

# Humble Hearts for a High Purpose

Acts 8:1-25

God directs and grows His Church

God desires right hearts



EMPOWERED  
WITNESSES



## Act 8:1b-25.

<sup>1b</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. (ESV)

# Humble Hearts for a High Purpose

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October 23, 2022

**Open:** Share about a time you tried to (or wanted to) buy something that wasn't for sale.

## **Read & Discuss: Acts 8:1b-8**

1. How is the state of the Church as described in verses 1-3 different from what we have read about in Acts up to this point? When you experience persecution rather than God's more obvious blessings (such as healings, miracles, or conversions), how does that impact your perception of His involvement in your life or in the world?
2. What positive things came about as a result of this persecution on the Church (vv. 4-8)? How have you seen persecution benefit the spread of the Gospel in our day?

## **Read & Discuss: Acts 8:9-25**

3. According to these verses what do we know about Simon? Why does Peter respond so strongly to Simon's request (vv. 20-23)? How do believers get their motives corrupted today?
4. What can we learn about the Holy Spirit from this passage that should shape how we seek God's presence in our lives today? According to our study of Acts so far, what would you say are some proper reasons we might desire to experience the Spirit's power?
5. In verse 22, Peter calls Simon to repent of his wickedness. From what we're told in verses 20-21, why were his motives wicked? What are some ways we can know when we have crossed over the line from righteous motives into wicked motives?
6. Does Simon's response to Peter in verse 24 reflect proper spiritual health? Why or why not? What does repentance look like in your life? As followers of Jesus in the New Covenant, how should the truths of the Gospel shape how we think about repentance?

**Apply:** What are some opportunities coming this week where you might partner with the Spirit in rightly motivated ways?

**Pray:** Ask God to protect our motives and enable us to quickly see and repent of unrighteousness. Pray we would be a people full of the Spirit and the truth of His Gospel.

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