

The importance of living without a mask before God

Acts 5:1-16 · Kaká Monteiro · July 26, 2026

The copied generosity, the planned lie, the church that learns to fear and grows

THE CENTRAL IDEA

"You can wear a mask before people for a while, but before God the mask falls."

Ananias and Sapphira didn't sin by keeping money, which was theirs, but by faking a total surrender to receive the respect Barnabas received. God is not fooled. The text is heavy and foundational, but it doesn't end in fear: the church learns to fear God, keeps growing and is called to be a place where it is safe to be honest.

THE MESSAGE IN 3 MOVEMENTS

01 A copied generosity.

"Also sold": Ananias and Sapphira look at Barnabas and want the same respect without the same price. Like Achan in Joshua 7, they "keep back" part of what seemed consecrated. It wasn't Satan deciding for them: it was their choice, planned together.

02 God is not fooled.

A believer cannot be possessed, but can be used for evil. The sin wasn't keeping, it was faking devotion before the church, which in practice is lying to God's face. The judgment was a foundational milestone, not a threat for today: Christ has already paid the price for us.

03 The church fears, grows and needs honesty.

In the middle of the judgment, the word "church" appears for the first time, and it grows. But numbers are not proof of health. The invitation is to build a community where you can say "I'm not okay" and ask for real: how is your life with the Lord?

READING THE TEXT · ACTS 5:1-16

Acts 5:1-4 · A fake surrender

Ananias, with Sapphira's full knowledge, sells a piece of property, keeps back part of the money and brings the rest to the apostles' feet as if it were all. Peter asks: why have you let Satan fill your heart? The land was yours, and so was the money. You have not lied to people, but to God.

Acts 5:5-11 · Great fear

Hearing this, Ananias falls down dead. Three hours later Sapphira arrives, knowing nothing, and confirms the same lie. She falls too. Great fear seizes the whole church and all who hear about these events.

Acts 5:12-16 · The power that can't be faked

The apostles perform many signs. No outsider dares to join them lightly, but the people hold them in high regard and more and more men and women believe in the Lord. People bring the sick into the streets, even hoping for Peter's shadow, and all are healed.

QUESTIONS FOR THE GROUP

To open: without talking about faith yet: in what everyday situation is it easiest for us to put on a show and look better than we are?

- 1 Ananias and Sapphira wanted the respect Barnabas received without paying the same price. In what area do you most feel the urge to look more spiritual, generous or put-together than you really are?
- 2 No one forced the couple to sell or to give: the sin was pretending. Why is pretending before God more serious than simply not giving? What does that say about what God values?
- 3 The text is heavy, but it was a foundational milestone, not a rule that God punishes whoever fails. How do you hold together the fear of God and the certainty of Christ's grace?
- 4 Do you have someone to call on your best and worst days? What keeps you from being honest about how you really are, and how can the group be that safe place?

KEY PASSAGES

Joshua 7:1, "Achan took some of the devoted things." The same verb for "keeping back" appears in Acts 5: hiding part of what was meant to be given whole.

1 Samuel 16:7, "People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." No facade fools the one who sees within.

James 5:16, "Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other." The antidote to a masked life is honesty in community.

TO CLOSE

A step for this week. Think of an area where you have been wearing a mask, whether in appearance, money, time or relationships, and talk about it with someone you trust. And ask a brother or sister for real: how is your life with the Lord?

Prayer. Thank God that Christ paid the price we could never pay. Ask for a whole heart before God and a safe community, where no one has to pretend everything is fine.



Watch the message again: point your phone camera here.