

### Discussion Guide

Read Acts 8:1-8 slowly. What stands out for you?

“On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. <sup>2</sup> Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him. <sup>3</sup> But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off men and women and put them in prison.

<sup>4</sup> Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went. <sup>5</sup> Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Christ there. <sup>6</sup> When the crowds heard Philip and saw the miraculous signs he did, they all paid close attention to what he said. <sup>7</sup> With shrieks, evil spirits came out of many, and many paralytics and cripples were healed. <sup>8</sup> So there was great joy in that city. Acts 8:1-8

1. List the ways that the Roman Empire and the United States is similar historically. Does the fact that Rome experienced the greatest expansion of the faith in history, give you hope for the United States? Or do you think we are beyond hope?
2. Has the church forgotten its mission? What get in the way of the church from focusing on its message? How has that hurt the church and its ministry? Share ways you have seen people, causes, politicians use the church to promote their cause or position rather than the Gospel?
3. Pastor Richard talked about the many ways the Gospel met the needs of Roman seekers and changed them in pleasant ways. Which of those effects of the Gospel on life appealed to you the most? What drew you to embrace the faith?
4. Have you ever led a person to Christ? If so share what it was like? If not, have you ever shared your faith with anyone, in word or deed? Share a time God opened an opportunity for you to share your faith with someone. It may not have been as easy nor as dramatic as the opportunity but God did clearly open the door for you.
5. Do most Christians see themselves as customers or providers? Would it take a big paradigm shift for Christians to see themselves as preachers of the Gospel or minor tweaks? How do we make that shift? What would it take: persecution, God removing all the Pastors and Church leaders from the U.S., revival....?
6. What church did you grow up in or become a Christian in? Did it emphasize soul-saving or did it take a more comprehensive view of the Gospel ministry to include the reformation of the whole person, society, and world?
7. What can we do to embody the Gospel in our lives?
8. What can the church do to bring joy to the city? What have you seen churches do that made a big impact on their city?

## “Being a Mission-Driven Church”

Acts

8:1-8

7/4/21

9. A constant theme you see pronounced in the Bible, shown by example by the people in the Bible, and experienced by Jesus and the church historically is...Before a resurrection comes a death. Death results in resurrection but it all begins with suffering and death.

What do people need to die to in order to experience a resurrection in their faith that enables them to be confident enough to share their faith with others like Phillip and the early church did?

Let's get more personal. What inhibits you from sharing your faith with others? Identify the root cause(s) and make it an issue of prayer. Pray that the Lord would remove that barrier or those barriers. Then ask him to then give you an opportunity share your faith with someone. Don't for the door open. Don't create the opportunity. Just look for an opening of God's doing!

One mistake I see in our more conservative brothers and sisters is they are so antsy to share their faith that they use techniques to force the conversation in an unnatural and unloving way.

Look at the story, later in Acts 8 of the opening God gave Philip. Notice how natural the conversation was. God prepared the Ethiopian to hear the Gospel. For me, that how to share the faith with others.

10. Any further things to discuss? Any questions left unanswered or insight left unshared? Do it now!!!