



## SENT, PART 2: THE TRUTH ABOUT CHRIST FOLLOWERS

What does it mean to be the church? What change does the Holy Spirit cause in our lives? Today, we're looking at the expansion of the church through the lives of the first generation of Christians—a group who, much like us today, hungered for an encounter with God.

**BIG IDEA: Your city should be glad you are there.**

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Complete the following sentence: When God seems silent and difficulties come my way; I tend to react by \_\_\_\_\_. What causes you to react in this way?
2. Why do most of us avoid difficulties? What makes us uncomfortable with silence?
3. What are some questions that run through your mind when things start to get difficult?

This weekend, we looked at the story of Philip and saw that the key is interpreting events from the perspective of a spirit-filled believer. According to Pastor Chris, For a Christ Follower...

4. **Death is a conquered enemy.** *With your Bible or BibleApp, read [Acts 7:54-60](#).*

*The Jewish leaders were infuriated by Stephen's accusation, and they shook their fists in rage. But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed steadily upward into heaven and saw the glory of God, and he saw Jesus standing in the place of honor at God's right hand. And he told them, "Look, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing in the place of honor at God's right hand!" Then they put their hands over their ears, and drowning out his voice with their shouts, they rushed at him. They dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. The official witnesses took off their coats and laid them at the feet of a young man named Saul. And as they stoned him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." And he fell to his knees, shouting, "Lord, don't charge them with this sin!" And with that, he died.*

[Acts 7:54-60 \(NLT\)](#)

5. What does this story teach you about God? About what it means to be a follower of Jesus?
6. *With your Bible or BibleApp, read the following verses...*

*Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? For sin is the sting that results in death. How we thank God, who gives us victory over sin and death through Jesus Christ our Lord!*

[1 Corinthians 15:54-57 \(NLT\)](#)

*Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or are hungry or cold or in danger or threatened with death? No! despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us. And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from his love. Death can't, and life can't. The angels can't, and the demons can't. Our fears for today, our worries about tomorrow, and even the powers of hell can't keep God's love away. Nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

[Romans 8:35-38 \(NLT\)](#)

*And now, dear brothers and sisters, we want you to know what will happen to the believers who have died so you will not grieve like people who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and was raised to life again, we also believe that when Jesus returns, God will bring back with him the believers who have died.*

[1 Thessalonians 4:13-14 \(NLT\)](#)



7. What do these verses tell you about death? How should these truths affect a Christ follower?
8. **Persecution is not always a bad thing.** *With your Bible or BibleApp, read [Acts 8:1-2](#).*

*A great wave of persecution began that day, sweeping over the church in Jerusalem; and all the believers except the apostles were scattered through the regions of Judea and Samaria. (Some devout men came and buried Stephen with great mourning.)* [Acts 8:1-2 \(NLT\)](#)

9. Do you have any examples of how persecution and problems aren't always being a bad thing in your own life?
10. What tends to be your reaction to persecution or hardship?
11. If you are experiencing any right now, what might God be trying to teach you through it?
12. **God is able to make friends out of your worst enemy.** *With your Bible or BibleApp, read [Acts 8:3](#).*

*Saul was going everywhere to devastate the church. He went from house to house, dragging out both men and women to throw them into jail.* [Acts 8:3 \(NLT\)](#)

13. Do you have any "enemies" in your life right now? What do you think they would be like if they became sold-out Christ-followers?
14. What can you do this week to encourage them in that direction?
15. **Your city should be really glad you are there.** *With your Bible or BibleApp, read [Acts 8:4-8](#).*

*But the believers who had fled Jerusalem went everywhere preaching the Good News about Jesus. Philip, for example, went to the city of Samaria and told the people there about the Messiah. Crowds listened intently to what he had to say because of the miracles he did. Many evil spirits were cast out, screaming as they left their victims. And many who had been paralyzed or lame were healed. So there was great joy in that city.* [Acts 8:4-8 \(NLT\)](#)

16. What difference are you making to your city?
17. What difference is your Community Group making to your city?
18. What can you do this week to begin impacting your city for the Gospel?

## THINK ABOUT IT

Are you spirit-filled? If yes, what is the evidence? If no, what do you think is keeping you from being so? What is your next step this week based upon Pastor Chris' message?

## MOVING FORWARD

As a small group, pray through Pastor Chris' message: Pray that God will help you see death and persecution from His perspective, that He will make friends of your worst enemies, that He will embolden you to bring joy to your city and your surroundings.

## CHANGING YOUR MIND

*But the believers who were scattered preached the Good News about Jesus wherever they went. So there was great joy in that city.* [Acts 8:4, 8 \(NLT\)](#)

