

## **GOING DEEPER STUDY NOTES** (April 21, 2024)

FOR PERSONAL OR GROUP STUDY

Isn't it a given that most of us, nearly all of us, would rather avoid pain? Sometimes we can't avoid it ... we go through the pain of surgery hoping for a healthier life on the other side of it. Working out, running, school, can be painful. We count the cost and believe the benefit outweighs the pain.

But what if simply believing something caused us pain. We could lie about what we believe, but what if what we believe makes lying difficult. That was exactly the situation the first Christians found themselves in. They were targeted and singled out for abuse simply because they believed in Jesus. They could have denied they were Christians ... but what would have been the point. Their whole lives had changed. Sooner or later others would see the difference and know. Believing in Jesus hasn't cost me extreme pain ... yet. But what if it did? What would I do then? What would you do?

### **The Holy Spirit Working Through Philip: Pt 1** (Acts 8:1-25) ESV

<sup>1</sup>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. <sup>2</sup>Devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him. <sup>3</sup>But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison.

<sup>4</sup>Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word. <sup>5</sup>Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ. <sup>6</sup>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. <sup>7</sup>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. <sup>8</sup>So there was much joy in that city.

<sup>9</sup>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. <sup>10</sup>They all paid attention to him, from the least to the greatest, saying, "This man is the power of God that is called Great." <sup>11</sup>And they paid attention to him because for a long time he had amazed them with his magic. <sup>12</sup>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. <sup>13</sup>Even Simon himself believed, and after being baptized he continued with Philip. And seeing signs and great miracles performed, he was amazed.

<sup>14</sup>Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, <sup>15</sup>who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, <sup>16</sup>for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. <sup>17</sup>Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit. <sup>18</sup>Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, <sup>19</sup>saying, "Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." <sup>20</sup>But Peter said to him, "**May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money!**" <sup>21</sup>You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. <sup>22</sup>Repent, therefore, of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you. <sup>23</sup>For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity." <sup>24</sup>And Simon answered, "Pray for me to the Lord, that nothing of what you have said may come upon me."

<sup>25</sup>Now when they had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans."

### **WHAT DOES IT SAY?**

1. What kind of persecution did those first Christians endure?
2. What happened when the persecution began? See Acts 1:8

### **WHAT DOES IT MEAN?**

3. What does, "Saul was ravaging the church" mean?
4. What does "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money" mean?

### **WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO YOU?**

5. What is something you do that causes a measure of pain but you believe it is worth it, and keep doing it? Discuss
6. Recall a time when you experienced pain and it caused you to do something you would not have ordinarily done. Share.
7. Are there things money can't buy? What does God offer that you cannot buy from anyone else or anywhere else?
8. If being a Christian meant you would suffer pain, would you?

As you spend time praying, remember that prayer is meant to be the most natural part of your day. Prayer is a conversation: talking to God and listening to God. Ask God for both the humility and courage to suffer for Him. Pray for Christians suffering now. God will help them and you, because He loves them and He loves you.