

Growth Group Questions – July 26th, 2020

Introduction Questions:

- How are you doing?
 - [This question will always be here – it’s optional, but may help bring the passage back to mind if you meet later in the week] - If you heard the sermon this week, was there any part of the message or scripture passage that was particularly important or meaningful to you? If so, what?

Read: Acts 8:1-25

Understanding Questions:

- Following the stoning of Stephen, and after the Christians of Jerusalem are scattered, where does Philip, one of the seven deacons, go? Are there any parables of Jesus you remember that also feature this place?
- What does Philip do amongst the people? How do they respond?
- Who is Simon? What is he known for and how does he respond to the gospel?
- What do the apostles in Jerusalem do when they hear about how people are responding in Samaria?
- Why does Peter become very angry with Simon? What had Simon done? How does Simon respond to Peter’s strong rebuke?

Application Questions:

In Samaria, God reaches those outside of the current community of believers. Have you ever felt God reach you when you were on the “outside”? Or have you ever experienced God reaching out to someone else beyond the current boundaries of a community?

Simon seems to be transformed by the gospel, but then falls into error again before repenting.

1. Can you name an occasion when you thought you were on the right track but then messed up again? What happened? Was there someone there to offer you a course correction?
2. Or has there ever been a time when you’ve been rebuked? How did it feel? Was it ultimately a good experience or a bad one?

Additional Notes:

Philip, one of the seven deacons, and his success in Samaria indicates that the good news is not only for those living in and around Jerusalem.

Philip's preaching in Samaria also provides initial fulfillment to Acts 1:8. It is a significant moment for the church given longstanding animosity between Jews and Samaritans (recall Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan).

Acts 8:17 – The action of “laying their hands on them” indicates healing, blessing, giving a new task or responsibility, or bestowing the gift of the Holy Spirit. The context here suggests that there was visible evidence that people had received the Spirit, because Simon offers money to get this power for himself.

Magicians were commonly viewed as people who plied their trade for money. Simon ascribes his own attitude to Peter. By contrast, Luke consistently depicts concern over money as threatening faith. [See also Judas in Acts 1:8; Ananias and Sapphira in 5:1-11; the owners of the girl with the gift of divination in 16:16-18; and Demetrius the silversmith in 19:24-27]