

“In Thy Power”

No. 41

Introduction.

I. The text of our lesson today is found in Acts 5:1-4.

1 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession,

2 and kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back part of the price of the land?

4 While it remained, did it not remain thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thy power? How is it that thou hast conceived this thing in thy heart? thou has not lied unto men, but unto God.

II. From this reading I call your attention to Peter's powerful question "was it not in thy power?" This question is filled with lessons for our modern age. There are many things within our power.

I. **Children** - Our children are within our power.

A. God has given us the privilege and the power to direct and control the lives of our children as we choose.

1. A **little boy came to his father one evening** while he was reading the paper and put his arms around his dad. He said, "Daddy, I want to thank you for all the food that you have bought and for all the clothes you have given me. I want to thank you for taking me to the ball game last night and for everything else. But, Daddy, what have you done to help me get to heaven?"

2. Wow, what a question! This is a question that every father and mother should ask themselves, "**What have we done to help our children get to heaven?**"

a. This little boy **struck at a weakness** in most fathers and mothers. Most parents will do about anything for their children. They will work day and night that they may have food and clothing and many of the luxuries of life. They would sell all their possessions in order that one of their children might have a needed operation or a good education. In fact, if need be they would even give up their lives for their children.

b. Many of these same parents, however, show little concern for the spiritual welfare of their children. They do very little, if anything, to get their children into heaven and keep them out of the fires of hell.

B. **Parents need to become more interested in the spiritual training of their children.**

1. Parents should **teach** them to love God and obey His commandments. (Matt. 22:37, 38).

2. Parents should also **set a Christian example** for their children to follow. Parents wield a tremendous influence over their children. Children imitate them in most of what they say and do.

a. It would be interesting to know how many thousands of little girls throughout the land have **aprons** just like their mothers. It would be interesting to know how many little boys have **tool boxes** just like their daddies. It would be interesting to know how many children love God and the Bible because their parents love them. Likewise, it would be interesting to know how many young people curse and drink and steal and do many other evil things so they can be like their parents.

b. It is impossible to overemphasize the importance of parental example.

3. A little girl with shining eyes-
Her little face aglow
Said: "Daddy, it's almost time
For Sunday School. Let's go.
They teach us there of Jesus' love,
Of how he died for all
Upon the cruel cross to save
Those who on him will call"

"Oh no," said Daddy, "Not today.
I've worked hard all this week
And I must have one day of rest.
I'm going to the creek,
For there I can relax and rest.
The fishing's fine, they say.
So run along; don't bother me,
We'll go to church some day."

Months and years have passed away.
But Daddy hears that plea no more:
"Let's go to Sunday school."
Those childhood days are o'er.
And now that Daddy's growing old,
When life is almost through,
He finds the time to go to church,
But what does daughter do?

She says: "Oh, Daddy, not today -
I stayed up most all night,
And I've just got to have some sleep,
Besides, I look a fright."
Then Daddy lifts a trembling hand
To brush away his tears.
As again he hears the pleading voice
Distinctly through the years.
He sees a small girl's shining face
Upturned, with eyes aglow
as she says, "It's time for Sunday School
Please, Daddy, won't you go?"

4. This poem brings to mind the old adage, "As the twig is bent, so will be the tree."

- a. Let us not forget this saying as we raise our children.
- b. Let us also remember the words of Solomon. (Prov. 22:6).

II. Time - Our time is within our power.

A. We have the power to utilize our time for useful purposes or waste it.

1. The scriptures teaches us to use our time wisely. (Col. 4:5).
2. The word rendered "redeeming" in this verse means to "rescue" or "recover" our time from waste.

B. As Christians we should rescue our time from waste for several reasons.

1. First, time should not be wasted because **it is precious.**

a. **A news dispatch released some time ago told of 2 men under the sentence of death.** These men felt they would be deprived of an hour of life if they were put to death by daylight savings time, so they applied to the warden to have the clock in the death house returned to standard time. Time was very precious to these men.

b. Time is very precious to all of us, especially when we see it slipping by so fast.

1) It is said when **Queen Elizabeth** of England was dying she exclaimed, "All my possessions for a moment of time."

2) **Thomas Edison** said,

"Time is the most important thing in the world. Character may be lost and regained. Lost friends may be regained or new ones won. Silver and gold may be taken from us, but time can regain them. But time cannot be recalled."

3) Someone has said:

“When as a child I laughed and wept, time crept;
When as a youth I laughed and talked, time walked;
When I became a full-grown man, time ran;
When older still I daily grew, time flew;
Soon I shall find in traveling on, time gone.”

2. Second, time should not be wasted because we are **stewards of time**.
 - a. A steward is “a person entrusted with something not his own.”
 - b. This means applied to time that it is not ours. It is God’s and we have only been entrusted with it. Some day we will render account for the way we have used our time.
- C. Let us consider some ways we should use our time.
1. We should use part of our time **making a living**. (2 Thess. 3:10; 1 Tim. 5:8).
 2. We should use part of our time **thinking of the past**.
 - a. It is sometimes good to remember the past.
 - 1) Most of us have a storehouse of precious memories which we like to recall.
 - 2) There are also thousands of lessons that can be learned from the past. All of us have done good things and make mistakes that we can profit from.
 - b. Although it is sometimes good to remember the past we should not live in it.
 - 1) Some let the past ruin their present happiness. They do this by not accepting God’s forgiveness.
 - 2) Others let the past destroy their present happiness by continually pining over the death of a love one. They leave a certain room and certain pieces of furniture as they were when the loved one was alive. Often they pull the shades and isolate themselves from the world.
 - c. It is good to have souvenirs, and get them out and reminisce occasionally but we should put them back in the trunk and go back to living in the present.
 3. We should use part of our time **planning the future**.
 - a. It is not wrong for a person to plan the future. In fact, it is wise
 - b. It is **wrong to spend time worrying about the future**. (Matt. 6:34).
 - c. It is also **wrong to plan the future without God**. (Jas. 4:13-15).
 4. We should use part of our time to **study and pray**.
 - a. The scriptures teach us to meditate on God’s word day and night. (Psa. 1:1,2).
 - b. The scriptures teach we should be men and women of pray. (Col. 4:2; 1 Thess. 5:17).
 5. We should use part of our time to **worship and examine ourselves** to see if we are living in harmony with God’s will.
 6. We should use part of our time to **laugh and play**. Most of us do not take enough time to smell the roses. This accelerated pace is destroying us.
 7. We should use part of our time to **visit and encourage others** of Christ.
 - a. Much good can be accomplished by these visits.

b. They will also bring pleasure to our lives.

III. **Money** - Our money is within our power.

- A. We can hoard our money like the rich fool or we can waste it or we can give sacrificially as the poor widow.
- B. The Lord teaches, however, that we should give cheerfully as we have been prospered. (1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 9:7).
 - 1. The Lord has been very mindful of us. He has blessed us with automobiles, homes, food, clothes, and countless other things.
 - 2. In view of these blessings we should give a generous portion of our income back to him.
 - 3. **Once a visitor went to a hospital to see a wounded soldier.** He asked, "How did you lose your arm? The soldier replied, "I didn't lose it, I gave it." He had willingly sacrificed to promote a cause greater than himself. This is the spirit we must have toward the cause of Christ. We must willingly give that the Lord's work be done.

IV. **Influence** - Our influence is within our power.

- A. We possess the power to live like a child of God or like the child of the devil.
- B. Christ stressed we should live to God's glory. (Matt. 5:13-16; 18:6).
- C. Paul said. (Rom. 14:7).
- D. Whether we are conscious of it or not someone is being influence by our example. Someone is being made better or worse by the example we are setting. We cannot escape this fact.

"The slightest breeze that ever blew
Some slender grass has wavered;
The smallest life I ever knew
Some other life has flavored.

We cannot live our lives alone,
For others lives we touch
Are either strengthened by our own,
Or weakened just as much."

V. **Salvation Of Others** - The salvation of others is within our power.

- A. The salvation of thousands of people right here in this area alone depends upon us as members of the Lord's church. If we do not teach these people the gospel, they will be lost because they will die without the Savior of the world.
- B. Brethren, we must **share Christ or lose Him.** We are only kidding ourselves when we think warming a pew several times a week is going to get us to heaven. We are only deceiving ourselves when we think mere knowledge or possession of the gospel will save us. We must take the gospel to others or perish.

Conclusion.

- I. **Our souls are also within our power.** Though we cannot earn or merit salvation, God expects us to accept His grace by faith. We must act. (Acts 2:40; Phil. 2:12).
- II. God has created us as **creatures of choice.**
 - A. He has given us the power to choose our destiny. We can choose to spend eternity with Satan or we can choose to spend it with God. Those who would spend it with God must be buried with the Lord in baptism and come forth from the watery grave to serve Him. They must detest evil and do good.
 - B. If you are not a follower of Christ or are subject to the invitation in any other way, we urge you to come as we sing the song of encouragement.

