

Upside Down | the character of the Jesus movement

Where the City Finds Joy | Suffering

Acts 8:1-8

August 13, 2017

Review: How did God help you as you brought your anger before Him? Have you been able to close the gap between offending someone and asking for forgiveness? Have you been able to be faster to come to forgiveness when you have been offended?

Introduction: If you follow Jesus, you're a part of a movement. You're in with others. The movement of Jesus is about the people. Jesus invites us individually but deploys us corporately. House by house, Luke tells us, the Lord added to their number those who were being saved (Acts 2:46-47). It wasn't about the buildings; it was about the people. The biblical word for 'house' (oikos) meant family. Jesus added to their numbers when his followers lived like his family with one another and with their neighbors. The movement wasn't defined by their ideas or rules but by the way they lived together, by the way that Jesus lived in their shared life. The book of Acts invites us to stop coming to church and start being the church. Summer in Seattle offers a wonderful opportunity: Our neighbors are coming out of their houses. Will we welcome them into his? If we do, maybe they'll say what the Greeks said, "These people who have been turning the world upside down have come here also..." (Acts 17:6).

This week the gospel moves out of Jerusalem as persecution causes the disciples to leave the city.

Pray: Holy Spirit, open our minds to your truth. Give us eyes to see, ears to hear and hearts that will understand what we read and discuss together. Amen.

Read: Acts 8:1-8

Discussion:

1. How far from Jerusalem did the early believers spread in this time of persecution? How does this fulfill Acts 1:8?
2. What do you know about the people who lived in Samaria? See 2 Kings 17 (especially verses 6,16,24-28 and 41) What did the Samaritans know about Jesus before Philip witnessed to them? See John 4:1-42.
3. What did the crowds in Samaria see and do?
4. The text does not say exactly what Philip proclaimed about Christ to the people. What do you think he might have said?
5. How would you proclaim Christ? Can you say the good news in a few sentences? For help try some of these verses: 2 Corinthians 5:21, 8:9; Romans 5:8, 6:23, 8:1, 8:32; I John 4:10. Have each member of the group try to share a one-sentence gospel.
6. What gives great joy to your community?

Application: This week spend a few moments each day telling yourself the good news of the gospel. If circumstances permit, do this aloud. Work on a one-sentence gospel you can use for this purpose.

How can you pay close attention to what God is doing in your life, and in your community? Report back on the joy you found.

Pray: Lord Jesus we want to participate in bringing the peace and joy of your good news to our city. Open our eyes to see what you are already doing here and draw our attention to places we could join in.