

It's not about the Money

Acts 8:4-25

January 26, 2020

Acts Series: Taking the Message of Jesus' Kingdom Everywhere

⁴ Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went. ⁵ Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah there. ⁶ When the crowds heard Philip and saw the signs he performed, they all paid close attention to what he said. ⁷ For with shrieks, impure spirits came out of many, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. ⁸ So there was great joy in that city.

⁹ Now for some time a man named Simon had practiced sorcery in the city and amazed all the people of Samaria. He boasted that he was someone great, ¹⁰ and all the people, both high and low, gave him their attention and exclaimed, "This man is rightly called the Great Power of God." ¹¹ They followed him because he had amazed them for a long time with his sorcery. ¹² But when they believed Philip as he proclaimed the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. ¹³ Simon himself believed and was baptized. And he followed Philip everywhere, astonished by the great signs and miracles he saw.

¹⁴ When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to Samaria. ¹⁵ When they arrived, they prayed for the new believers there that they might receive the Holy Spirit, ¹⁶ because the Holy Spirit had not yet come on any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ¹⁷ Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

¹⁸ When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money ¹⁹ and said, "Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit."

²⁰ Peter answered: "May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money! ²¹ You have no part or share in this ministry, because your heart is not right before God.

²² Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord in the hope that he may forgive you for having such a thought in your heart. ²³ For I see that you are full of bitterness and captive to sin."

²⁴ Then Simon answered, "Pray to the Lord for me so that nothing you have said may happen to me."

²⁵ After they had further proclaimed the word of the Lord and testified about Jesus, Peter and John returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many Samaritan villages. ¹

¹ The New International Version. (2011): Zondervan.

1. Simon Prays

Acts 8:4-13

*"As a result, many men and women were baptized.
Then Simon himself believed and was baptized."* Verses 12, 13

A. Scattering

Acts 8:4-8

The message of Jesus continues to be communicated

The result is Joy – What causes that Joy?

B. Simon

Acts 8:9-13

A man of great power, influence and fame

Simon is the star attraction 'Great Power of God' vs 10

Simon accepts the message of Jesus Christ

Simon is amazed at Philip

2. Simon Sees

Acts 8:14-17

*They prayed for the new believers there that they might receive the Holy Spirit,
because the Holy Spirit had not yet come on any of them;* Verses 15,16

A. Investigative Committee

Acts 8:14, 15

John has not always had kind thoughts about the Samaritans

Peter and John recognize God's hand

B. The Holy Spirit

Acts 8:16, 17

Not Yet οὐδέπω (*oudepō*) A Greek adverb used rarely (only 4 times in the NT (John 7:39; 19:41; 20:9; Acts 8:16)) it means not yet with a clear expectation that it will occur in the future. Translated: NIV, ESV, NASB, NLT, Not Yet; NKJV, KJV, As Yet

When does He come? Romans 8:1-11

Who decides? Apostles, Believers, Spirit? Acts 2:17-21

What does this mean?

A great bible study question

What do Peter and John learn, do or discover?

3. Simon Pays

Acts 8:18-25

"Give me also this ability

so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." Acts 8:19

A. Tries to pay money

Acts 8:18, 19

Buying power, influence and control

Simon wants to become a Holy Spirit dispenser

Ability ἐξουσία (*exousia*) A Greek noun used commonly in the NT (101 times in total, 16 in Luke, 7 in Acts and 21 in Revelation) It has a range of meaning from Authority to Right to Power or Control. It is clear by this word choice that Simon desires to exercise control over the Holy Spirit. Simply stated, he wants to tell God what to do and when to do it.

Translated: NIV, Ability; ESV, NLT, NKJV, KJV, Power; NASB, Authority

B. Peter's Insights

Acts 8:20-23

We are talking about 'God's Gift'

Simon's heart is not right

Repent and Pray

Full of bitterness and captive to sin

C. Simon's Wise Choice

Acts 8:24

Repentance or Avoidance?

D. Peter and John's Missionary Journey

Acts 8:25

Doing what they should have been doing all along

It's not about the money

What God gives us (forgiveness, mercy, grace, Holy Spirit) comes from his heart and is his gift

God's plan can be very different from our ways of thinking

Our behaviour is to be characterized by humility, attentive obedience and gratitude. (jealousy, stubbornness, pride)

Factoring money as part of what we might gain from God clouds the motivation for why we believe and obey

Study Questions

For your personal study or with family, a friend, mentor or Life Group

Beginning:

1. What insight, idea, question or principle from Sunday's message did you find most helpful, eye opening or troubling?
2. In what ways is the criticism 'Churches are always after money' true?

Learning:

3. ID check: Philip appears again in Acts 21:8. He is one of the seven, Acts 6:5.
4. Read 1 Thessalonians 1:8-10 and compare the conversion experiences their to the conversion experience of Simon. What are the important differences?
5. Look at a previous interaction between John and the Samaritans in Luke 9:54. This may hint at what is happening here in Acts.
6. Peter's slow realization: Peter and John are not on a problem-solving expedition on behalf of the apostles in Jerusalem. They have heard Samaritans have heard the 'gospel'. They come to see what is happening. Pastor Tom suggests that Peter and John were the ones who needed to learn something important here. At times, so too with us. God will work in unexpected ways and people we may not expect to be saved will be saved.
7. Read Acts 1:8 and see how that verse has anticipated the current activity in Samaria. Where will the gospel go next?

Applying:

8. The scattering of the Christians leads to an expansion in the mission of the church. The persecution involved has caused Acts 1:8 to be engaged. How does God sometimes use things we do not want to in order to make the things happen that he wants?

Praying:

9. Pray regarding some of the hard and unwelcome things in your life that God might use to do an amazing work that we would never expect.

Mentoring: Money is often a controversial topic for many people. Why is that? How open are you in talking about money? Is this because of shortage, abundance, embarrassment, selfishness or some other factors? Which impacts you? Share where you have seen God meet a financial need in either a 'miraculous' way or in a change of thinking. Share some of the things from your journey that you have gained that might be regarded as wisdom related to money. Share and pray together about some of the areas in which you struggle the most when it comes to finances.