

Series: The Acts of the Apostles: From Jerusalem

Text: Acts 8:1-4

HI: Persecution propels the gospel.

Title: *Powder Keg*

Hook: Powder Keg

Date: 11.20.22

Purpose: To encourage God's people that the forces we often think will silence the gospel only end up spreading it.

FCF: Like the early Christians, we experience tribulation in this world. The grace of God meets us here as his comforting and empowering Spirit makes us witnesses of the gospel.

COR: There is real grief here, and this text shows us that it is good and godly to lament.

Witness of Christ [WC*]: John 15-16 stuff in MVM 4; his presence with his people explains their witness through persecution

Apologetic: MVM 4: spreading of the Word (explication of the gospel)

Form: Inductive

Outline:

- I. They were scattered by persecution. (1)**
- II. They grieved in great lamentation. (2)**
- III. They were threatened with destruction. (3)**
- IV. They spread the word. (4)**

Main Idea:

Subject: What happened when the church was scattered through persecution?

Complement: The word spread.

Exegetical Idea: As the church was scattered through persecution, the word spread.

Theological Idea: Persecution of the church fuels proclamation of the gospel.

Homiletical Idea: Persecution propels the gospel.

Introduction:

Powder Keg [PIC]

READ Acts 8:1-4

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. ² Devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him. ³ But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison. ⁴ Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word.

RE-READ Acts 8:1

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.

I. They were scattered by persecution.

Persecution = a program or process designed to harass and oppress someone

They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God. And they will do these things because they have not known the Father, nor me. John 16:2-3

"If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. (Jn. 15:18-19)

READ Acts 8:2

Devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him.

II. They grieved with great lamentation.

READ Acts 8:3

But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison.

III. They were threatened with destruction.

Ravaging = to cause extensive destruction or ruin utterly

Acts 2:46 And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts,

Acts 5:42 And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus.

And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, (Acts 5:14)

RE-READ Acts 8:4

Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word.

IV. They spread the Word.

Acts 1:8: "You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

HI: Persecution propels the gospel.

"The devil has overreached himself. His attack led to the opposite effect.... Instead of smothering the gospel ... it succeeds only in spreading it." John Stott

"But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. ²⁷ And you also will bear witness.... Jn 15:26-27a

I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world." (Jn. 16:33)

