

“Scattered to Make All Things New” | Rev. Tim Frickenschmidt | July 4, 2021

Old Testament Reading: [Proverbs 11:3-11](#)

The integrity of the upright guides them, but the crookedness of the treacherous destroys them. 4 Riches do not profit in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death. 5 The righteousness of the blameless keeps his way straight, but the wicked falls by his own wickedness. 6 The righteousness of the upright delivers them, but the treacherous are taken captive by their lust. 7 When the wicked dies, his hope will perish, and the expectation of wealth perishes too. 8 The righteous is delivered from trouble, and the wicked walks into it instead. 9 With his mouth the godless man would destroy his neighbor, but by knowledge the righteous are delivered. 10 When it goes well with the righteous, the city rejoices, and when the wicked perish there are shouts of gladness. 11 By the blessing of the upright a city is exalted, but by the mouth of the wicked it is overthrown.

Reading from the Acts of the Apostles: [Acts 8:1-4-20](#)

And Saul approved of his execution.

And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.

4 Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word. 5 Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ. 6 And the crowds with one accord paid attention to what was being said by Philip, when they heard him and saw the signs that he did. 7 For unclean spirits, crying out with a loud voice, came out of many who had them, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. 8 So there was much joy in that city.

But there was a man named Simon, who had previously practiced magic in the city and amazed the people of Samaria, saying that he himself was somebody great. 10 They all paid attention to him, from the least to the greatest, saying, “This man is the power of God that is called Great.” 11 And they paid attention to him because for a long time he had amazed them with his magic. 12 But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. 13 Even Simon himself believed, and after being baptized he continued with Philip. And seeing signs and great miracles performed, he was amazed.

14 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

Introduction

There is a storm brewing at the beginning of Acts, and it finally breaks in chapter 8 with Stephen’s martyrdom and a great persecution of believers. The disciples are scattered far and wide. But God is at work, sowing Jesus’s followers in different cities and among different people groups to proclaim the Good News wherever they take root.

Background

1. **What the Gospel Requires**

- The believers are scattered, separated like sheep. But they are also like seeds being sown. Jesus uses Saul to cast his followers into different lands.
- The apostles temporarily remain in Jerusalem, and the other disciples are doing the ministry elsewhere.
- The scattered Christians share the Good News with people they would otherwise not have associated with. Like the early disciples, we are sown into people’s lives with a purpose.

2. **What the Gospel Does**

- The Gospel makes people pay attention.
- In the past, outsiders had to travel to Israel to join God’s community. Now, for the first time, the insiders were heading out into the world. God marked this event with miraculous signs.
- The disciples addressed people’s physical and spiritual needs, and the cities they entered rejoiced.
- The believers were bringing about racial and ethnic reconciliation, including between Jews and Samaritans. True reconciliation was as shocking then as it is now.

3. **What the Gospel Is**

- Telling yourself that you are someone great—that is as much as this world can offer.
- We try to amaze people so they will love us. This may seem to work for a time, until someone more amazing comes along.
- The Good News is that God loves us for who we are—his image-bearers.
- Jesus was sown into the ground like a seed, and his life was broken open for us.

Discuss

- Why do so few American adults report having friends? Do you have friends?
- What people groups do we hate or at least avoid?
- Does the city of Austin rejoice over our presence? Are we demonstrating joy and reconciliation?
- Do you ever try to amaze people so they will love or praise you? How do you feel about yourself if you lose their admiration? How does God feel about you?

Conclusion/Application

Like the first-century believers, we have been sown by God into a particular place and into the lives of particular people. Wherever we are, we are to tell others about Jesus and demonstrate his love by caring for our neighbors’ physical needs and seeking reconciliation. God uses even suffering and evil to spread his Good News.

Prayer

Father, you are the great Sower, sending your people to the ends of the earth with your message of reconciliation. Please forgive us for avoiding those we consider different from us and for ignoring the suffering of your image-bearers. May your Spirit empower us to turn our neighbors’ attention to you through our service and joy. Thank you for sending Jesus into our world like a seed that has sprouted and is making all things new. Amen.

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. 18 Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, 19 saying, "Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." 20 But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money!"

Gospel Reading: [John 12:20-26](#)

Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. 21 So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." 22 Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. 23 And Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. 24 Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. 25 Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. 26 If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him."