lying to God himself. For more on this, we preached a whole sermon on lying in the 10 commandments series this summer. So God makes a big statement. He removes sin from the church. And then watch what happens next:

12 Many signs and wonders were being done among the people through the hands of the apostles. They were all together in Solomon's Colonnade. 13 No one else dared

to join them, but the people spoke well of them. 14 Believers were added to the Lord in increasing numbers – multitudes of both men and women. 15 As a result, they would carry the sick out into the streets and lay them on cots and mats so that when Peter came by, at least his shadow might fall on some of them. 16 In addition, a multitude came together from the towns surrounding Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed.

Look at verses 13-14. Feels like a contradiction right? Nobody would join them but believers were added to their numbers daily. How? This is the gospel on display. The non-believers in the community saw God moving. They FELT a power emanating from this group. They spoke well of them. But they knew they couldn't treat such power casually. AND YET...the same power they feared they were also drawn to. NOW THIS is a right understanding of God. A beautiful paradox only available in the God of the bible. We'll talk more about it in a moment but look at what is happening. In Acts 4 they prayed: God gives us boldness so we can carry out the signs & wonders you want to do among us for your glory. HE ANSWERS. Look at the power of God pouring out of Peter. And yes there is a uniqueness to Peter and the apostles that Christ bestowed on them for the moment of starting the church. BUT, signs and wonders verifying the gospel didn't stop with them. Because the Spirit didn't stop moving. And he continues to move now. And what was the result? Physical healing...and the salvation of souls. POWER that pours out of the church for the spiritual and physical good of others.

By looking at the scene of Ananias & Saphira in the context of what happens before and after, I want to show you the _____ markings of a people who are ALL-IN with God.

How have you allowed satan to fill you?

- Couple that is engaged - not living together - but is sleeping together. Want people to think you are holy. BUT YOU ARE NOT.
- KNOW THE THINGS TO SAY
- Story of the King & the Carrot & the jester & the horse

When you have all-in faith you give your whole heart to God. And is so intensely focused on knowing God it doesn't get concerned with how it appears to others. But such a person so consumed by Christ will overflow with holiness. Not in an effort to impress an audience of peers, but their actions will conform to what pleases the God they are consumed with.

Like when a member of the male species falls in love with a girl. He begins to act differently. He begins to buy flowers. Never even looked at a plant he couldn't eat before then. But now he's buying flowers. His money is going to different places. He's vacuuming his car & his beard. He's spending time with her. And he readily does these things, even enjoys these things because SHE delights in these things. And her delight brings him delight. If he HATED doing these things and just did them to appease her you would say...that's not love. That's endurance. And she deserves someone who does more than endure her.

1. All-In faith is joyfully generous

One of the differences Luke wants us to see between all-in believers like barnabas and half-way in believers like Ananias & Saphira is that going all-in comes from a place of joy and then practicing generosity from a place of joy actually creates more joy. The apostle Paul talks about taking up an offering to help out believers in need over in 2 corinthians 9

7 Each person should do as he has decided in his heart – not reluctantly or out of compulsion, since God loves a cheerful giver. -- 2 Corinthians 9:7

That's because God is after your heart. It's not that God NEEDS you to be generous in order for him to carry out his purposes in the world. Whether you want to realize it or not, you are a tenant in this world not the owner of it. And everything you have is given to you from God for you to use for his glory during your few days here on earth. And when you realize THAT. AND you realize God was generous to you in Christ...then you become radically generous towards others. Like we said earlier.

So let me ask you: Are you a rock, a sponge, or a honeycomb when it comes to your finances? By God's grace there are some wonderfully generous brothers and sisters in our church. Truthfully ya'll are sacrificial and creative in how you bless one another. You are generous in your giving towards God's ministry here. But if the local church is God's established plan for advancing his mission, and you consider yourself a part of this local church, are you giving towards the ministry here IN A

JOYFUL and truly GENEROUS way? And if not but you want us to all think you are...heed the warning of who you are really lying to. Listen: A rock can't try harder to be a honeycomb. It has to be transformed into one. So the cure is to spend time in the gospel. Instead of trying to loosen your grip on your stuff...grab hold of GOD. Watch him loosen your grip on your stuff and tighten your grip on his people.

2. All in faith has a magnetic fear of God

Here's what I mean. The one who is all-in with God recognizes their own sin and that their sin separates them from God. But, because of the grace of God this fear actually becomes the path to life.

Which leads right to our last point

3. All-In faith practices regular confession and repentance of sin

The All-In Christian finds himself or herself in a bit of a dilemma. Because we believe God is good and we are not. We believe he has died to set us free from sin and has given us the power to not give into it. AND YET we find ourselves falling back into sin. Constantly. What do we do with that? Do we throw our hands up in frustration?

No. In fact, God knew this would be us and that's where we take the comfort of passages like 1 John 1.8-9
8 If we say, "We have no sin," we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins

and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 -- 1 John 1:8-9

We own it, confess it, and turn back to God. That's the word you need to receive today. Ananias and Sapphira chose to try and lie to God. They cared more about who they appeared to be than who they were. And you can't bring empty-hearted obedience and lay it at God's feet. That is disobedience and he will not be mocked like that.

The blessings of knowing God come through the valley of confession and repentance. Church I want God to move among us and through us. But that comes only when we refuse to allow sin a foothold among us.

The Bench

I want to take a minute before we get into our message and talk about where we are as a church right now. A year ago we were out of room at our independence campus and we were praying and fasting and asking God to show us what he had next for us. We believed he had called us to continue to reach people with the gospel and so we said ok God, supply the space. And God moved in an unexpected and really amazing way. He led another church to join us and give their facility to us. That became our providence Road campus. It had the same capacity as our independence campus so the elders felt the best way to steward it to reach new people was to use it as a second location for Mercy to worship in. This would in effect double our capacity to reach people.

And the Lord has blessed what was a MASSIVE step of faith you took. Massive for a church our age and size. We continue to see people experience the transforming power of the gospel. We saw 14 people baptized in our services last weekend! AWESOME. So, we are walking ahead right now as One church meeting in two locations. And I'm going to speak a lot more to that on Vision Day on October 27. I encourage you to make sure you don't miss that day. We'll talk about where we sense God taking us in the next couple of years.

Let me talk real quick about our set-up. For the past several months we've been trying out a few different ways to honor the Lord with how we serve you, the Mercy Family in these two locations. We feel good about where the Lord has led us so far and we are taking another step this weekend that we believe will serve you well. For months we've been recording our sermons

early Sunday morning and delivering them by video to our Providence Rd campus. And that's been the resourceful way to make the most of the situation we stepped into. Starting today, thanks to the great work of our A/V ministry we are able to deliver our sermons live at our 9am service to both locations. Independence Campus is receiving the sermon by live stream at this service. Our 10:45 service will continue as it has in the past with Providence Rd receiving the sermon by video and I'll preach live at Independence. This is our best attempt

LIVESTREAM INTRO VERSION 1

Good Morning Mercy Church! Happy October. Man hasn't the fall weather just been....not fall at all. Hey I want to address a big change this weekend that I'm really excited about. If you are newer to Mercy Church, we currently meet in two locations for worship on the weekend. It's a pretty cool story that I can't give you in full right now. When we moved to 2 locations in January we "made it work" by recording the sermons really early on Sunday mornings and delivering them by video to our Providence Rd campus while preaching live at our independence campus. Our intent is to do this about 75% of the time and the other 25% of the time we have members of our teaching team preaching in both locations. That was always a temporary solution that we thought was faithful to where the Lord had us. Well, thanks to some GREAT work by our A/V ministry led by our tech director Jack Guthrey we are now able to deliver our sermons live at our 9am service to both locations at once. The team has worked hard to create

a live-stream set-up that is live...today. Right now for the first time. This is a shift for everyone who attends our 9am services. To our Independence Campus family I want to encourage you that your Providence Rd brothers and sisters have experienced this and they continue to reach people with the gospel. We've got a great campus pastor in Rashard Barnes who is ready to lead us well there at Independence.

We'll keep the 10:45 service the same as we have been operating where I'll preach at Independence and the message will be delivered by video as it has been here at Providence Rd. Doing this allows us to have four worship services on Sunday morning for you to invite friends and family to. This is what we believe to be a faithful next step church in stewarding the blessing of God he is giving to Mercy Church. So we are going to try it out!

Last weekend was fantastic. 14 people baptized on Sunday morning! It was awesome! BUT, it was also a bit of a zoo there at providence Rd. They say when you are at 80% full, you are full. Well, our worship service was so full we had to pull office chairs into the back of the room. And our parking lot was so full...Well let's just say we had to apologize to food lion. The Lord is moving and I believe a big reason is because of our willingness to say YES to a course he is charting for us that is a little unconventional. So thank you for continuing to say YES to what God seems to be doing among us here. You are a wonderful church to pastor and certainly this has been a good but a little odd story the Lord has written

for us. And your encouragement and spirit of unity with which you continue to follow the Lord together is awesome. AND by the way, I'm going to talk A LOT more about where we believe God is taking us on October 27th. That's vision day for Mercy Church. You should be here every weekend but especially that weekend.

Verse 3 - 'If the devil's first tactic was to destroy the church by force from without, his second was to destroy it by falsehood from within'.²

- Rock, Sponge, Honeycomb illustration? - gospel turns rocks into honeycombs

This is a danger that I think many specifically in the bible belt face. They like the idea of God but they also want to maintain control of their life. You want the BENEFITS God offers without giving him the authority over your life that he calls for. And the result of that is a compromised faith that walks through some of the motions of Christianity without ever being changed by God. It's this compromised faith that explains a guy being in church for 30 years and still being a bitter person. It's because he's gone through the motions but never said GOD I'M ALL IN. YOU ARE IN CHARGE.

² Peterson, D. G. (2009). [*The Acts of the Apostles*](#) (p. 210). Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

THIS is the reason many Christians are spiritually tired. They hear week-in & week-out about a joy that they never experience. Because the joy of Christ comes to you when you go all in with him! AND LISTEN - IF WE WANT GOD TO MOVE...IT COMES WHEN WE GO ALL IN WITH HIM. AND THE THING that will keep us from getting there: Our own sin. We are going to see today that the path to an All-in faith that experiences the blessings God wants to give you: That experiences freedom from sin, reconciliation in relationships, the fruit of the holy spirit: Love, Joy, Peace...The Path to the mountain top of all in faith that experiences the movement of God **MUST** go through the valley of confession and repentance of sin.

We are going to look at that today. Acts 5. I'm going to walk through the scene and explain what is happening and then I'm going to show you **what an ALL-IN faith looks like (4 commitments of an all-in faith. Or something like that).**

ANYWAY at the end of chapter 4 here's what we see:

. You go ALL-IN for others only because your heart has been warmed by the truth that Jesus went all-in first.

36 Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus by birth, the one the apostles called Barnabas (which is translated Son of Encouragement), 37 sold a field he owned, brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet. -- Acts 4:36-37 Barnabas is the encourager in the group. He's so generous. So forgiving. We'll dig more into his story

another time but here we see him setting an example in generosity. His grip is loosened on his stuff and tightened on his care for people. So he sells a FIELD. That's a big deal. And gives proceeds to his brothers and sisters in need. It's pretty awesome. There is this beautiful work of the Holy Spirit creating a culture of generosity in this new church. This church is visibly demonstrating the gospel in the way they care for one another. They are sacrificing for each other and doing so as an act of worship & thankfulness to God. The world is seeing this and marveling at these insanely generous Christians.

And you have to understand THAT in order to understand what is about to happen. This couple, Ananias and Sapphira, are a part of this church. They see others selling property and being generous with the proceeds. So what do they do...

come inside the church through this deception. Last time we saw the church attacked by pressure from religious leaders to keep quiet. That was acts 4. And the church said no. We've seen God move. We can't stop talking about that. Now, we are seeing the enemy try to tear it down from the inside.

John Stott said if the devil's first tactic was to try and destroy the church by force from without (think acts 4), his second was to destroy it by falsehood from within.

And Peter says you think the worst thing you are doing is lying to people...to make them like you more. Which you think is worth the lie. I mean after all you are giving SOMETHING. It's a good deed right? They don't need to

know that we kept some back for ourselves. Peter says its WAY WORSE than you think. You aren't just lying to people...YOU ARE LYING TO GOD!