

Home Group Questions

The week of 4/26/2020

Acts 8

WAY TO GOD!

GETTING STARTED...

This past Sunday, Pastor Mel continued his survey of Acts as we studied Chapter 8 and the ministry of Philip to the Samaritans, as well as Peter's confrontation with Simon the magician. Philip also has a powerful encounter with an Ethiopian eunuch who come to faith in Christ and is baptized.

LOOKING IN THE WORD...

1. **Read Acts 8:1-3.** Here we encounter Paul (Saul) the persecutor! - But as the church was scattered, they took the gospel with them. Try to get into the mixed emotions that the church must have been feeling during this time...amazing growth, awesome miracles, yet painful persecution. What might have been some of the struggles the church in Jerusalem was experiencing during this time?

Read Philippians 3:1-11 and talk about the amazing contrast between the unsaved Paul and the saved Paul. What are the important, central theological discoveries that Paul made between his unsaved state and his later life as an apostle?

2. **Read Acts 8:4-8.** Here we encounter Philip the "break-down-the-walls" evangelist! - God had prepared the hearts of Gentiles including the hearts of the Samaritans. Samaritans were not Jews, they were foreigners that lived in the country of Israel and, at best, were considered half-breed and unwanted by the Jews. What is the beautiful message that the church encounters here through Philip and the part of the church that needs

to be later checked out by Peter and John....that Samaritans were truly coming to faith.

3. **Read Acts 8:14-25.** Pastor Mel highlights Peter's confrontation of Simon(the magician)...the faker. It seems clear from the text that Simon appeared to believe but was never really in right relationship with God. Share experiences you have had that with people that have "left" the faithread 1 John 2:19 to help understand what truly happened to those who rejected Christ when they seem to have believed.

-At times, people mistake what happens in this passage below as being a prescription for a second experience of the "baptism of the Holy Spirit". However, we know that a person is baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ at conversion. Talk about the chart below to be sure you understand why this experience occurred only when Peter and John arrived to witness it.

Acts 8:14-17

Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, ¹⁵ who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, ¹⁶ for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ¹⁷ Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.

Samaritans? "Sure they believed but they are not on the same level as Jewish believers!! Are they??"

Need to send apostles to check it out...Philip was not an apostle...and probably not there at Pentecost

The receive the Holy Spirit just like in Acts 2!! This is an "Ah hah!!" moment. Samaritans are accepted by God just like Jews were!

4. **Read Act 8:26-40** - if you have time talk about this inspiring act of sharing and conversion and how this might inspire you in your heart for the individual.

MOVING FORWARD...

Pray for the church around the world to be a light during this time of difficulty in the world.