

Acts of the Holy Spirit - 9
Evangelism 101 – Week of November 13, 2016
Bay Park Life Groups – Participant

The ongoing ministry of the gospel until Jesus comes again, rests squarely with committed Christians . . . who make themselves available for the service of Jesus Christ whenever and wherever the Holy Spirit wills¹.

Acts 8 decisively dispels the myth that the work of preaching, evangelism, church growth and planting is the responsibility of a select few. As we'll see next week, Peter and John had to play catch up with how God was spreading his gospel and growing his church through committed believers. It's a timely message for all believers regardless of age, gender, ethnicity or geography.

1. One thing that made you mad, sad or glad this past week?

Read Acts 8:1-8 together

2. In verses 1-4 Luke describes an interconnected chain of events or domino effect. What is the chain of events and what was it's final result?
3. God used persecution to get the early Christians to do what he had already told them he wanted them to do (Acts 1:8). This same story is repeated throughout the history of the church. In 1949 all missionaries to China were expelled after the Communist takeover. It seemed to be a disaster. Yet the end result was that the expelled missionaries went to other parts of unreached Asia while Chinese lay leaders took over the Chinese church. The Chinese church today is 30 to 40 times larger and continues to experience exponential growth. Both the missionaries and the Chinese Christians had become complacent. Why is comfort and success such a threat to the gospel? How do you see God using personal pain and disaster to revive Christians and mission today?
4. In verse 4 we learn that *everyone who was scattered preached the word wherever they went*. Philip was one such example. He's not an apostle and yet he was instrumental to the fulfilling of Acts 1:8 in Samaria, aka enemy territory.
 - a. What challenges did Philip likely face in preaching the gospel?
 - b. In what ways could those of us who don't have formal leadership positions or theological training abdicate our responsibilities when it comes to evangelism and discipleship? What holds us back and how does the story of Philip help?
5. Compare Luke 9:51-55 with Acts 8:6-8. Why such a difference in both Philip's reaction to the Samaritans and in their reaction to him? What personal lessons can we learn from this turn around?

¹ Kenneth Gangel, *Holman New Testament Commentary – Acts*, (Broadmen, 1998)

6. It was the combination of hearing and seeing that led the crowds to pay close attention to Philip (v 6-7). What good works or acts of mercy do you feel most passionate about? How can you combine both words and works together?

7. Sunday's message ended with a list of 22 ways we can "preach" the gospel in word and deed. Ways we can bring joy to our community and city. Look through the list again. Which 1 or 2 are you most likely to try and why?
 - Get to work/school early so you can pray for others and the day ahead.
 - Daily communicate honest encouragement to someone at work/school.
 - Don't eat lunch alone.
 - Bring food you can share once a month.
 - Start a Bible study or discussion group.
 - Be part of the after work/class get together whenever appropriate.
 - Talk openly about what you did "over the weekend", including church.
 - Get to know the other Christians – pray together and hold each other accountable.
 - Learn how to share the gospel *briefly* (as in, less than 30 seconds).
 - Make a list of birthdays or anniversaries and send a note of encouragement.
 - Politely avoid gossip, be the voice of praise not complaint.
 - Carpool.
 - Be the first to welcome new people.
 - Get to know their names and that of their loved ones.
 - Graciously offer to pray for people who share struggles and follow-up.
 - Do the jobs others avoid – cleaning up the lunchroom fridge or coffee pot.
 - Tastefully display Scripture on your desk.
 - Visit co-workers or classmates when they are in the hospital.
 - Go out of your way to talk to your janitors, cleaners, suppliers, those others overlook.
 - Invite co-workers into service projects you're involved in with your church.
 - Lead the charge in organizing others to help co-workers/class mate in need.