

This Week's Smile

It was graduation day, and mom was trying to take a picture of her son in a cap and gown posed with his father.

"Let's try to make this look natural," she said. "Junior, put your arm around your dad's shoulder."

The father answered, "If you want it to look natural, why not have him put his hand in my pocket?"

So, May 12, 72 AM -
Brent boy July 19, 87 PM ✓

BROKEN VOWS

Acts 5:1-16

Ecc. 5:1 and 2

4 and 5

Politicians - Broken Vows

*This Week - Broken Vows - Tombs - Took life & cheapened men -
Cherry & Frost - Ended in tragedy!!*

INTRODUCTION: *Broken Vows - " " " "*

Why is it that hundreds of well meaning Christians attend conferences, attend worship, and seek deepening of the spiritual life but return a life's vocations which a feeling of no improvement and speedily lapse into the former ways of back-sliding and defeat.

There are many reasons but one of these is the matter of incomplete consecration or the sin of broken vows.

Too many Christians make a bargain with God, and fail to pay their part at the price -- now this is sin.

One of the simple little problems that becomes a big complicated problem -- we are unwilling to pay the price to be what God wants us to be. We make resolves but every church in America that is reaching people today is doing it on the basis of hard work as the Holy Spirit leads them.

The cost of outreach is going. Jesus went about. He did not reside in a monastery - he went out among the people. He loved people. And the same command was given to Christians. We are not going. We will not turn on the ignition key, we will not start the car, we will not hit the pavement, we will not make the contact.

Jesus said, go ye therefore and make disciples. You can never do this sitting down. And you can never do this by waiting. The cost of outreach is

get up and go. How can a farmer have a crop if he does not get up and go out into the field and sow the seed. He may have the best certified seed at his doorstep but he cannot expect the harvest until he goes into the field.

The price involves our going and it takes dedication, on our part in order to do it.

John Vassar never missed the chance to talk to lost people. One day in the hotel lobby he engaged a lady in conversation, about her soul. She started crying. Soon her husband came over to where she was standing and took her by the arm and led her away. He asked, what did that old man say to you that made you cry. He asked me if I were a Christian. If I were saved, she said. Why didn't you tell him you are a church member. He didn't ask me if I were a church member - he asked me if I were a Christian. Then the husband said, why didn't you tell him it was none of his business. And she said, that is John Vassar and if you had heard the way he had talked to me, you would have thought that it was his business. I wish that somehow that in your everyday life on the streets of the city, that men would say that you are in the soul-winning business.

The curse of today is that we are willing to let George do it. We have many shirkers today. In fact, as the Negro colored preacher said, we have some lilly Baptists. Somebody asked him what he meant. He said, why have you not heard. That they are the ones who toil not and neither do they spend.

Now we know that the church of Jesus Christ is a divine institution. One of the great proofs is that everything in the world has happened to the church and yet it still stands. Satan has used against it every weapon, at his command, and still the church remains. And it will remain until Jesus returns.

Acts 4 tells us about Peter and John in prison for preaching the Gospel. The revival tides were running high. The Apostles were preaching with great boldness.

4:37 If newspapers had been published in those days as they are today, the headlines would have told about the strange things that were happening. The radio news caster would have made comments about matters that were happening. If you had met a friend on the street, he would have said, did you hear what happened yesterday. This rich farmer Barnabas was converted, and sold his land and gave every cent to the church.

Another would say did you hear about Joshua he had been crippled all of his life but he went to the meeting and was converted and was completely healed.

Another would have said, do you remember that old blind man that begged everyday at the corner of ^{Geo. Washington} Poindexter and ^{Day C -} Chesapeake - the Apostles touched him and now he can see. He is going everywhere praising God.

Did you notice Saul's ^{Geo. Washington} gambling den on Liberty Street. The place where men drank and where vice flourished. It was closed this morning because Saul has been saved. And a few minutes ago he was heard to be preaching about Jesus on the street corner.

Now when the Holy Spirit begins to work, when the power flows into the community - we will see some counterfeit confessions.

Acts 4:37 - These new Christians not only had their souls converted - they also gave their pocketbooks to the Lord. They brought their money to the church.

They gave it to the Apostles to be used to the glory of God.

Many a man is glad for Christ to save him and to give him a home in Heaven. But he doesn't want to live a heavenly life in this world. He sings, "Jesus Paid It All" - and is content to let it rest at that. He never pays anything himself.

Some church members will say yes, I am saved. I am on my way to Heaven but they will not give a dime to the church in years.

Barnabas set a good example in sacrificial giving. The church member said of him, that was a wonderful gift. Isn't Mr. Barnabas a good man. Yet, in that group there may have been some poor man who was only able to give some meager amount. But who gave cheerfully and willingly. I'm sure that God gave him just as much credit as he did Barnabas.

(E. J. Daniels) said that in one of his churches where he preached a sermon on tithing the chairman of deacons came to him and suggested that some brother got angry with him and refused to return to church (as long as he was the preacher.) He said that was back in the days when he felt it was his duty to make every member of the church like him. He spent more time dehorning the billy goats but he learned later on that he could win a dozen sheep while he was trying to get one goat to act like a sheep. He said he went to that brother and asked him why he was offended. He said, you called me a thief and I will not let anybody call me a thief and get by with it. And the preacher asked when it was that he called him a thief - he couldn't remember. He said when you were preaching on tithing a few Sundays ago. You said that anyone who failed to bring all the tithes into

the storehouse was a thief. The preacher said, well, brother - what does the Bible say about it. The Bible called him a robber but does not call him a thief.

Now perhaps we need to have some funeral music when the offering is received because quite often a tight-wad will reach his hand in his pocket and get hold of a copper and squeeze it so hard until Lincoln thinks the Civil War has started all over again. And this man who was upset with Daniels would sing, "Oh How I Love Jesus".

Now let us look at this striking example. The failure of Christians to keep their word and it is found in the story of Ananias and Sapphira.

Acts 5:1-11.

5:1 They said, no doubt, after people began to speak about Barnabas - we could sell our land for a goodly sum. Ananias said that would be too much to give to the church. I'll tell you what we'll do said Sapphira. We could sell the land and keep most of the money and yet we could take a good sum down to the church and we could tell them that this was a sum that was received from land. And the Apostles would say God bless this fine, generous couple. These wonderful godly people - look what they are doing. And then the people would say that these people are just as fine as Barnabas.

5:2 So, the next morning they went down to the real estate office and put this land up for sale. It was probably good property and by night fall the papers had been signed and the money was in hand. That night Ananias and Sapphira divided the money into two stacks. One for the church and one for themselves. I can imagine what Sapphira said, that is too much to give to the church. Let's put a little more in our stack. We may need it in the years to come. They did not sleep much that night - they took turns watching

5:3
the money. The next morning they hid their own money and got ready to take their own money down to the church. Ananias decided to go to the church first. And give the money to the Apostles. They would commend him. Then Sapphira would make her entrance and more praise would be heaped upon them.

Ananias goes to church and he walks right down to the front and lays the money at the feet of the Apostles. He expected Peter to smile and say, "God bless you brother". But instead the preacher turned on him saying, why have you allowed Satan to fill your heart and to cause you to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back part of the price of the land. Ananias was struck dumb. He could not say a word. How did Peter know what he had done. He thought that all he had to do was to fool a mere man and here was a preacher reading his heart.

Today men think that if they can fool other men - everything is alright. So they hide their sin from man but they forget that God with his all seeing eye looks upon everything.

You can steal and no one will ever know about it. You can lie about someone or somebody, and that's all right. You can curse, you can drink, you can hate someone, you can gossip about someone but there is a god in Heaven and he knows all about it. He will call you to account. Be sure your sins will find you out. Numbers 32:23.

5:4
Peter said, you did not have to do this - the money was yours. No body was forcing you to give it. You have not lied unto man but unto God. Yes, all sin is against God and he is the one that punishes sin.

Peter asked the question "why?" and then he answered his own question.

Satan has filled your heart. Now that is the answer behind all your sins.

The sin is deep down in your heart.

How these people got into the church we do not know. They were not born again. They were not filled with the Holy Spirit. It was not the Preacher's fault that these unsaved people got into the church.

Now there are some lessons for all of us to learn.

1. They made a voluntary act of consecration. As Peter said, while the land remained unsold - it was the owner's possession. And after it was sold, and the money realized, thereby was the owner's undisputed accusation.

No one told Ananias and Sapphira that they must sell their property, in order to remain in Christian fellowship.

No one compelled them to offer the proceeds to the general fund of the church.

The inducement was the power of a godly example. They saw others making a financial sacrifice. And they thought of a way whereby they might gain like approval without making the full sacrifice.

This was to be done in the eyes of men. Likewise the acts of consecration made by Christians today are voluntary. No one is told that he must spend so much time in prayer, in order to remain in the fellowship. No one is told that he must give 1/10 of his income or more in order to be recognized as a Christian. No one is told that he must witness to so many people each week to prove that he is a true believer. These things are done by and on account of godly example and exhortation.

2. They were unaware of the seriousness of their offense.

These two people did not appear to be aware of any offense against God at all.

Peter told the husband - you have not lied to men but to God. One can not imagine that Ananias and Sapphira sat together in conference, and planned to tell a lie to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was far from their thoughts.

The Apostle asked them how they had schemed such a thing in their hearts. But it does not seem likely that either the husband or the wife felt that they were battling their wits against the Holy Spirit. They were unaware of the Holy Spirit being involved.

It is true today of Christians. They scheme, plan, and cheat - and deceive in ways that involve the Holy Spirit, who cannot ignore broken vows. But the offenders are generally unaware of their offense. They think that it concerns themselves alone. That failure is their own affair.

How is it asked the Apostle, that you have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord. They had made an agreement together to sell their land and to keep back part of the price. But it seems unlikely that they had discussed the matter to the extent of saying, let us see how far we can provoke the Holy Spirit in this way. The Holy Spirit was not in their thoughts.

Christians today, by keeping back part of the price of consecration are making vows that are speedily broken and are guilty of provoking the Holy Spirit.

No wonder you make such little progress, or no progress at all in spiritual things. The fact that you have not suffered severely is but evidence of the long suffering of God.

3. They suffered the (extreme penalty) as far as this life is concerned.

There is agreement that the offenders suffered immediate breach of fellowship with God and his people. That is what happens today to Christians that commit the same offense.

5:5
Ananias never did say anything. He stood there trembling and in a few minutes, he fell down dead. Then the young men carried him out and buried him. They had not even the resemblance of a funeral service. Peter did not kill him - God did! It is an awful thing to lie to the Holy Spirit. The Spirit comes to a man convicting him of sin. The man says, "yes", I will surrender to Christ. But if he does not do it he has lied to the Holy Spirit. The terrible thing about it is that the spirit may leave him.

Spiritual fellowship is (vertical) and (horizontal). If we say that we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not live according to the truth. The (vertical) fellowship with God is broken by cheating on consecration and broken vows. Now everyone who has fellowship with God has fellowship with the children of God.

When the (vertical) connection is broken, the (horizontal) lines are snapped as well. Spiritual fellowship between Christians are broken as a result of broken vows.

The word fellowship is used in a sloppy way by Christians - they seem to

think it is an ordinary social fellowship between believers because they both profess to be Christians. This is not so.

Spiritual fellowship is the presence of the Holy Spirit between believers.

When one party or one or both concerned have been grieved or have grieved the Holy Spirit, there is no real spiritual fellowship.

Now a couple of Christians offending the Holy Spirit may sustain fellowship on a carnal level. But they have no fellowship in love, in the Spirit.

When the judgement comes then we recognize this truth.

The Spirit says go to that man and straighten out your differences with him. Your answer is, I will certainly do that tomorrow. The next day, you say, no, I'll keep that old hatred in my heart.

The Spirit tells you tithe and you say, I'll do that - I'll start tithing the first of the month but you do not do it. You use the tithed money for yourself. You have lied to the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit says to you - go to that friend and tell him that you want him to become a Christian. You said you would do it but you have not. You have lied to the Holy Spirit. When Ananias lied, he died.

2:19
Three hours later Sapphira came in, she looked around for her husband and he was not present. She wondered what had happened. She looked up at the Apostles but they gave her no smile of approval. The crowd was strangely silent.

5:9-10
She did not understand. Then Peter spoke - did you sell the land for that much - and she said yes. That was the price. Peter said to her, you agreed with your husband to lie to the Holy Spirit. Your husband is dead and the young men who buried him are ready to bury you. She gave a sob and fell down dead and was carried out and buried by the side of Ananias. They had been together in lying to the Holy Spirit.

Now I do not know who influenced who to make such a decision. But the net result was a tragedy.

5:11
What were the results of this tragedy upon the people. More people were saved and there was greater growth in the church.

They had to get the weeds out before the flowers could grow.

If we exercise some discipline in our church, if we would cut the rolls of our church down some, and turn out some of those who are not living for Christ, I wonder if we would not have more power in the church. The big question is - where would we begin. There is no doubt however that our churches would be stronger if we set higher examples and insisted upon our members living up to these standards.

First we are told there was great fear which came upon the church. The believers said we must get right with God. Or the same thing will happen to us. It would be a good thing if God would bear his mighty arm in his churches today.

Second we notice that the hypocrites would not dare to join this church.

Third, we notice that the outsiders were moved. Multitudes were added to the church. When God works his power - things really happen.

Fourth, the preachers had more power than ever. Many signs and wonders were wrought among the people. V. 12.

A front door revival takes place when many people come down the aisle and join the church. A back door revival takes place when those that should not be in the church are put out. A church had a back door revival and the after effect was a great in-gathering.

Broken Pledging - Tuesday - Thank God - Cheryl made vow follow Lord 7 months ago. Faithful to vow - Fred - made vow - wife said some early to discipline Bullitt's - Hymn - Bob -

A preacher was holding a meeting in Toronto, Canada. The meeting was not moving very well. And one night the janitor said to the preacher -- we have some young people who are praying for revival. He said he went up to the room and there were 34 people down on their knees praying. Some of them were high school students and some college students. They were not saying prayers but they were really praying. There was much weeping and God's power was upon them. When one person would finish praying another would say, my sister is lost, or my father is a drunkard. And then someone else would pray. This sort of prayer continued until midnight. And they prayed this way each night. On Friday morning it began to rain and it rained all day. And about 7 o'clock that night, the preacher said, oh Lord, I don't understand it. We have been praying for revival. But that night, by the time of the service, the auditorium was filled and by count 258 young people walked the aisle in what people declared was the greatest service they ever witnessed in the church. The meeting closed with a victory - what did it? Not just the preaching. Nor -- people began to confess their failings and their broken vows and come back into the ways of God.

asked and talking had left years -

If Ananias and Sapphira had been better acquainted with the Hebrew Scriptures, they would have not trifled with God. But if we turn to what a wise man had to say, Ecc. 5:1-2, 4-6, watch your step when you go to the house of God. To draw near to listen is better than to offer the sacrifice of fools. For they do not realize that they are doing evil. Be not rash with your mouth, nor let your heart be hasty to utter the word before God, for God is in Heaven and you are upon earth. Therefore, let your words be few.

When you vow a vow to God - do not delay paying it. For he has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you vow. It is better that you should not vow than to vow and not pay. Let ^{not} your mouth lead you into sin. And do not say before the messenger that it was a mistake. Why should God be angry at your voice and destroy the work of your hands.

When a man in the Air Force - he receives his orders by direction of the President. Ordering him to active duty. He goes promptly. It is true when they have volunteered - but once he has been accepted - he neither argues, delays, or disobeys. But he respects authority.

Now you may error in judgement by parking your car in a no parking zone. And come back and find a ticket tied to the windshield. It informs that you have transgressed and that you are required to appear at the traffic bureau, on a certain day. Now you neither argue, delay, nor disobey. But you respect the law. The law has the power to make you keep your obligations.

How much more then should I respect the power of Almighty God. The trouble with too many Christians - they forget that God is Lord of all. Therefore watch your step when you go to God's House. The very thought of foolishness is sin to God. It is foolish to trifle with vows.

V. 1 - Be reverent and ready to listen. Too often prayer is a one-sided affair. We say (listen Lord), thy servant speaketh. Instead of speak Lord, thy servant heareth.

V. 2 - Don't be rash - don't rush. Dr. Orrs said when his second son was born he soon discovered that he was going to miss more sleep than in previous instances. His wife had a program of feeding the infant 2, 6, 10. Every four hours, my wife knew the program. So did the doctor, and so did the family -- but apparently the little baby didn't. He seemed not to offer an alternative schedule.

So he said he found himself with two problems - one was how to get the sufficient sleep he needed. And the other was how to maintain a devotional schedule. So the thought struck him one night - I asked the Lord to let the baby sleep between his 10 o'clock feeding and his 6 in the morning one. And I promised to get up at 6 for my quiet time - it was a wonderful idea. It seems scarcely impossible to happen. I did not tell my wife of my resolution - he says I slept well. And the next waking moment was caused by the baby's whimper, 3 minutes before six. I went back to bed - three mornings in succession this happened. And I found the warmth of the bed too inviting - compared to the chill of the English morning and the fire died down in my heart. From then on the baby continued in his own manner and I missed more sleep than ever.

Some vows originate in pride - God resists the pride and gives grace to the humble. It is better to say the Lord enabling me - I will do thus and so. And then to seek the necessary grace with a humble heart.

Solomon says let not your mouth lead you into sin. If a man's tongue promises more than he fulfills, he thereby grieves the Holy Spirit. And the moment the man grieves the Spirit, he suffers a loss, of which the temptor is well aware.

Broken vows bring Spiritual weakness. Spiritual weakness brings temptations. And these bring sin.

Too often when Christians make a vow and fail to keep it - he will explain it away as a mistake, or an error of judgement. In most cases it is not a mistake - it is that he falls short of the mark that is definitely sin. For the Christian would not make a promise which he is incapable of fulfilling.

Why should God be angry with us. Not all our prayers are acceptable. If one regards iniquity in one's heart -- the Lord will not hear him.

A broken vow is a sin of omission. It is also a commission of an a front to God. It must be confessed as sin, before fellowship can be completely restored. It is necessary for God to bring our schemes to naught. In order that we may not waste our time and our effort to build with wood, hay, and stubble.

*Broken vows -
Faith lead to
tragedy lead to
glory!*

mind your V - -