

Ekklesia (part 4): The Movement Moves & the Message

Pastor Rick – 5/15/22

In a country where you have the freedom to worship God and the opportunity to rally around this life-changing message, why doesn't everyone take advantage of it?

The church is a movement. It's a movement around a very simple gospel that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, who died on the cross and he rose from the dead.

Acts 5:41-42

Acts 8:1-3

At the end of three years of unchecked persecution of the church, something incredible happened that changed everything for Paul. Plus it changed everything for the spread of the Ekklesia!

Acts 9:1-2

Acts 9:3-6

Acts 9:10-16

Acts 9:19b-21

After twelve to fourteen years of preparation, he launched out on what we call "Paul's Missionary Journeys."

During those ten to twelve years, he stopped in each of these cities. Paul actually planted little *ekklesias*, little churches, little gatherings.

And today people name their dogs, Nero, and their sons, Paul!

Unexplainable and bad things happen to people who are extraordinarily faithful and God is not rocked by it!

Throughout the book of Acts we don't find Christians huddled together, afraid that God has lost control, afraid that maybe God doesn't love them anymore, etc...

God raised up Paul to help those of us who don't have an Old Testament background, who weren't looking for a Messiah, for the people in his day that weren't looking for a Messiah, in order to understand what is the essence of the gospel.

1 Corinthians 15:1-8

- 1) Christ died for our sin
- 2) He was buried
- 3) He was raised
- 4) He appeared

Have you embraced this personally?

PRAYER for this series

God, would you please stretch out your hand and do something through me in my community, among my unbelieving friends, among my anti-church friends, among my friends that have been burned by religion and have every reason in the world . . . God, would you be willing to stretch out your hand and do something unusual? Not for my benefit, not in the church, but for the benefit of those who don't believe.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Take turns reading Acts 8 and 9 together. Share your insights and observations.
2. In what ways are seeing changes to the way you are praying?
3. How have you experienced Spirit-led or empowered boldness in your life this week? Share about the situation with your group, whether it be as a praise or petition.
4. How can you continually be amazed by the Gospel? Who is someone your group can pray for that they would awaken to the Good News?
5. How can you apply this message to your life this week?

Choose a Scripture for your small group to use to pray for different needs:

For those yet to believe

- Isaiah 55:6-8;
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-5;
- Ephesians 5:14-18;
- Psalm 107 (Pray for the different types of people described.)

For believers

- Ephesians 1:17-19;
- Ephesians 3:14-19;
- Colossians 1:9-14;
- 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13;
- 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12;
- 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17
- For revival, use Isaiah's cry for revival in Isaiah 64:1-5.
- For spiritual power, use the early disciples' prayer in Acts 4:29-31

More ideas: <https://www.toolsformentoring.com/resources/small-group-helps/prayer-ideas.php>