

Connect Group Guide: “The Gospel That Brings Persecution Also Brings Joy”

Passage: Acts 8:1-8

Sermon Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tRwlomN2JiM>

Welcome:

(Choose a question for your group to discuss)

- What is joy?
- Have you ever had a first-hand experience where God used your hardship for good? Please share...

Worship:

(You may choose to use YouTube or other mediums to facilitate your time of worship)

-  Charity Gayle - I Speak Jesus (feat. Steven Musso) [Live]

Word:

(Discuss these questions in your group, encourage everyone to take part)

Before reading the scripture:

- What does it look like to have joy in the midst of persecution?
- How may we overcome the fear of speaking the Gospel even though risks like rejection, isolation and persecution may persist?

Read: Acts 8:1-8

- How do you feel knowing that Saul - who later became Paul and wrote most of the New Testament - was present at the stoning of Stephen and was enforcing the persecution on Christians?
Is there someone who you have stopped praying for because you felt like they might be 'too far gone' to follow Jesus? Consider taking a moment to pray now.
- This passage states that those who had been scattered kept preaching the word wherever they went. What shift would need to take place in your heart to become someone who shares about Jesus wherever they may go? How might the church community encourage you in this?
- What would it look like for the suburb where you live to be filled with joy? How might you connect with your neighbours this week?

Works:

(Take some time for personal reflecting on the following questions and then share back with the group)

- 1 Peter 3:15 states that we should be ready to share reasons for the hope that is within us. Are you able to clearly articulate the hope of Jesus within you? Consider spending some time on this if you need to.
- How are you challenged to keep sharing the Gospel knowing that it will bring both persecution and joy?
- How can you encourage someone in your community or neighbourhood this week with the message of Jesus?

Closing:

(Remember to ask for prayer requests.)

- Pray that we would stand strong in the face of persecution to preach the good news of Jesus.

