

# Summary

This sermon from Acts 5 explores the story of Ananias and Sapphira, who lied about their offering to appear more generous than they were, resulting in their deaths. The message emphasizes that God values authenticity over appearance and that purity must come before power in the church. The apostles, despite being imprisoned and beaten for preaching about Jesus, continued to obey God rather than human authorities, demonstrating that Christ sets us free not to sit back, but to stand up. The sermon challenges believers to choose obedience over opposition and to stop pretending while starting to walk in truth.

## Intro Prayer

Heavenly Father, as we gather together today, we ask that You would open our hearts and minds to what You want to teach us. Help us to be honest with ourselves and with You, laying aside any pretense or performance. We pray that Your Holy Spirit would move among us, revealing areas where we need to grow in authenticity and obedience. Give us the courage to hear Your voice and respond with willing hearts. In Jesus' name, amen.

## Ice Breaker

What's something you've tried to stop that just couldn't be stopped - like a toddler running to a playground, your dog chasing a squirrel, or water flowing down a hill?

## Key Verses

1. Acts 5:1-11
2. Acts 5:29
3. Acts 5:38-39
4. Acts 5:41-42
5. Acts 1:8

## Questions

1. What was the real issue with Ananias and Sapphira's offering - the amount they gave or their motivation behind it?
2. Why do you think God dealt so severely with their deception at this particular moment in church history?
3. How does the phrase 'authenticity trumps activity' challenge the way we approach our faith and service?
4. What does it mean that 'purity came before power' in the early church, and how might this apply to our lives today?

5. The apostles chose to 'obey God rather than human beings.' What are some areas where this choice is difficult for believers today?
6. How did the apostles respond to persecution and suffering, and what can we learn from their attitude?
7. What does it look like practically to 'stop pretending and start walking in truth' in our daily lives?
8. Where might God be calling you to step out in obedience, even when it feels uncomfortable or costly?

## Life Application

This week, ask yourself this question 20 times: 'Where is God calling me to obey Him right now?' Whether it's in generosity, confession, restoring a relationship, or stepping into a calling you've been afraid to pursue, identify one specific area where God is asking for your obedience and take a concrete step forward in faith.

## Key Takeaways

1. God values authenticity over appearance - He wants our integrity, not our image
2. Purity must come before power - God cleanses before He releases His anointing
3. We are called to obedience over opposition - we must obey God rather than human beings
4. Christ sets us free not to sit back, but to stand up and proclaim the gospel
5. The church is part of an unstoppable movement that no opposition can ultimately defeat

## Ending Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You for the example of the early church and their commitment to authenticity and obedience. Help us to examine our own hearts and motives, choosing truth over pretense in every area of our lives. Give us courage to obey You even when it costs us something, knowing that disobedience will cost us everything that matters. May we be people who stand up and speak up for You, rejoicing even in suffering because we are counted worthy to share in Your name. Make us part of Your unstoppable movement in this world. In Your powerful name, amen.