

Sermon Summary
Pentecost
12th June 2011

- The gospel reading stresses that one of the key benefits which will emerge from the giving of the Spirit is “peace”. This is repeated twice to make the point more emphatic.
- This gift is also connected to the forgiving and/or remission of sins.
- It is a gift which the church, the Spirit-filled body of Christ, is to share.
- An episode in Acts 5:1-11 is, however, a warning that we must always be mindful of the great responsibility that comes with this gift.
- Ananias and Sapphira lie about the money they have earned from selling land.
- Peter challenges Ananias, identifies his as Satanic, and lying to God. Ananias dies
- In a less than satisfactory follow-up, Peter brutally tells Sapphira of her husband’s death. She too dies.
- This passage makes us uneasy. The punishment seems out of all proportion.
- I think that the passage is here to warn us of the great responsibility we have to use God’s Spirit properly
- We are all too aware of the times when the church has used its power and authority to create fear, as Peter does here.
- But is this really how we are meant to communicate the saving love of a God who “gave his only son that whoever believes in him might have eternal life” (John 3:16)
- We are surely right to name sin when it occurs, and to encourage change, repentance and restitution.
- But it is not our business to proclaim sin and so “condemn to death”

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