

# Caught

**Emerge from shame and guilt now into forgiveness and mercy.**

Message Magazine's Online Devotional for Tuesday, February 3, 2015

Based Upon Acts 5

I was thinking about some difficult things going on in the church the other day. Can we be candid here? Among our brothers and sisters in the faith, are all kinds of sins. One kind that overwhelmed me recently, because I have been apprised of new situations, is adultery. The thing that is so troubling about this for me is that it is happening among members of the church all over the world. I mean, some people who may be seated next to one another on the church bench are engaging, together, in adultery. I do realize that we all, due to the fact that we have been born in sin and shapen in iniquity, are prone to wander from God. I get it. Obviously, I get it, since I am a redeemed sinner too. But why do we sometimes involve ourselves in these things among our ranks. Like, why choose other members instead of just enjoying this activity in the world? There is plenty of sex to be had there. Why try to stay inside the ark and drill holes into the hull of the ship while we are sailing through to glory? The truth is, sin and all of its pleasures is an insidious foe, because it is so enjoyable.

Ananias and Sapphira had to struggle over the same issue according to our theme chapter. They committed to follow Jesus with their money, talents, and influence. On an occasion when many were committing the proceeds from properties sold to the Lord's work, Ananias and his wife decided to say that they would give the proceeds, but actually give only part. Was it not good enough to at least give some of the proceeds? What if it was the majority that they gave, and they only reserved a small portion for themselves? I think we are all unwittingly challenged with this very thing at times. We sometimes attempt to give God a tip, rather than our all. Well, Ananias and Sapphira tragically discovered (too late) that lying to the Holy Spirit was a losing proposition. Had they confessed the fact that they were attempting to withhold from the Lord, and then repented, God would have had mercy. But, since they refused, they received the consequences of that refusal.

I would like to highlight the mercy of God here! Do not be confused. We all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. We have all needed an extra measure of grace and forgiveness of our infidelity in our relationship with God, not just those of us who have engaged in adultery. Yet, as with the woman caught in the very act of adultery, our God is willing, ready, and able to empower us to turn from such things and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. He is able to keep us from falling, if we surrender and place our trust in Him. We have the privilege now to recover from all pride, gossip, lying, sexual sins, counterfeit worship, self-serving, evil thoughts, and the many things that are not as in-your-face as adultery. We have the privilege now to learn from the tragic story of Ananias and Sapphira, and be fully redeemed from all of our sins to be restored into the perfect image of Jesus Christ.