

Incredible Awe
June 17, 2018
Lynn Haven UMC – Transmitter Campus

Introduction

Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. With his wife's full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles' feet. Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied just to human beings but to God." When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened. Then some young men came forward, wrapped up his body, and carried him out and buried him.

About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. Peter asked her, "Tell me, is this the price you and Ananias got for the land?" "Yes," she said, "that is the price."

Peter said to her, "How could you conspire to test the Spirit of the Lord? Listen! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also." At that moment she fell down at his feet and died. Then the young men came in and, finding her dead, carried her out and buried her beside her husband. Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events. (Acts 5:1-11 NIV)

In our current sermon series based on the movie "The Incredibles 2" we are looking closely at all of the incredible gifts God has placed in each of us and how we can make the most of them to bring Him the glory. This week we will talk about something we should all have inside: holy awe of the Lord. Many of us would be pretty fearful if two people dropped dead in front of us, especially under the circumstances detailed in the verses above from Acts 5. But how can we know if we truly possess a healthy awe (or fear) of the Lord? After all, this is "the beginning of wisdom." (Proverbs 9:10)

Digging Deeper

Incredible Awe...

Comes from an awareness of God's POWER and PRESENCE.

- Read 1 Corinthians 2:5. Incredible awe (fear of the Lord) is an understanding of who God is and what He can do. The mighty power of God, which created the universe and parted the sea, has been changing lives since the beginning of time. Do you live with a healthy fear and respect of the power of God? When was the last time you were blown away by His presence or a demonstration of His power? We may not care for the ones who have been given human authority over us, but our Heavenly Father is most certainly worthy of our reverence.

Convinces us of what God thinks about SIN.

- As Paul states in Romans 6:23 (NLT), "the wages of sin is death." If we know better, we should do better. But since we are hard-headed, prone to sin human beings, we don't always follow that advice. If we believe that sin leads to death, why are we not scared to sin? Have we relegated God to some sort of "forgiveness genie" that will just wipe away all of our wrongdoing? Have we simply lost our fear of the Lord? What motivates you to do the right

thing? A basic understanding that we cannot fool the powerful God we serve should keep us mindful of our transgressions and eager to resist the urge to repeat them.

Contributes to a sense of UNITY among believers.

- Can you imagine what the people of the early church must have felt as they watched two people drop dead in front of them for lying to God? Jaws were surely dropping in that room! We can definitely assume a strong desire swept over them to start respecting God's commandment regarding honesty. Shared experiences often bring forth a unity of opinions and emotions. Have you been impacted by something miraculous that you witnessed either with a group of friends or strangers? Did the uniqueness of the circumstance create relationships or conversations beyond that one experience? Speaking generally, we often find common ground in the things we love or dislike, or that scare or inspire us. We establish true unity however, through being honest and open with one another and sharing everything – both who we are and what we have.

And great fear and awe gripped the whole church, and all who heard about these things.
(Acts 5:11 AMP)

Conclusion

Have we made God too small? Do we fear Him at all? Let us open up our lives to the power and presence of the living God and allow His Spirit to root out sin and change us so we can live world-changing, incredible lives!