

A Church That STANDS

Acts 5:1-6:7

Read Acts 5:1-11

Why does God deal so forcefully with the Sin of Ananias and Sapphira?

What does the story of Ananias and Sapphira teach us about standing against sin?

Read Acts 5:12-42

In what way do Christians and the church experience persecution today?

What does this passage teach us about standing up under persecution?

The way the apostles face persecution gives us three tools that will help us stand under the persecution we face today:

1. Remember your purpose- *“Go, stand...and tell the people the full message of this new life.”*
2. Redraw your parameter- *“We must obey God rather than men!”*
3. Renew your perspective- *“The apostles left the Sanhedrin rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name.”*

Read Acts 6:1-7

Describe the type of men called to stand and serve.

How are the character traits of a Deacon outlined in I Timothy 3:8-13 characteristics of a man who is full of the Spirit and wisdom?

How will being a church that stands help us be a church that shines?

A Church That STANDS *(with notes)*

Acts 5:1-6:7

Read Acts 5:1-11

Why does God deal so forcefully with the Sin of Ananias and Sapphira?

They sell some property and propose to bring a gift to lay at the apostles' feet. They bring a portion but tell the leaders they are giving the full amount. Their sin is not in keeping a portion for themselves, but rather, their sin comes from the lie they tell the church. Sin among God's people is a serious thing. It undermines the message of the gospel when the church accepts sin and closes its eyes to the impact.

What does the story of Ananias and Sapphira teach us about standing against sin?

It cannot be ignored and must be addressed. To give the devil a foothold is a mistake with lasting repercussions.

Read Acts 5:12-42

In what way do Christians and the church experience persecution today?

Social stigma? Political correctness? Intolerance? Other examples?

What does this passage teach us about standing up under persecution?

While in this country today we rarely face physical abuse for proclaiming Christ, there are social pressures to remain silent and compromise the truth.

The way the apostles face persecution gives us three tools that will help us stand under the persecution we face today:

1. Remember your purpose- *"Go, stand...and tell the people the full message of this new life."*

The world often tries to redefine our purpose, or add to it, or diminish it. There is immense pressure to be "politically correct" and sugarcoat the cross. Remembering our purpose will help us keep our eyes fixed on God and will help us rely on His power to achieve what we have been called to do.

2. Redraw your parameter- *"We must obey God rather than men!"*

Persecution draws our eyes to the opinions and reactions of others. It is easier to start measuring our words and actions by standards other than God. Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. He is that standard. When we hold ourselves close to Him it is easier to let go of the world's approval.

3. Renew your perspective- *"The apostles left the Sanhedrin rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name."*

Persecution for the sake of Christ is a compliment. Jesus told us that darkness hates light. The world reacts negatively to the aroma of Christ-it is the smell of death.

Read Acts 6:1-7

Describe the type of men called to stand and serve.

The apostles appoint seven men to be special servants in the church. These men are to be full of the Spirit and wisdom.

How are the character traits of a Deacon outlined in I Timothy 3:8-13 characteristics of a man who is full of the Spirit and wisdom?

The heart of a Deacon portrays a life that is committed to being like Christ. The commitment to reflect the nature of Christ is woven into his family life, his work, his relationships, his reputation, and his integrity. One can look at his life and see the evidence of the Spirit of God working in him and through him. He also encourages, through that life, those around him to become increasingly Christ-like as well.

How will being a church that stands help us be a church that shines?

Individual thoughts and reflections. We encourage you to share to thoughts on this question on our Facebook page, under the post that announced this lesson, in order to facilitate discussion.