



CHURCH GROWTH THROUGH PERSECUTION

ACTS 8:1-8

PASTOR JOSE PRADO



JESUS BUILDS AND SUSTAINS HIS CHURCH

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. 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.

(Acts 8:1-8 ESV)

How can God allow Stephen's death?

- *Favored by The People*
- *Full of Faith and The Holy Spirit*
- *Serves the widows and the poor*
- *Full of Grace*
- *Performed great signs and wonders*
- *Full of Wisdom*

Main Point:

*God is Sovereign; His
purposes are Good for His
Glory and Our Joy*

1.) God is Sovereign

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

God is Sovereign:

Psalm 103:19, “The Lord has established his throne in the heavens and **His kingdom rules over all.**”

Colossians 1:16-17, “For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. **And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.**”

God does not lead us to sin:

James 1:13, *Let no one say when he is
tempted, "I am being tempted by God,"
for God cannot be tempted with evil, and
he himself tempts no one.*

God can and will use evil to bring about His purposes:

Acts 1:8 *"You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; **and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria** and to the end of the earth."*

*Acts 8:1 uses exactly those two unreached areas in that same order: "... **they were all scattered throughout the region of Judea and Samaria.**"*

*"There is no circumstance, no trouble,
no testing, that can ever touch me
until, first of all, it has gone past God
and past Christ, right through to me.
If it has come that far, it has come
with great purpose."*

2.) God is Good

To Stephen: 55 But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.

To Unbelieving Jews: 2 Devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him.

To His Followers: 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.

To Samaritans: 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.

Main Point:

*God is Sovereign; His purposes are
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Pastoral Reflections:

- 1. Have you experienced the goodness of God?*
- 2. God is here with us today!*