



# PV Household Worship

**March 11-16, 2019**

❖ **Daily Memory Verse: Acts 8:5**

Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ.

❖ **Song:** *Magnificent, Marvelous, Matchless Love*

**Monday, March 11, "A glass that is shattered travels farther."**

Read Acts 8:1-8

Persecution has existed throughout history as men and women commit to stand for God and the truth He has spoken. When Jesus came to earth, fully God and fully man, He, Himself was persecuted. Since the dawn of Christianity persecution has persisted in various forms. Stonings, crucifixions, burnings at the stake, imprisonment, separation from families, and he list goes on. History is stained with the blood of martyrs and continues today by the testimony of those who've endured hardship on account of Christ. In Acts 8 Stephen has just been killed and now "*a great persecution is spreading through the church.*" Later, the Roman emperor Nero will set Rome on fire, and when criticized for it, he will blame Christians. Peter and Paul were martyred under his reign. In more modern times, Brother Yun, known as the "*Heavenly Man,*" was beaten and imprisoned for his faith in China. He famously said that "*a glass that is shattered travels farther than an intact one*"—meaning persecution spreads the gospel farther and faster. Persecuted or not, our joy as Christians is to keep our eyes on Jesus and make his name known. To that end, the global church can support believers who are subtly or overtly harassed for their faith. Through extreme circumstances, God is revealing Himself. People have turned to Christ, though they know they will face hostility for doing so. Even so, they've decided any persecution they may face pales in comparison to the surpassing worth of Christ. Always remember that this is God's work, and He will accomplish it even in the face of resistance.

- Do you believe you will ever experience the kind of persecution we read about Acts 8 in your lifetime? Why or why not? How do you feel about this?
- Memory Verse: Acts 8:5
- Prayer - God grant those who are being persecuted the perseverance to stand. Help their persecutors see Jesus through their witness.

**Tuesday, March 12, "A giant ant hill."**

Read Acts 8:1-8

The image I have of the early church in Jerusalem is that of a gigantic ant hill. There was lots of activity with people constantly entering the city. Jerusalem became the hub of Christianity, but God wanted the gospel preached throughout the world, so God allowed the church to be persecuted (*through the person of Saul*). This was like dropping a large rock on top of the ant hill. Everyone scattered -- but they took with them the Word and preached it "*wherever they went.*" Phillip ends up in a city in Samaria and proclaims "*the Christ there.*" Samaria is not the prime spot of the Middle East. It is definitely not a "*destination*" type of place. In 721 B.C. (see 2 Kings 17), the Assyrians invaded and conquered the northern part of Israel and carried the 10 northern tribes into captivity leaving behind a remnant. Over time this remnant intermarried with the Assyrians, creating an ethnic group known as the Samaritans. The Jews in the south looked down upon the Samaritan's, calling them half-breeds and dogs. This was Phillip's new place of ministry. Humanly speaking, I'm sure it may not have been at

the top of Phillip's list of preferred destinations. But Phillip was full of the Holy Spirit and went nonetheless and there in Samaria he saw many believe and find eternal life as he proclaimed Christ!

- Has there ever been a time where God directed you somewhere to proclaim Him, but you haven't gone?
- What is the Lord calling you to do that makes you feel a little uncomfortable? Will you give it a try?
- Memory Verse: Acts 8:5
- Prayer - God use me wherever you have me. Help my testimony to remain strong for Your glory.

### **Wednesday, March 13, "Never cut up a starfish."**

Read Acts 8:1-8

Did you know that if one of the arms of a starfish is severed, a new one will grow in its place? In fact, if a starfish is cut up, any piece that contains a part of the central disc will develop into a new starfish. A group of oyster harvesters found that out the hard way. When their oyster beds became infested with starfish, the harvesters caught them and cut them up tossing the remains back into the water. Rather than destroying them, however, they were actually helping them multiply. For centuries, Christians have been hated and viciously opposed in many nations. But persecution has not destroyed the church. Even under the most dire circumstances, it has not only survived but thrived. Jesus said of His church: *"I will build My church and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it."* First-century believers in Jerusalem were severely persecuted, but it resulted in their being scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. And wherever they went, they preached the Word and many more believed. Multitudes responded to the preaching of Philip. Yes, the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, no matter how severely persecuted, continues to grow. Even the forces of hell itself cannot overcome it!

- How did persecution actually cause the gospel to multiply?
- What was the outcome of Philip's preaching in Samaria? How is the gospel specifically changing lives around you today?
- Memory Verse: Acts 8:5
- Prayer: Jesus, praise You that You are building Your church and nothing will stop You.

### **Thursday, March 14, "The world won't go to the church, so the church must go to the world."**

Read Acts 8:1-8

Have you ever seen the old photograph of people leaving a church after a service carrying their Bibles and smiling? As you look at those men, women, and children, you gotta think to yourself, there goes the church. The building will stay, and it will be referred to as *"a church."* But those bricks can't preach and those pews can't witness. That building can't love. Only God's people can do that. The world won't go to the church, so the church must go to the world. R. C. Sproul wrote, *"Where the people of God are, there is the church, under the lordship of Christ and indwelt by the Spirit."* This is the essence of the commission Jesus gave to His disciples just before He left them. He promised them power from the Holy Spirit and said they would be His witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the end of the earth. And when the first-century church of Jerusalem came under persecution, that's what happened. They were scattered and proclaimed the gospel wherever they went (8:4). When believers in Jesus Christ leave a worship gathering, the building stays, but God's people spread out into the community. Throughout the week, they continue to be the church wherever they are in the world—in shops, schools, businesses, factories, restaurants, and homes. I wonder, is the world hearing the gospel from you and our church?

- What is the church? (Is it a building?) What was happening when Saul was "ravaging" the church? Was he "ravaging" buildings or people?

- Why did the people pay attention to what Philip was saying? What happened in Samaria because of Phillip's preaching?
- Memory Verse: Acts 8:5
- Prayer: Father, thank You that Your church is not a building, but a people whom You redeemed.

**Friday, March 15, "The gospel is too good to keep secret!"**

Read Acts 8:1-8

Just a little bit of light can dispel great darkness. In Acts 8 we find many believers scattered and going everywhere preaching Jesus. Philip went to Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ. Samaria was a dark place filled with unclean spirits, sickness, and sin. But when he preached the gospel, God saved many lives. Because of the intense competition in the automobile industry, carmakers like to keep their design breakthroughs secret. A company that can offer a new and desirable feature on its cars gains a selling edge in a tough market. So it may surprise you to know that a company like Mercedes-Benz is sharing an exclusive breakthrough with its competitors. In a recent safety test they show one of their cars crashing into a brick wall at high speed. The way it withstood the impact shows why its energy-absorbing construction has saved lives. Even though Mercedes-Benz holds the patent on the exclusive safety design, any and all competitors are free to use it because the company does not enforce its claim over the patent. When asked why, the Mercedes-Benz spokesman replied, "*Because some things in life are too important not to share. This design saves lives!*" The message of salvation is the best news mankind has ever received. Yet all too often that good news is not shared. So tell someone. The gospel is too good to keep secret!

- What earlier action opened the door to Philip's ministry (Acts 8: 1-4)? How can God increase the sphere of our influence today?
- How can God use seemingly difficult circumstances in our lives today for His glory? Can you give any practical examples?
- Memory Verse: Acts 8:5
- Prayer: Father, thank You for opening my eyes to Your gospel. Your salvation is too good not to share.

**Saturday, March 16, Read Acts 8.**

**Review memory verse.**

**Prayer:** Father, make us ready to hear your Word. Reveal your truth to our hearts. Give us grace to listen and obey. Bind the enemy of our souls and fill us with Your Holy Spirit. Give us joy as we meet with your people for doctrine, prayer, and worship.