

Small Group Questions | November 11th, 2018

Called to Explore — Judea and Samaria

Acts 7:59–8:13

Other Passages Referenced: Matt 11:11; Luke 12:11–12; Romans 8:11; Proverbs 11:10

Introductory Comments to Group Leaders:

In this second sermon and small group of the series “Called to Explore,” we look at the gospel’s spread from Jerusalem to Samaria. You’ll want to make sure the group catches that Philip is not the Philip who was one of Jesus’ twelve disciples. Also, make sure to emphasize that the apostles stayed in Jerusalem when other Jerusalem church members were scattered by persecution. The Holy Spirit empowered the scattered disciples to witness for Jesus in unexpected places—to places and people they might normally have avoided ...to places and people with whom they had little in common and felt out of place. Please take some time to discuss the East Side Church plant and God’s movement to scatter some of our Chapel family to what may be for them a place they didn’t expect to be. Encourage and challenge one another as to how you will intentionally follow the Spirit’s leading to speak the gospel and serve in places where you are more of an outsider than an insider.

Again this week, I put some answers to the questions and commentary in bold text at the bottom of this document. The numbers correspond to the numbers of the questions. Please refer to those answers after you have delved into the text on your own.

Sermon Recap: What are Judea and Samaria. They are the unexpected places where scattered disciples live intentionally in response to the Gospel. These disciples intentionally speak the gospel message. They intentionally serve the residents of the place. They intentionally seek racial reconciliation. All of this is in response to the gospel we received. Jesus has served us, spoken the gospel to us, and made racial reconciliation possible. Our response is empowered by the Holy Spirit who makes us witnesses of the gospel. As the church scattered, the Spirit will lead us to unexpected places to show and tell the gospel.

Hook: A Question to Help Ignite Conversation

What is the youngest age of a church you’ve been part of? (It would be good to go around and ask each person in the group to answer the question.)

Look:

Read Acts 7:59–8:13

1. Although one of Jesus’ 12 disciples was named Philip (Matt 10:3), the Philip in our focus passage is a different Philip. What do we know about this Philip? (Check Acts 6:1–5).
2. What qualifications do we find in Acts 6:3 that these seven men needed to possess?
3. We read in Acts 7 that Stephen, another one of the seven along with Philip, was stoned to death by Jewish religious leaders. Acts 8:1 tells us that Stephen’s death ignited “a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem.” Which believers scattered throughout Judea and Samaria and which ones stayed in Jerusalem?
4. Note the three times we read the words “paid attention to” or “were giving attention to” found in Acts 8:6, 10–11. Who was giving attention to whom and why?
5. What was the Simon the Magician’s message and what was Philip’s message?
6. How did those who believed Philip’s message respond once they believed?

Illustrations:

Illustrations and quotes can be found on the “Sermon Slides” link at the bottom of www.wcchapel.org

Took: *Applying the message to our lives.*

Practical Applications:

1. How does the thought of the Holy Spirit using you to intentionally speak, serve, and work to bring together people who are unlike you (racially, culturally, politically, etc.) strike you?
2. Those who believed were baptized. We regularly have baptisms during Sunday worship services at the Chapel. Is baptism a step of witness that the Lord is calling you to take in response to your faith?
3. How did the video about the East Side Church plant impact you?

Verse (You might consider memorizing this one): “Now those who were scattered went about preaching the gospel.” — Acts 8:4

Prayer:

- Please pray for the team that is planting East Side Church and that the Lord would draw residents from that area to Himself and to the church.
- Perhaps your small group would like to go as a group to pray with Doug and the team at East Side Church at one of their regular prayer gatherings.
- You may want to check out <https://www.opendoorsusa.org> to learn more about the persecuted church. The site rates the 50 countries thought to most oppress Christians and offers suggestions to pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ who follow Jesus there.

What we hope members glean from the passage.

1. This Philip was one of 7 men chosen to distribute food to needy Grecian widows among the infant church in Jerusalem.
2. The men chosen to serve were expected to be “of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom.”
3. It appears that only the apostles stayed in Jerusalem but other church members were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. The Holy Spirit was using ordinary men and women as witnesses of Jesus and the gospel.
4. The crowds were giving attention to Philip in v. 6 because of the signs they were seeing – unclean spirits cast out, healings, etc. In 10–11, the people of Samaria from the least to the greatest gave attention to Simon the Magician because of the magic he performed.
5. Simon’s message was that he, himself, was someone great. In contrast, Philip’s message was about the greatness of the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus.
6. Both men and women who believed were baptized.