

With Sister Paulette Morrison
on November 14, 2021

DISCOVERING THE POWER OF THE WORD

A Reading and Listening Session

Reflections on Acts 8



On November 14, 2021, our community gathered for a Sunday Evening Reading & Listening Session centered around the theme 'Discover the Power of the Word.' Guided by the selected verses from Acts 8:1-40, chosen by Sister Carisa and Minister Marjorie, we delved into a narrative rich with transformation, persecution, and the unwavering spread of the Gospel. This article reflects on the key moments and insights shared during that enlightening session.

Setting the Stage: Persecution and Proclamation

The passage opens with a stark reminder of the challenges faced by the early church. Acts 8:1-3 depicts Saul's (later Paul) relentless persecution, scattering believers and creating havoc. This initial adversity, however, became the catalyst for the Gospel's expansion. As Deaconess Sonia and Minister Marjorie highlighted, this period of upheaval, though difficult, ultimately served to propel the message of Christ beyond Jerusalem.

Philip's Ministry: Samaria and Beyond

Amidst the persecution, Philip emerged as a powerful evangelist. Acts 8:5-7 describes his ministry in Samaria, where he proclaimed Christ and performed miracles, driving out unclean spirits. The impact was profound, as many embraced the Gospel and were baptized. Deaconess Sonia emphasized Philip's central role in preaching Christ, and it's clear that his obedience to the Holy Spirit bore much fruit.

Simon the Sorcerer: A Cautionary Tale

The narrative introduces Simon the Sorcerer (Acts 8:9, 12-15, 20-21), a man who initially impressed the Samaritans with his magic but was later captivated by Philip's message and the power of the Holy Spirit. However, Simon's attempt to buy the gift of the Holy Spirit reveals a dangerous misunderstanding of God's grace. Minister Marjorie and Sister Sophia aptly pointed out that God's gifts are not for sale or to be negotiated by man. This moment serves as a crucial reminder that spiritual gifts are freely given by God and cannot be earned or purchased.

The Ethiopian Eunuch: A Life Transformed

The encounter between Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-27, 32-33, 35-39) stands as a powerful testament to the transformative power of the Word. Guided by the Holy Spirit, Philip approached the eunuch, who was struggling to understand the prophecy of Isaiah. Philip explained the scripture, revealing its fulfillment in Jesus Christ. The eunuch, upon hearing the Good News, believed and was baptized. As Minister Marjorie observed, this story underscores the importance of believing in the heart. Evangelist Mullings's reflections on the leading of the Holy Spirit further emphasize the divine orchestration of this encounter. The immediate baptism also highlights the importance of immediate obedience, and the joy that results.

Key Takeaways and Reflections

Our Sunday Evening Reading & Listening Session illuminated several key themes:

- **Persecution as a Catalyst:** Even in times of adversity, the Gospel can flourish.
- **The Power of Proclamation:** Boldly sharing the message of Christ can transform lives.
- **The Danger of Worldly Ambition:** Spiritual gifts are not commodities to be bought or sold.
- **The Importance of Understanding Scripture:** Seeking guidance and interpretation can unlock profound truths.
- **The Leading of the Holy Spirit:** Being open to the Spirit's direction can lead to unexpected and fruitful encounters.

This session served as a powerful reminder of the enduring power of the Word to transform lives and spread the Gospel to the ends of the earth. May we all be inspired by Philip's example to boldly proclaim Christ and remain open to the leading of the Holy Spirit.