

ICB COMMUNITY GROUP STUDY

WHAT WE DO: A JOURNEY THROUGH THE BOOK OF ACTS

The message last Sunday, continued our series "What We Do". Brandi shared with us that despite the persecution of the believers the church started to spread and Jesus' commandment to share His message throughout the world began to be fulfilled.

START

Today we are going to be talking about the believers being scattered all over the world. If you were sent on a journey and could only take 3 items with you, what would you choose?

SHARE

- Stephen's death begins the second phase of the spreading of the gospel, into Judea and Samaria, how would you summarise the first phase in Jerusalem?

READ ACTS 8:1-25

- Why do you think the Apostles stayed in Jerusalem, and why do you think the Jewish leaders allowed them to remain there?
- Did the persecution mentioned here hinder God's plan? List at least three observations in this chapter to support your answer.
- What does this passage tell us about the apostles (and ultimately God's) strategy for World evangelisation?
- The same descriptive word as we would use to describe the planting of seeds (scatter) is used here to talk about the spreading of the gospel at this time. Why do you think God used that method to further His kingdom? What advantages and disadvantages are there to being "scattered" rather than being sent in an orderly fashion to specific places?

Brandi shared with us that there had been a long conflict between Israel and Samaria, since Old Testament times. Yet in Acts 1:8 Jesus was commanding his followers to specifically go to that region and share the good news. All through his ministry we can see that he had a heart for this people, and a longing for them to be saved.

READ JOHN 4:1-30 and 39-42

- Why was it so significant that Jesus called believers to reach those in Samaria? What changed when the Gospel began to be shared in Samaria?
- What does God's plan for spreading the gospel to Samaria show us about His character?

- What objectives were achieved by Peter and John coming to Samaria (Acts 8:14)? Why wasn't Philip's confirmation enough in this situation? What positive application can we take from that for our own lives?

GROW

- Who do you relate to most in this story, the apostles who stayed in Jerusalem or the believers who were scattered around the world? How is God calling you to be used for His kingdom right now?
- God's way of sending people is not always logical yet in the end we can see that He plan is the most effective. How might this affect our own consideration of career, calling, where we go?
- What would it look like to model Philip, right here where you live?
- Are there any "Samaritans" whom God wants you to reach?

PRAY

Ask God to show you where He wants to "plant" you and how you can be used best for His kingdom. Pray that he would show you any places where you are holding back and if there are any "Samaritans" in your life.

GO

As you go into this week, be encouraged that just like a GPS, God knows exactly where He has placed you, and even when we feel "scattered", lonely, out of control or abandoned, He is never far away. Be confident that He has things for you to do right where you are, right now! Whether it's something short term or long term, the key is for us to be ready and available to serve!

Read more about Philip and the spreading of the gospel in Act 8. Read about the history of Israel and Samaria in 2 Kings 17:1-41 and how Jesus treated Samaritans in John 4, Luke 10:25-37, Luke 17:11-17.