

Living on Shades of Death Road

by Phil Beach Jr.

Phil Beach Jr. emphasizes the necessity of living in the shadow of the cross to experience true transformation and fruitfulness in the Christian life.

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Scripture: Acts 5:1

Topics: "Christian Life", "Living in the Light", "Repentance"

Description

Phil Beach Jr. emphasizes the urgent need for believers to hear God's voice and align their lives with His will, especially in a time of widespread deception and apostasy. He warns against the dangers of living in duplicity and highlights the necessity of repentance and transparency, using the story of Ananias and Sapphira to illustrate the consequences of deception within the church. Beach calls for a return to the 'Shades of Death Road,' a metaphor for living in the shadow of the cross, where true transformation and fruitfulness occur through brokenness and surrender to Christ. He challenges the congregation to consider whether they truly desire to be part of a church where God's presence is evident and sin is dealt with swiftly. Ultimately, he encourages a life of humility and a willingness to let God expose darkness in order to experience His light and power.

Transcript

The Lord is very, very, very much searching for a people, listen closely, who will hear his voice and understand what he's saying. Very, very much wanting a people to hear his voice. It requires in this late hour of apostasy and deception, a very earnest heart, a very diligent heart, one that cannot be lazy, one that cannot take the things of God for granted.

Listen, God's people will not be able to drink of the spirit of this world and at the same time expect God to commit himself to them and will not be able to do it. All darkness, all deception, all forms of duplicity, everything in our lives that does not line up to the standard of Christ must come under the scrutiny of God's spirit and we must be brought to the place where in cooperation with God's spirit, we are willing to acknowledge our sin, confess our sin, and repent and turn from our sin, whatever it might be. Religion will go on right to the very last hour, just like it has been going on since the very beginning, prior to Paul's departure.

He began to sense that religion started entering into the body of Christ. Religion is substituting Christ for something else. You know, anti-Christ not only means against Christ, it means instead of Christ.

Instead of Christ. The presence of religion in our life is not only those things that are against Christ, but those things that are instead of Christ, taking the place of Christ. But as I, you can turn your Bibles to Acts if you like and we're going to read a portion of Scripture that indicates the measure of God's presence that was working within the early church.

This little message this morning is entitled, Shades of Death Road, Shades of Death Road. But this particular portion of Scripture indicates, beloved, the measure of God's presence that was present in the early church. I would invite you to read along with me.

I'm going to read out loud, you can read to yourself. And just consider the incredible incident that we're about to read in light of today. And ask yourself this question.

Do you want to be a part of a body where the authority of Jesus Christ is present in the same measure that we read of it in the book of Acts chapter 5? Do you want to be a part of a body such as we're going to read about here? This is a very serious question that we have to ask ourselves because in response to our prayer, God, we want fruitfulness, we want fruit that lasts, we want enlargement. Lord, we want you to do something in our midst. This is the response from God's heart.

We've got to reconsider where we're living and make a necessary decision in agreement with God that we're going to move to Shades of Death Road. Now certainly I'm not referring to literally everybody moving to Shades of Death Road. But as I was walking down Shades of Death Road, I realized that God was saying, Son, I'm going to walk with you only on Shades of Death Road.

The church wants God to walk with her. We want God to walk with us. And God is saying, I will not walk with you except it be on Shades of Death Road, at the cross, the place of the cross, where you understand that all that you are in your sinful, selfish self has got to be set aside.

God will not meet the church on any other basis than death by faith through Jesus Christ. And it is only to the measure that we allow God to appropriate in us and through us that shadow of the cross that God will meet us in a marvelous way. Acts chapter 5, but a certain man named Ananias with Sapphira, his wife, sold a possession.

Now let me first of all say this, that during this particular time in the church's history, it was very common for the believers to sell possessions. Let me make it very clear that this movement within the church in selling possessions had nothing to do with a charismatic leader standing up in front of a pulpit, admonishing God's people to sell what they had and give it to their ministry, and God will return it to them a hundredfold. Bonkers! It had nothing to do with a charismatic leader trying to manipulate God's people into thinking that if they sold something and gave it to that ministry, they would prosper.

It's not in there. The selling of possessions and homes and lands and taking the money and laying it at the apostles' feet was a movement within the body wholly initiated by Jesus through the Holy Spirit working within the hearts of the people of God. There was no ministry in the front of the people orchestrating and initiating such a thing.

Nowadays, there's always a man or a ministry trying to get people to do that, and 99.9% of the time, it's not God. The early church was so deeply united to Jesus Christ in spirit and so radically transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit, God so released them from earthly possessions and earthly things and the desire for things that they willingly, at the movement of the Holy Spirit, sold everything that they had and

willingly gave it so that they could be in a state where they're completely free from anything that would hinder them. From obeying the Lord.

But I want to emphasize that this movement that we're going to read about was happening throughout the early church for many, many years, but it wasn't being conducted by some hireling, by some so-called prophet or apostle. They sold a possession. Now, what the early church was doing was this.

Organically, it was God moving. They were selling things, laying it at the feet of the apostles, and then it was being distributed. It wasn't being used to buy Cadillacs.

It wasn't being used to build personal kingdoms for the twelve apostles. The very ones that were there when they went to the gate, beautiful, and there was a lame man. What did they say? Silver and gold have I none.

Silver and gold have I none. Nowadays, preachers make you think if you don't have money, you got the spirit of poverty upon you. But yet, Peter and John said silver and gold have I none.

They were a part of this movement. The church was laying at their feet the money that they got from selling homes and lands and property. But yet, Peter and John said silver and gold have I none.

They weren't pocketing the money, beloved. They didn't see dollar signs in the eyes of God's people and woe unto every preacher that looks at eyes and calculates what the tithe's going to be. Woe unto every preacher that does it.

Because God will judge them. Making merchandise of the house of God. Peddling the word of God.

Trying to get rich off of people. Away with such foolishness. Away with it.

Backslidden preachers. Given over to lying devils who talk to them and they think it's the Holy Spirit. Deceived spirits.

Hearts are calloused before God. Shepherds that feed on the flock and get rich off the flock of God. Let me tell you, when God puts together His remnant in this last hour who have learned to live at the shadow of death, in the shades of death, there's going to be such a demonstration, such a revelation of the light and purity of God.

Men are going to tremble. Devils are going to cry out. Sinners are going to tremble in Zion, the Bible says.

The light is going to come. God's house is going to be light. It's going to be holiness.

It's going to be righteousness. It's going to be a corporate manifestation of all that Jesus is in glory. My house shall be called a house of prayer, but you've made it what? A den of thieves.

A place where buying and selling was going on. A place where men were getting profits. God's against it.

So, Anais and Sapphira sold a possession. Listen, they were doing just like everyone else was doing. But there is a difference between their act and everyone else's act.

And kept back part of the price. Now, listen. Pay attention, please, to the word.

There was no sin in selling a possession and keeping part of it back. Nobody told them to sell it. It wasn't a rule of the church.

So, we're still not dealing with the sin yet. But, keeping part back of the price was not a sin. And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it.

And brought a certain part and laid it at the apostle's feet. But Peter, who's this talking now? The one who said, silver and gold have I none. But Peter said, Anais, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost and to keep back part of the price of the land? Listen carefully.

While it remained, was it not thine own? And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. Satan filled Anais and Sapphira's heart to do something that was dreadful. The sin was not selling a possession, nor was the sin keeping part of it back.

Because Peter said, wasn't it yours before you sold it? And then after you sold it, wasn't it in the power of your hand to do with it what you wanted? The sin was this. Anais and Sapphira gave the impression that they were giving everything. But they secretly held some back for themselves.

The sin was deception. They were being deceptive. They were being a phony.

They were wanting people to get a wrong impression about themselves. Now, if they had come to Peter and said, Peter, we just sold this possession for \$10,000 and we've kept \$5,000 for ourselves, but we'd like to give this to the saints so that it can be distributed, Peter probably would have said, bless God. But they took the money and gave \$5,000 and gave the impression that they gave all of the purchase of the possession and kept back some privately for themselves.

They were being deceitful. Let me tell you something. The Bible says in verse number three, Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie? Satan is the author of deception.

When you are deceiving somebody in whatever form it is, in whatever manner it is, beloved, know this, that Satan is in and on and upon you. Satan filled their hearts to lie against the Holy Spirit. The devil is always behind deception.

Now, do you remember the question that I asked earlier before we started? Do you want to be a part of a church that has the presence of God in it so strongly that such an act of deception would be immediately dealt with on the spot? Don't be quick to say yes or no. It's a rhetorical question, one that simply necessitates much thought and ponder. What happened to Ananias and Sapphira? Verse number five, And Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and gave up the ghost.

And great fear came on all them that heard these things. And the young man arose, wound him up, and carried him out and buried him. What happened to Ananias as a result of lying against the Holy Ghost? He dropped dead.

Really, it's not, it's not, listen carefully. This was not, this was not necessarily the result of lying against the Holy Ghost. This was the result of God bringing this lie into light.

When God begins to move in a body like this, sin is dealt with and exposed. Verse number seven, And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. And Peter

answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much.

You see what's going on here? Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? You see what they did? Let's sell this possession for ten thousand dollars and tell the church that we sold it for five thousand. Let's give them five thousand dollars and give the impression that we sold everything we have and gave it to the church. When in reality, we kept back part of it for ourself.

This principle of deception is running rampant in the church today. This principle of giving the impression of something that is not true is running rampant in the house of God today. And where would we stand if God suddenly began to raise up Peter's, who would look into the eyes of a certain Annias and Sapphira and say, Why hast thou done this? Satan filled your heart to lie against the Holy Spirit of God.

Do you think it'll happen? I do. Verse 10, Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost. And the young men came in and found her dead, and carrying her forth, buried her by her husband.

And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things. Turn your Bibles to Revelation chapter 1, verse 12. This is the revelation that John had been given from the angel.

Verse 12, Revelation 1, And I turned to see the voice that spoke with me, and being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks. The seven golden candlesticks was a picture given to John representing the seven churches in Asia Minor, which represent the church age. It represents the whole church.

So John saw the church, the seven golden candlesticks, but watch what else he saw. And where, what does it say? And in the midst of the seven candlesticks, one like it under the Son of Man. John saw Jesus where? In the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.

Jesus Christ is not somewhere far off where he cannot see. He is in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. He is right in the midst of our lives.

He is in the midst of our homes. He is in the midst of our fellowshiping. And he is beholding and seeing and listening and taking notes, if I might use that word.

And he is observing everything that's going on. There he is in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. Now Acts chapter five is a direct result of Jesus Christ very intimately in the midst of the early church beholding the very motives and intents of the hearts of those that name the name of the Lord.

And in this instant brought swift judgment to sin. I believe that when the church in this late hour of apostasy cooperates with the Lord sufficiently enough through faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ to where we are effectually by the power of the Spirit of God living on shades of death road. We're living in the shadow of the cross.

The principle of the cross is the principle that we live by. I believe that when this happens anywhere we're going to see the same kind of dealings that we see in Acts chapter five. Christ is going to deal with sin within the church and great fear will come upon many people.

Are we prepared to let the Lord work in our lives in this manner? To live at the valley of the shadow of death is to experience an unceasing uninterrupted flow. Listen of God's will and God's word into our lives continuously necessitating a readjustment on our part to align ourselves to the dealing of God in our life.

Shades of death road.

There is no inheritance to inherit. There is no blessing to receive. There is no fullness to enter into apart from accepting our lot of having to come by faith to where we cling to the old rugged cross.

Not in word only but allowing it to challenge the very motives and intents of our heart. The very motives and intents of our heart. This is the way to fruitfulness.

Let me direct you to a story in the New Testament. John chapter five. We've read it many times.

John chapter six, excuse me. Beginning in verse one, listen carefully. After these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee which is the sea of Tiberias and a great multitude followed him because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased.

And Jesus went up into a mountain and there he sat with his disciples. And the Passover, a feast of the Jew was nigh and Jesus then lifted up his eyes and saw a great company come to him. He said to Philip, where shall we buy bread that these may eat? And this he said to prove him for he himself knew what he would do.

Philip answered him, 200 penny worth of bread is not sufficient for them that every one of them may take a little. Listen carefully. One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother said unto him, boys, it's not time for that.

One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother said, brother, saith unto him, listen, there is a lad here which hath five barley loaves and two small fishes, but what are they among so many? And Jesus said, make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down and number about 5,000, listen.

And Jesus took the loaves and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples and the disciples to them that were set down and likewise of the fishes as much as they would. Now listen, so many times we'll read this and we'll say, well, certainly what Jesus is saying here is just give everything you have to him. But I don't think this is what the Lord's after.

Don't think this is what the Lord's after. First of all, the numbers five and two are very significant. Two fish and five barley loaves.

The number two is representative of a testimony. In the New Testament, two oftentimes represents the testimony of Christ. Two witnesses in the book of Revelation.

Two sons, the prodigal and the elder. Two represents the body ministry. Five is representative of the ministry within the body, not apart from the body, not separate from the body, not the clergy and then the laity idea.

But five represents the ministry, the five-fold ministry within the body. The gifted ministries that God's placed within the body. What Jesus is saying here is this, there is no way that we will have bread to provide for the need that is before us unless we unswervingly and unconditionally not offer what we have to God, but offer ourselves to God.

We have got to give ourselves. The whole ministry and the church has to give itself to Jesus. And only in the hands of Jesus who breaks the bread, you will never know fruitfulness until you have experienced in a

very real way the brokenness that only comes in the hands of Jesus Christ.

Only in brokenness will the church know fruitfulness. Only in brokenness will the church know spiritual multiplication. Only in brokenness will the ministry accomplish the intent that God ordained it for.

The ministry in Ephesians chapter four is intended to bring the word and life to the body that together we all might grow up into Him in all things, and that we together might attain to the full stature of Christ, and thereby become a body through whom the living head, Jesus Christ, is manifesting the full stature of His person. The only way that will happen is if the two fish and the five barley loaves are handed over to Jesus Christ. We've got to get our lives out of our own hands.

We've got to get our lives out of the hands of the church. The ministry's got to get their lives out of the hands of men and systems and ecclesiastical orders. The ministry and the church together need to place their lives in the hands of Jesus, and only in the hands of Jesus Christ as He breaks us and as He brings us down and as He reveals to us the way of the cross, the way of the Lamb, as He shows us the areas of darkness in our life, and by revelation and by the word of God, purges us and cleanses us and breaks us and brings us down to nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing.

Then out of that nothingness, out of that brokenness, out of that humility, Christ will make us bread. Bread that will feed the hungry. There's no easy way.

There's no other way. There's no other plan. The only plan is give your life to Jesus Christ and let Him break you.

Let Him break you. Don't be afraid. Let Him break you.

John chapter 12. I'm closing with this. John chapter 12, beginning in verse 20.

Who brings the water every week? Oh, okay. Thank you, Norman. John chapter 12.

Beloved, listen closely. All right? Read this story. It's only about ten verses with me.

I'm closing on this, and let's think together about the profound truth that Jesus is teaching here. This has to go with the spirit of death is the way to life. Verse 20, chapter 12, book of John, and there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast.

The same came, therefore, to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus. All right, are we getting the picture here? Chapter 12, verse 20, the book of John. We've got Greeks who are talking to Philip and said, Philip, we want to see Jesus.

They wanted to meet Jesus, all right? Now, watch what happens. Philip cometh and told Andrew, and Andrew and Philip together went and told Jesus. Now, what would be the normal response from a normal person if somebody wanted to meet him? Oh, either, all right, or, well, tell him I can't talk to him now, but maybe make an appointment, or, you know, something reasonable like that.

Now, listen to what Jesus says. This first of all goes to show you how dead Jesus was to being impressed by men, or how dead He was to the thought of other people coming to know Him. He had no self-glory, no self-exaltation.

There was nothing in Him that gloried in the fact that people wanted to see Him. Nowadays, the more important a person gets in the Christian world in the eyes of men, the more important this person thinks they really are and how deceiving that is. It's not who knows you.

It's not how many people know you. It's not how many people look up to you. It's not how many people are writing you or calling you or know about you or talk about you.

That has nothing to do with anything. And Jesus answered them saying, the hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. What an incredible response to His two disciples who simply came and said, Jesus, there's a few Greeks out here that want to talk to you.

The hour has come that the Son of Man must be glorified. Uh, um, excuse me, Lord. I feel the spirit of Jesse Duplinis coming upon me.

What's his name? Jesse Duplinis? What a comedian. But, you know, uh, excuse me, Jesus. Um, that's a really profound truth.

The Son of Man is about to be glorified. But I just got done telling you, Lord, that two men want to see you. The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified.

Uh, Earth calling Jesus. Earth calling Jesus. Did you hear me? Did I make it plain to you? I think that's a great theological truth, Jesus.

But again, people want to talk to you. Hello? What should I tell them? Are you available? Maybe you'll see him tomorrow? Hello? Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat. Stop right there.

The corn of wheat that Jesus is referring to now is himself. Himself. Jesus is the corn of wheat.

Now, remember, listen closely. What was the initial question? We want to see Jesus. Jesus very well knew that these men wanted to see him.

But what they didn't know was Jesus' way of revealing himself to them, and not only them, but to the world. It wasn't the will of God to reveal Jesus as a one-person man to the world. That wasn't God's plan.

This was God's plan. Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone. But if it die, it brings forth much fruit.

The death of Jesus and the resurrection of Jesus and the ascension of Jesus brought forth the fruit of a many-membered body that would be impregnated with his very life. So the fact of the matter is, when these Greeks said, we want to see Jesus, Jesus was responding properly. Andrew and Philip didn't have a clue at that time what he was talking about.

But what Jesus was saying is this, you're going to see me, but it's going to be a different kind of revelation. You're going to see me multiplied and reproduced. That is, my life and my nature and my character.

You're going to see me reproduced in thousands and thousands as soon as I get done with the mission that God has called me to do to become an atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world. I'm going to go back up to heaven and then I'm going to come again in the Holy Ghost and impregnate people who call upon me with my very life and I'm going to call them my body. So that when you see them, you're going to see me and my life and my nature and my character.

That's the nature of the body of Christ. We're not an organization. We're not run by men.

We're not a religious system. We are a living organism impregnated with the very life of the Son of God. That's why it's imperative that we know the principle of death because only as I die to what I am in my sin, does Christ get more and more place in me as the resurrection and the life.

Huh. Then Jesus went on to say here, he that loveth his life shall lose it and he that hates his life in this world shall keep it unto eternal life. The principle of the cross and fruitfulness is demonstrated in the very Son of God Himself.

Jesus wanted all men to know who he was, but he did not go the way of man. He went the way of the cross in order for God to reveal who he was. No personal glory for Jesus, though he deserved every bit of it.

No personal exhortation for Jesus, though he deserved every bit of it. When men wanted to see Jesus, Jesus said, I'm sorry, I have to hide. When men wanted to make Jesus king, he slipped out and went his way.

When men wanted to place him on a pedestal, he refused. Why? Because he wasn't deserving of it? Absolutely not. But because he was demonstrating in his person the principle of the cross.

The way of fruitfulness is dying and takes up her residence on shades of death road. The effects, Acts chapter 5, Annihilus and Sapphira, all darkness, all sin. Remember that prophetic word this morning, beloved.

It was, in fact, singling out a particular sin in a particular person's life. God dealt with gossip, the spirit of gossip. God will move like this as we continue to pray, as we continue to call on him.

Because as we call on him, what we're saying is, Lord, we want more light. And the more light that God brings, then the less darkness can be in our midst. No gossip, phonies will be exposed.

Hypocrisy will be exposed. The works of darkness will be exposed. Impurity will be exposed.

Do we want to gather together for the Lord to do this? We don't want religion. We want Jesus Christ. To come forth.

I'm closing. There is a travail in the spirit going on. God is birthing his word into our hearts.

He's birthing the revelation of the cross corporately in our midst. It's going to result in God exposing darkness. Let's be prepared.

Let's walk in humility before God. And let's let God have his way in our lives. Are you going to move to shades of death road? I hope you do.

Because it's only there that God will meet you, and bless you, and prosper you, and give you an inheritance. No other place but at the shadow. Of the cross.

Father, thank you for your word. Thank you for your presence. Lord, I'm asking that you'll continue by the Holy Spirit to intercede and travail and bring to birth into us all that you intend.

And only, Lord, as we meet you at the altar of sacrifice, Mount Moriah, Golgotha, Calvary, the Valley of Acre, only as we meet you there will we know the fruitfulness and the expansion that you want to do in and through us. Father, I pray your hand on us. Help us to take our lives and give them to you so that you might break us.

Only broken bread will feed the multitude. Lord, in Jesus' name, prosper this, I pray. Amen and amen.

Praise the Lord. Make sure everybody gets a bulletin.

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