**Spiritual Honesty**  
*Acts 5:1-11*

**Objective:** Impress upon folks, the need for genuine honesty with themselves and with God.  
**Reading:** Acts 5:1-11.  
**Memory:** Acts 5:4, “…You have not lied to men but to God.”  

**Introduction:**
1. Often, when I talk to people about religion, their actions and deeds in life, where they are and what they do spiritually, I get a very real feeling they are not being completely honest. It is so easy for people to sometimes “fudge”; to cover up things, to sort of disregard things, sometimes to express what they wish was true rather than what actually is genuinely true.
2. It is a spiritual problem. Sometimes people are not genuinely honest with themselves even, and sometimes they are not honest with God. This can be a real problem that we might not even notice or realize. I want assert and reinforce that **We need to be absolutely honest spiritually.** *(WHY?)*

The passage that was read this morning, *Acts 5:1-11*, tells of an incident in which a Christian couple, Ananias and Sapphira were less than honest, spiritually, and the passage highlights several reasons why it is so very vital for Christians to be spiritually honest with ourselves and with God.

*The first reason that ought to be abundantly clear from the passage is that*

**I. Spiritual Honesty Is Essential To Life.**

A. If we are only pretending we are “in Christ”, we are already dead.
   1. It’s not so much that Peter *struck* them dead, as that *truth* was manifested. Ananias and Sapphira were *already* dead if they were lying to themselves and to God about coming to life in Christ.
   2. Are you alive or dead? Have you really come to Christ? If you have come to Christ with your “fingers crossed” you too, are already dead. It’s just not physically evident.
   3. If He’s “lord” on Sunday, but not Friday Night, He’s not really “lord”. You are lying to self and God.
   4. To be “lost” is not necessarily such a bad thing - you can be found, you can be saved. To be lost and not admit that you are lost is absolute tragedy!
   5. Without genuine Spiritual Honesty, we can’t see our own sins in order to repent of them. This is the essence of the "blasphemy of the Holy Spirit" that Jesus speaks of in *Matthew 12:30*.

B. Consider some reflections of spiritual dishonesty.
   1. You know you are being dishonest and wrong when you think or say;
      a. “I am in good relationship with God.” When you know you are living with intentional sin.
      b. “I am in good relationship with God.” When you know there are things you have not obeyed.
      c. “I am in good relationship with God.” When you know you have recently done vengeful and malicious or devious things.
   2. How about when you remove or isolate yourself from the congregation because there are some things you don’t agree with or like??
      a. “I find some fault with your worship style” – and use it as an excuse to not worship at all.
      b. “You are using a poor translation” - when you are not even attending yourself!
      c. “There are hypocrites in the church”. When you don’t try to approach them and correct them in a Christ-like manner – who is the hypocrite!!?? Be honest.
      d. “Folks are not very loving sometimes”– when you won’t have anything to do with them.
   3. If you sing with us; “I’ve been crucified with Christ…” and you haven’t been, you are being dishonest! Need to have died with Him in baptism and need to be living by His Spirit and His will, not your own in order to sing that song honestly!
      a. *Titus 2:11-14*, “For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. **It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled,**...
upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.”

b. If you are not saying “no” to ungodliness, you are not really crucified with Him.
c. If you are not self-controlled, you are not really crucified with Him.
d. If you’re truthful about dying to self and living for Him, you should be eager to do what is good.

C. Spiritual Honesty requires we bring matters fully into the light.
   1. 1 John 1:6-7, “If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.”
   2. We need to live by truth, walk in the light; in order to see clearly and repent of anything ungodly. In order that we know where we stand and how desperately we need Christ.

The first reason for spiritual honesty has to do with our personal salvation. Realize also that

II. Spiritual Honesty Is Essential To The Purity Of The Church.

A. Peter did not hesitate to identify a spiritual lie.
   1. Something wasn’t right. Something that was defiling the very character and nature of the church. (Pause here to define what the issue was with Ananias and Sapphira)
   2. We are afraid of losing someone to the church, so we often overlook their sins. But, when Christians are living a spiritual lie, they dead already, and simply defiling the body of Christ, so sins should be challenged.
   3. There is a need for us to be truthful as well; If that person is not spiritually honest, they are already spiritually dead, and not a part of the body anyway.
   4. If they refuse to be spiritually honest, they are in effect, lying to the Holy Spirit. One cannot be saved while they are lying to the Holy Spirit!

B. Keep the Body pure.
   1. If you lovingly challenge and confront and folks leave, they leave. That’s okay.
   2. The church is the Body of Christ; Don’t dare defile it or let anyone else!
   3. The church is the Bride of Christ; (Whom He died for) Don’t dare defile it or let anyone else!
   4. The church is the Temple of the Holy Spirit; Don’t dare defile it or let anyone else!
   5. The church is Ultimate Grace of God; Don’t dare disparage that or take it for granted!
   6. 1 Corinthians 5:6-8, “… Don’t you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough? 7 Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. 8 Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth.”

C. We need to be convicted to challenge spiritual dishonesty when we see it.
   1. 2 Timothy 1:7, “For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.”
   2. By the grace of God, by the Spirit of God, you can do this!
   3. Confront such with love. Confront such with courage.
   4. Children of light should shed light where light darkness and shadows reign.

The third reason that stands out in this section, for the need to be genuinely honest is that appropriate…

III. Spiritual Honesty Generates Appropriate Fear Of God. Acts 5:11, “Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events.”

A. “Fear of God” is a good thing here.
   1. Such “fear” is beneficial to the saving message.
   2. Such “fear” is beneficial to get people’s attention.
   3. Such “fear” is beneficial to motivate people to godly behavior.
   4. Such “fear” generates from genuine honesty and it moves people to genuine spiritual honesty!

B. Honesty should involve “fear” of God!
1. Consider Who He is; Creator of Universe. Creator of YOU! So such reverence and respect is warranted.

2. He is the ultimate in holiness and purity. In OT, only the High Priest was privileged to come into His Presence - and that, only once a year with elaborate and appropriate cleansing and sacrifices.

3. Sometimes folks get to thinking God is nothing really so special.
   a. Because God is love, because He is merciful, because we can pray to Him directly, folks have a tendency to trifle with Him. This ought never be.
   b. Because we are covered by the adequacy of Christ, forgiveness seems cheap to people and they don't take sin seriously. This is dangerous and wrong.
   c. Because God does not act in such immediate ways as with Ananias and Sapphira, people take God for ordinary and common and the old saying that “Familiarity breeds contempt” becomes true, and that is a very bad, wrong thing in regard to God.

C. It takes appropriate fear to generate appropriate love.
   1. We can't appreciate what God has done for us in Christ until we appreciate how awesome and fearful it is to come into the Presence of God in our natural state.
   2. Only when we realize the heinousness of our sins and only when we tremble at the very thought of God standing in Judgment, can we appreciate the power, the love, the adequacy of Christ – then we will be moved to serve Him and to love Him with all of our heart!

So What?
May God open the eyes of our hearts so we can realize His purity, His majesty and glory. May God open the eyes of our hearts and convict each of us to be absolutely honest with Him and with ourselves so we can genuinely honor Him and stand in His presence by the love and lordship of Christ.

Closing Prayer:
We need to be absolutely honest spiritually. Why it is so vital to be spiritually honest with ourselves and with God.

I. Spiritual Honesty Is Essential To Life.
   A. If we are only pretending we are “in Christ”, we are already dead.

   B. Consider some reflections of spiritual dishonesty. Titus 2:11-14

   C. Spiritual Honesty requires we bring matters fully into the light. 1 John 1:6-7

II. Spiritual Honesty Is Essential To The Purity Of The Church.
   A. Peter did not hesitate to identify a spiritual lie.

   B. Keep the Body pure. 1 Corinthians 5:6-8

   C. We need to be convicted to challenge spiritual dishonesty when we see it. 2 Timothy 1:7

III. Spiritual Honesty Generates Appropriate Fear Of God. Acts 5:11
   A. “Fear of God” is a good thing here.

   B. Honesty should involve “fear” of God!

   C. It takes appropriate fear to generate appropriate love.

So What? Be absolutely honest so we can honor Him and stand in His Presence.