

The Spiritual Atmosphere of the Church

April 19, 2026 / [Acts 4:23-5:12](#)

Moving Forward – Series

The Spiritual Atmosphere of the Church

Pastor Brent Snook · April 19, 2026 · AM Service

Text: [Acts 4:23-5:14](#)

“If we will set ourselves afire for Jesus Christ, people will come to watch us burn.”

Most professions require ongoing training in order to move forward. But if we as a church want to move forward, we don't need to look ahead at the innovative and creative — we need to look **backward**. The early church in Acts has what we want and what we need. Let's look back so we can move forward.

“In the Gospels, we see Christ crucified and risen. In Acts, we see Christ ascended and exalted. In the Gospels, the Christian life was modeled by a perfect Man. In Acts, it is modeled by imperfect men.”

I. THE PRAYER OF A NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

[Acts 4:29-33](#) — The secret of the strength of the early church was its prayer meetings. Prayer is our most powerful weapon. When the apostles were threatened and commanded to stop preaching, they went straight to prayer.

A. The Perspective of Earthshaking Prayer — [Acts 4:24-28](#)

1. They saw God as Creator — Those who threatened them were creatures. God was the Creator. Glance at your problems — then gaze on your God.

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” — [Genesis 1:1](#)

2. They saw God as Controller — God did not wind up the universe and let it spin. They knew their Bible and knew that what was happening was exactly what God said would happen.

B. The Pursuit of Earthshaking Prayer — [Acts 4:29](#)

What got them into trouble? Speaking the Word of God. What were they now praying for? Not ease. Not comfort. They were praying for **boldness** and **courage** — to do it some more.

*“Do not pray for easy lives. Pray to be stronger men and women. Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers. Pray for powers equal to your tasks.” — **Phillips Brooks***

C. The **Power** of Earthshaking Prayer — [Acts 4:31, 33](#)

"...they were all filled with the Holy Ghost..." Jesus has gone to Heaven — but He still has a body on earth. His body is the Church.

"And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all." — [Acts 4:33](#)

They became witnesses. The whole community was filled with the love of Christ — care, concern, and compassion were evident. The church was moving forward.

II. THE PURITY OF A NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

[Acts 5:1](#) — Satan could not conquer the church, so he tried to corrupt it. Enter Ananias and Sapphira.

A. The **Crime** Against Purity — [Acts 4:34–5:3](#)

Barnabas had sold everything he had and gave it all to the apostles. Ananias and Sapphira also sold property — but secretly kept back a portion while pretending to give it all. It was no sin to own property. It was no sin to keep a portion. The sin was **jealousy, covetousness, and hypocrisy**.

The Holy Spirit had heard their conversation, knew the market price of the land, and walked beside Ananias all the way to the church — prodding his conscience and troubling his soul.

"Hypocrisy makes it more difficult to reach people for Christ than almost anything else."

"Better is little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble therewith." — [Proverbs 15:16](#)

B. The **Chastening** Appointed for Purity — [Acts 5:4–10](#)

It is serious to tell a lie. More serious to lie to a judge. Serious beyond words to lie to God. *"Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God."* — Those were the last words Ananias ever heard. He dropped dead. Three hours later, Sapphira came in — and the same fate fell upon her.

Sin will harden any heart. First it is exciting. Then boring. Finally, the conscience grows dead and sensitivity to sin disappears. Friend — if sin is left to fester in your heart, it will kill your walk with God, your Bible study, your prayer life, your family's spiritual walk, and your influence for Jesus.

"Be sure your sin will find you out." — [Numbers 32:23](#)

C. The **Cause** Associated with Purity — [Acts 5:11–14](#)

The Holy Spirit had acted in judgment — now He could act in blessing. The news spread quickly. The church was not only a **happy** place — it was a **holy** place. People didn't join that church unless they meant business.

"And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women." — [Acts 5:14](#)

The church was pure. The church was powerful.

III. THE PURPOSE OF A NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

A. The Hand of God Was **Unhindered** — [Acts 5:12a](#)

When a church gets on fire, gets clean, begins to live right, and gets sin out of their lives — God's power begins to flow. People are born again. Christians get right with God. Lives are changed.

"And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people." — [Acts 5:12a](#)

B. The Hearts of the People Were **Unified** — [Acts 5:12b](#)

Jesus said — *"A house divided cannot stand."* Paul warns us to mark and avoid those who cause division in the church. Unity must be **in Jesus** — and that kind of unity begins where we started: **prayer**.

"Make every effort to keep the unity and the spirit in the bond of peace." — [Ephesians 4:3](#)

Crack, cocaine, alcohol, and sexual temptation have slain their thousands — but bickering, quarreling, and criticism in the church have slain their ten thousands. The devil would rather start a church fuss than open a porno shop.

— **Moving Forward** —

If we are going to be a New Testament church, we must follow the first-century church in its Prayer, its Purity, and its Purpose.

- **The Prayer** of a New Testament Church — bold, persistent, and earthshaking
- **The Purity** of a New Testament Church — holy living allows us to experience God's best
- **The Purpose** of a New Testament Church — unhindered by sin, unified in Christ