

9 Beware of COVETOUSNESS

4 Mar. 23



Ice-Breaker: *As a kid what did you really, really want?*

John 12:1-8 cev ¹⁻²Six days before Passover Jesus went back to Bethany, where he had raised Lazarus from death. A meal had been prepared for Jesus. Martha was doing the serving, and Lazarus himself was there. ³Mary took a very expensive bottle of perfume and poured it on Jesus' feet. She wiped them with her hair, and the sweet smell of the perfume filled the house. ⁴⁻⁶A disciple named Judas Iscariot was there. He was the one who was going to betray Jesus, and he asked, "Why wasn't this perfume sold for three hundred silver coins and the money given to the poor?" Judas did not really care about the poor. He asked this because he carried the money bag and sometimes would steal from it. ⁷⁻⁸Jesus replied, "Leave her alone! She has kept this perfume for the day of my burial. You will always have the poor with you, but you won't always have me."

- *What issues was Judas dealing with that made him upset with Mary?*
- *What prompted Mary to act as she did? What can we learn from her?*
- *How did Jesus deal with the situation? What was Jesus directing attention to?*

Acts 4:32-5:11 cev ³²The group of followers all felt the same way about everything. None of them claimed that their possessions were their own, and they shared everything they had with each other. ³³⁻³⁵In a powerful way the apostles told everyone that the Lord Jesus was now alive. God greatly blessed his followers, and no one went in need of anything. Everyone who owned land or houses would sell them and bring the money to the apostles. Then they would give the money to anyone who needed it. ³⁶⁻³⁷Joseph was one of the followers who had sold a piece of property and brought the money to the apostles. He was a Levite from Cyprus, and the apostles called him Barnabas, which means "one who encourages others".

^{5:1-4}Ananias and his wife Sapphira also sold a piece of property. But they agreed to cheat and keep some of the money for themselves. So when Ananias took the rest of the money to the apostles, Peter said, "Why has Satan made you keep back some of the money from the sale of the property? Why have you lied to the Holy Spirit? The property was yours before you sold it, and even after you sold it, the

money was still yours. What made you do such a thing? You didn't lie to people. You lied to God!" ⁵⁻⁶As soon as Ananias heard this, he dropped dead, and everyone who heard about it was frightened. Some young men came in and wrapped up his body. Then they took it out and buried it. ⁷⁻¹¹Three hours later Sapphira came in, but she did not know what had happened to her husband. Peter asked her, "Tell me, did you sell the property for this amount?" "Yes," she answered, "that's the amount." Then Peter said, "Why did the two of you agree to test the Lord's Spirit? The men who buried Ananias are by the door, and they will carry you out!" At once she fell at Peter's feet and died. When the young men came back in, they found Sapphira lying there dead. So they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. The church members were afraid, and so was everyone else who heard what had happened.

- *How did the church deal with community welfare and outreach in Acts?*
- *What would happen if our churches followed similar methods today?*
- *Compare Joseph (Barnabas) with Ananias & Sapphira. What do we see?*
- *What safeguards can be put in place to stop the likes of Ananias & Sapphira getting into the church today? Or, can we prevent them at all ...?*

Isaiah 14:12-23 cev ¹²⁻¹⁴You, the bright morning star, have fallen from the sky! You brought down other nations; now you are brought down. You said to yourself, "I'll climb to heaven and place my throne above the highest stars. I'll sit there with the gods far away in the north. I'll be above the clouds, just like God Most High." ¹⁵⁻¹⁷But now you are deep in the world of the dead. Those who see you will stare and wonder, "Is this the man who made the world tremble and shook up kingdoms? Did he capture every city and make earth a desert? Is he the one who refused to let prisoners go home?" ¹⁸⁻²¹When kings die, they are buried in glorious tombs. But you will be left unburied, just another dead body lying underfoot like a broken branch. You will be one of many killed in battle and gone down to the deep rocky pit. You won't be buried with kings; you ruined your country and murdered your people. You evil monster! We hope that your family will be forgotten for ever. We will slaughter your sons to make them pay for the crimes of their ancestors. They won't take over the world or build cities anywhere on this earth. ²²⁻²³The LORD All-Powerful has promised to attack Babylon and destroy everyone there, so that none of them will ever be remembered again. The LORD will sweep out the people, and the land will become a swamp for wild animals.

- *What values does Babylon exhibit in this passage?*
- *How are these seen by the world today? How are they seen by God?*
- *Where do the goals and aspirations Babylon & Lucifer have come from?*
- *Why is it wrong for humans to believe they can be as God?*
- *What warning is given to Babylon in this passage?*
- *How can we ensure we don't have the same values and aspirations as Babylon?*
- *What's your takeaway from this study?*