

SCATTERED ABROAD

ACTS 8

Text: Acts 8:4

Acts 8:4

⁴Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.

Introduction:

On the day of Pentecost, God put the fire of the Gospel into the heart of these believers.

They were commanded to take this fire or the Gospel everywhere even unto the ends of the earth.

The book of Acts is an outline how they carried this fire or the Gospel.

(Chapters 1-7, in Jerusalem, Chapters 8-12, in Judea and Samaria, and Chapters 13-28, to the ends of the earth)

1. THE PERSECUTION OF BELIEVERS (ACTS 8:1)

Acts 8:1

¹ And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.

A. Predicted by the Saviour (Mark 10:30)

Matthew 10:16-18

¹⁶ Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. ¹⁷ But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; ¹⁸ And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.

Matthew 10:21-23

²¹ And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against *their* parents, and cause them to be put to death. ²² And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved. ²³ But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.

Matthew 10:28

²⁸ And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Matthew 24:8-10

⁸ All these *are* the beginning of sorrows. ⁹ Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. ¹⁰ And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

Jesus made it very plain that it would not be easy to follow Him. He didn't promise us a walk in a rose garden but here in this Scripture, he promised we would have persecutions.

Illustration:

John Wesley was riding along a road one day when it dawned on him that three whole days had passed in which he had suffered no persecution. Not a brick or an egg had been thrown at him for three days. Alarmed, he stopped his horse, and exclaimed, "Can it be that I have sinned, and am backslidden?" Slipping from his horse, Wesley went down on his knees and began interceding with God to show him where, if any, there had been a fault. A rough fellow, on the other side of the hedge, hearing the prayer, looked across and recognized the preacher. "I'll fix that Methodist

preacher,” he said, picking up a brick and tossing it over at him. It missed its mark, and fell harmlessly beside John. Whereupon Wesley leaped to his feet joyfully exclaiming, “Thank God, it’s all right. I still have His presence.”

B. Pictured by Stephen (Acts 8:2)

Acts 8:2

² And devout men carried Stephen *to his burial*, and made great lamentation over him.

Stephen must have been a tremendous man of God. Not an apostle. Not a preacher. He’s a deacon. But, he spoke with such unction and such power, that they were not able to withstand the wisdom by which he testified. And because of his preaching, they stoned him to death.

These religious leaders were disturbed by people like Stephen, for he was real and showed them to be fake.

If you live for Jesus and obey His commandments, you are always going to disturb some people.

So Stephen was killed and now he was buried, but God raised up another deacon name Phillip (verse 5) who would bring about revival in Samaria.

C. Practiced by Saul (Acts 8:3)

Acts 8:3

³ As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed *them* to prison.

Saul seems to be the lead persecutor, he is mentioned three times in this persecution.

2. THE PARTING OF BELIEVERS (ACTS 8:1)

Because of this persecution, they were scattered abroad like scattering seed. And like scattered seed, it produced fruit.

Acts 8:1

¹ And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.

A. Was a Personal Burden

They had to leave their home, their jobs, their friends and etc.

Illustration:

The army of Alexander the Great was advancing on Persia. At one critical point, it appeared that his troops might be defeated. The soldiers had taken so much plunder from their previous campaigns that they had become weighted down and were losing their effectiveness in combat. Alexander commanded that all the spoils be thrown into a heap and burned. The men complained bitterly but soon saw the wisdom of the order. Someone wrote, "It was as if wings had been given to them—they walked lightly again." Victory was assured.

As soldiers of Christ, we must rid ourselves of anything that hinders us in the conflict with our spiritual enemy.

Hebrews 12:1-2

¹ Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset *us*, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, ² Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

To fight the battle effectively, we must be clad only with the armor of God.

Ephesians 6:11-17

¹¹ Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹² For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*. ¹³ Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. ¹⁴ Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; ¹⁵ And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; ¹⁶ Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. ¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

B. Was a Providential Blessing

Their enemies had meant for it to be bad, but God meant it to be a blessing.

Illustration:

I read the story of Pastor J. H. Crowell, when about sixteen, shipped on a sailing vessel, where he was the only Christian, in a crew of twelve. Before leaving his mother he promised to meet her three times a day at the throne of grace. So regularly he went below and prayed aloud. He thought he must. They threw wood at

him and poured buckets of water over him, but could not put out the fire in his soul. Then they tied him to the mast and laid thirty-nine stripes on his back. Still he prayed. They tied a rope around his body and threw him overboard. He swam as best he could, and when he took hold of the side of the ship they pushed him off with a pole. At last his strength gave way, and, supposing they meant to kill him, he prayed that God would forgive them, and called out: "Send my body to my mother and tell her that I died for Jesus." He was then pulled on deck unconscious, but after some time came to. Conviction began to seize the sailors. Before night two of them were gloriously converted. Inside of a week everyone on board, including the captain, was blessedly saved.

3. THE PREACHING OF BELIEVERS (ACTS 8:4)

Acts 8:4

⁴Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.

A. Notice Who Did the Preaching (Acts 8:4a) –
“Those that were scattered abroad”

Someone once said:

All of us are to be witnesses to the grace of God in Christ Jesus. Don't ever persuade yourself that we will win the world to Christ by paid preachers and paid missionaries. It never was so. It isn't now. It never will be so.

B. Notice Where They Did the Preaching
(Acts 8:4b) – “everywhere”

The early Christians believed that they had good news to share. They believed that everybody needed to hear this good news so everywhere they went, they shared what the Lord had done for them.

When they went before Kings and governors they shared Jesus. When they went to a synagogue they shared Jesus. When they went to the marketplace they shared Jesus. If they were in jail . . . they shared Jesus.

Persecution didn't stop them; it only gave them opportunities to share Christ in a new location. Irregardless of where they moved, or how uprooted they were they shared CHRIST.

C. Notice What They Were Preaching (Acts 8:4c)
– “the word”

We too need to proclaim the Word of God.