

Week of May 13-19

HOUSECLEANING

Scripture Reading: Read Acts chapter 5

Every year when my wife was growing up, her family would do a massive spring cleaning. They would thoroughly clean each room, vacuum, dust, wash windows, scrub floors, and steam clean the carpets, etc. They would take the screens out of the windows and wash them. Any collected junk would also be tossed out. This annual event was a massive undertaking but it was necessary to keep a house with nine children in order. Unfortunately for my wife, when we joined together in wedded bliss 26 years ago, she married a packrat! I like to save everything. Fortunately, my wife is persistent and she has strongly encouraged me through the years to be more diligent in my housecleaning. I have made some progress in twenty-six years but there is more, much more, to go!

In our chapter reading today, we see the Holy Spirit doing some spiritual housecleaning in his church. In Acts chapters 2-4, we witness the church growing in leaps and bounds. Thousands of people came to Christ. Miracles, signs, and wonders were being performed by the apostles. Great joy, love, and peace were evident among the believers. In addition, those in the church shared their possessions with one another so that no one was in need. Such an environment was magnetic and many people felt the pull to join the group.

This phenomenon is not uncommon today when things are happening in a church. There is a buzz that develops that draws many people to the church. Folks pour in because of the excitement but may not choose to fully commit to the cause of Christ. Over time, this can be unhealthy for a church since the call to the body of Christ is to be a committed congregation of disciples. In order to purify his church, the Lord will do some housecleaning so that so-called disciples will either be all in or all out but not in-between.

Ananias and his wife, Sapphira, were two such individuals who were housecleaned from the church and in a dramatic fashion! They wanted to be part of what was going on but they wanted in on their terms. They wanted to look good rather than be good so they gave money to the church from a sale of property but kept part of the money back without telling the apostles. The Holy Spirit revealed this to Peter and, when all was said and done, Ananias and Sapphira were put to death by the Lord for lying to the Holy Spirit. Notice the effect on the church and the crowds in verses 11 & 13: *“Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events...No one else dared join them.”*

Now, you might think that’s a bad thing, right? Not really. Take a look at the rest of verse 13 and verse 14: *“...even though they were highly regarded by the people. Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number.”* Did you see what happened? By cleansing the church of so-called disciples, the Lord enhanced the church’s reputation and genuine growth occurred. People knew if they were going to sign on the dotted line and join, they had to be serious.

Action Step & Prayer Focus: Read Ephesians 4:22-24 in light of today’s devotional. Ask the Lord to show you where any spiritual housecleaning is required in your life and then throw out the trash.

Take-a-way: *Housecleaning isn’t only for homes, it’s also important in the church!*