

Acts 8

Introduction (Overheads in Bold Print)

Prayer

Acts 8:1-4

Saul was in hearty agreement with putting him to death. And on that day a great (megas) persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and they were scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. Some devout men buried Stephen and made loud lamentation over him. But Saul began ravaging the church, entering house after house, and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison. Therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching the Word.

Great persecution-“Megas”, encompassing most of Jerusalem, , mob mentality,

Scattered-driven from their homes, ran for their life, throughout region, “Judea and Samaria,” fulfilled Jesus word and the sovereign work God building His Church, using persecution to spread His Word, greatest growth of church people willing to die for faith.

“...you shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.” Acts 1:8

Went about preaching the Word-not overcome by circumstances, remembered their calling, could not stop sharing,

“For we cannot stop speaking what we have seen and heard.” Acts 4:20

“Wherever the established believer is driven, he carries the knowledge of the gospel, and makes known the preciousness of Christ in every place. Where a simple desire of doing good influences the heart, it will be found impossible to shut a man out from all opportunities of usefulness.”¹ Matthew Henry “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.” Romans 8:28

Today Lesson=Do we believe that? How do we react to adversity, what does our life reflect in our current world, sometimes greatest witness for Christ is how we react to life's difficulties?

"At all times, preach Christ, and when necessary, use words." Francis of Assisi

Acts 8:5-8

"Phillip went down to the city of Samaria and began proclaiming Christ to them. The crowds with one accord were giving attention to what was said by Phillip, as they heard and saw the signs which he was performing. For in the case of many who had unclean spirits, they were coming out of them shouting with a loud voice, and many who had been paralyzed and lame were healed. So there was much rejoicing in that city."

Phillip- Last week's lesson on Chapter 6, one of 7 men chosen to serve, to allow Apostles to devote to prayer and the Word, along with Stephen

"...select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom." Acts 6:3

**"...they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Phillip..."
Acts 6:5**

Proclaimed Christ-Boldness, Gospel, expand, quote next page, cause for pause, finding ways to attract men, not strategies, not more appealing, can be offense, CHRIST* (Iman Story) Pearl before swine.

"The new gospel brings men to Christ, the (old) gospel brings Christ to men" J.I. Packer

**"Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under their feet and turn and tear you to pieces."
Matthew 7:6**

Giving Attention-to what said, Gospel, Word of God, validated by signs and wonders,

Much Rejoicing-Spurgeon sermon-"Great Joy"--God reaching out to the outcast, immediate and abundant response-- Phillip reaping the harvest of Christ planting, woman watering, God now opening hearts. Great-"Megas"

***"And there was great (megas) joy in that city" Acts. 8:8 KJV**

Today lesson-proclaiming Christ. Becoming part of planting, watering, knowing God is able to cause the growth, Scripture tells us to make the most out of every opportunity

"I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters are anything, but God who causes the growth. Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor. I Cor. 3:6-8

Acts 8: 9:25-Not able to include but there are some lessons to mentions from Simon of this passage, he had great magic arts but then discovered true power, but in the end his belief was false.

Wheat and tares, Whenever Word is preached, God knows His sheep, sheep and goats. Simon fell to pride, power, greed. He wanted God on his terms and not God's terms. Spirit knew "the intention of his heart," exposed by Peter, (Ananias and Sapphira) How sad he could have openly admitted his sin, asked for and received mercy like every sinner, and put his trust in Christ and Him crucified.

Professor not possessor. Unregenerate not regenerate.

***Acts 8:26-40**

But an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip saying, "Get up and go south to the road that descends from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a desert road) So he got up and went, and there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure; and he had come to Jerusalem to worship, and he was returning and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet Isaiah. Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go up and join this chariot." Philip ran up and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?" And he said, "Well, how could I, unless

someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. Now the passage of Scripture which he was reading was this: **“HE WAS LED AS A SHEEP TO SLAUGHTER; AND AS A LAMB BEFORE ITS SHEARER IS SILENT, SO HE DOES NOT OPEN HIS MOUTH. IN HUMILIATION HIS JUDGMENT WAS TAKEN AWAY; WHO SHALL RELATE HIS GENERATION? FOR HIS LIFE IS REMOVED FROM THE EARTH.”** The eunuch answered Philip and said, “Please tell me, of whom does the prophet say this? Of himself or of someone else?” Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him. As they went along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, “Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?” (And Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” And he answered and said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”) And he ordered the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch and he baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; and the eunuch no longer saw him, but went on his way rejoicing. But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he kept preaching the gospel to all the cities until he came to Caesarea.

Angel of the Lord/ Get up, go south, go up and join-Phillip demonstrated great obedience to the Lord’s leading. No delays, no excuses, no buts like—but Lord see what is happening here in Samaria, I have this great big following and you are sending me into the desert to meet with whoever, don’t you want to reconsider, are you sure you know what you are doing? Craig=out of comfort zone

Ethiopian Eunuch-gave up (vol/invol) sex life to serve queen, man of great responsibility and influence, religious, came to worship, visit to Jerusalem did not satisfy, searching the scriptures for answers, God’s sovereign work and preparation for the gospel, reading Isaiah, no new testament at this time, Acts-Christ proclaimed through Old Testament Scriptures

Appropriate question-Proper lead in, openly received and invited to join and help him understand.

Importance of Questions- EE, determines (When we are being lead to share our faith)

Openness, willingness to discuss spiritual truth-Be sensitive (Gentleness and Reverence)

Person's church or religious background

Person's understanding, where they are at spiritually

Also determines what work the Spirit has already done in person's life-
Always remember salvation is the work of the Holy Spirit. It may be just time to water what has been planted or time to be used by God to bring person to faith. NW testimony.

Beginning with this Scripture-Phillip well equipped and knowledgeable of the Scriptures, started where he was at, once again preached Jesus to him. Our need to know the Word, be changed by the Word, obedient to the Word, Spirit will help us share the Word.

"Be diligent to present yourself approved by God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth." 2 Timothy 2:15

"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you." John 14:26

"Unless our 'Bible Study' is conforming us both inwardly and outwardly, to the image of Christ, it profits us not." A.W. Pink

Eunuchs response-obedience to the Word, faith in action, "what prevents me", conversion, Phillip and Eunuch-entered water, (New believer that has never been baptized, great opportunity to confess Christ before Men)

Philip snatched away-This was a miracle, "no longer saw him", God purpose of miracle, to reaffirm Eunuch, His particular, personal, and perfect love.

Eunuch went rejoicing-New creation, new heart, God's sovereign choice to spread Gospel to Ethiopia, now small country but at that time it was the only country west of Egypt, early church tradition says he became founder of church in Africa.

Philip found himself-kept preaching the gospel in all the cities. Where ever he was it was an opportunity to share Christ.

Close and Challenge

Jail Testimony

Closing prayer (harvest)

Acts 8 –One Man

“One man with God is always in the majority” John Knox

Encouragement to each of us, but also as one church

“Get up, go and join, go South, North, East, West”