Murray Baptist Church – 6/1/20 – Bible Study Outline

Themes

1. The **Witness of the Gospel Continues** – Chapter 8 Focuses on the importance and effectiveness of witnesses
   1. It begins with the ending of one witness – Stephen, whose story is told mostly in Acts 6 (selection of the seven deacons) and 7 (Stephen’s witness 7:2-7:60)
   2. Brief introduction of Saul (before he became the witness Paul)
   3. The witness of Philip (8:5-8, 26-40)
2. **Persecution** – Chapter 8 is the documentation of the first general persecution of the newly formed church
   1. Verse 1b, Persecution forced the group of believers who were in Jerusalem to the areas of Judea and Samaria (cross reference – Acts 1:8 - But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”
   2. Samaria – When the Assyrians were allowed by God to capture and rule over the people of God (722 B.C.), the Assyrians had taken control of Galilee (North), Samaria (Middle) and Judea (South). They Assyrians took the Jews from Samaria and in their place resettled foreigners and those Jews who were left (the poorest of the poor) intermarried and became a mixed people called the Samaritans. These Samaritans were known as “half-breeds” and hated and were hated intensely by the Jews. When God’s movement is at hand cultural and social issues become secondary to the spreading of the Gospel. The culture of sin and the culture of grace are universal.
   3. In Acts 1:8 Jesus is making a statement of direction but he is also providing a prophecy. God will use anything and everything necessary in order for his plans to be enacted. Will you be obedient to respond to his movement and direction in your life?
   4. Verses 8:1-3, The central focus of the persecution
      1. It began with the martyrdom of Stephen (for Background see Acts 6 and 7)
      2. Saul would be a central figure in the persecution and thus the movement of the Gospels to places outside of Jerusalem (notice where the disciples stayed during this time).
      3. Saul began to destroy the church – notice we don’t hear anything about buildings being destroyed but “destruction” came as people were being arrested and drug from their homes.
      4. Current application – We are in the time of protests around the death of George Floyd. In some images we see protestors being arrested and drug away by the police. Imagine seeing people being drug away for having done nothing but because they believed in Jesus Christ as the savior.
3. **Right motives** should be the basis for right actions – the issue of Simon the Sorcerer (Magician) – vs. 9-24
   1. The discussion of Simon’s practices is a flashback to times prior to the arrival of Philip, the demonstration of the Holy Spirit’s presence in ministry and how it was different than the type of power that Simon appeared to possess.
   2. People who have to boast or remind others about their greatness are generally insecure people and live for the praise (what happens to them and their greatness when the praise stops?)
   3. The Holy Spirit and God’s direction, prompting and leading cannot be counterfeited.
4. **Philip’s Missionary Mindset** (This Philip the deacon, not Philip the Disciple/Apostle) – Verses 4-8, 26-40
   1. An effective ministry is a portable ministry – it travels where you do
   2. People are blessed when they minister where God places them
   3. Philip acted as the Apostles acted, The Apostle acted as Jesus acted, Jesus, acted as the Prophets acted (Luke is drawing connections in regard to the anointing of God
   4. Philip stayed in communion with God (v.26) and followed the angel’s instructions
   5. Philip met who was there (v.27)
   6. He obeyed the Holy Spirit and stayed near the Ethiopian eunuch
   7. He offered assistance – and got an opportunity to share
   8. His witness led to the eunuch’s baptism

Application for this church today?

1. Do you have a ministry that travels? Or does it just stay in your suitcase or your travel bag?
   * Ministry = the spiritual gifts you have been given + the talents you have developed + the opportunities you recognize + God’s leading. Ministry can occur on a bus, Trax, in the break room at work, on a walk, etc. More ministry will occur outside of the “church” than inside.
2. Are you willing to move at God’s direction even when it may mean the ministry opportunity is smaller? Compare vs. 9 and vs. 26. Only God knows the value of the opportunity and he sees value differently than we do.
3. How do you do with the following?Try this approach for the next few weeks

Charge:

* **Connect** (to God),
* **Direct** (be led by the Holy Spirit)

Use:

* **Observe** (What is God doing around you?),
* **Assist** (what can you help with, be willing to help),
* **Share** (and receive),
* **Point** (them to Christ and how that has helped you)