

A Tale of Two Men - Acts 8:4-25
Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading

Notes from the Sermon

Over the last number of years, our country has become more and more polarizing. It is getting harder and harder to have meaningful intelligent conversations with people that hold different viewpoints than us. They may get offended, loud, belligerent. They may even try to cancel us. This makes it more difficult and we can easily become defensive and shut down, or even become just as nasty back to them. Yet these are the people to whom we're called to take the gospel.

In Acts 8, God sends Philip to a people group that the Jewish people had issues with for a thousand years. To say that the Jewish people had an issue with the Samaritans is putting it lightly. The Samaritans were at one time Jewish who had intermarried with Gentiles. They practiced their own form of Judaism and even had their own temple. The Jewish people had a deep seated, long running history of hating this people group, so much so, that it was deeply ingrained in their culture and psyche. It would have been very easy for Philip to write these people off, and yet God, through the sovereign work of the persecution that arose in Jerusalem, directs Philip to Samaria. Philip goes preaching the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. His message is authenticated by signs and great miracles including driving out demons and healing the lame and the paralyzed. He never once makes it about himself. The result is that the city is filled with joy and many come to believe the word and are baptized.

Our other main character is a magician named Simon. He wasn't a magician like Penn and Teller. He was one who most likely was into a much darker, demonic type of magic. We're told that everyone, from the least to the greatest, paid attention to him and thought he was great. It went so far as that he thought himself to be great.

Once Philip arrives on the scene and the crowds start listening to Philip and people start believing the word, Simon loses what he has. He's not the greatest in town any more and no one pays attention to him. Simon, at some point, believes the message himself, gets baptized, and is even amazed at the miraculous things Philip is doing.

However, there is still a problem. The new believers haven't received the Holy Spirit. News gets back to Jerusalem and the apostles send Peter and John down. Why? One, to authenticate that these new believers had in fact received the word and had put their faith in Jesus. Two, to welcome them into the church, so as to be one in Christ. Because of the faction between the Jews and Samaritans, it would have been easy for the Samaritans to start their own branch. The apostles pray for the new believers and lay their hands on them and then they receive the Holy Spirit.

Simon sees this and wants that same ability. He even offers money to the apostles to acquire this. Peter rebukes him and points out that Simon's heart is not right with God and tells him to repent. Peter reveals that Simon's heart is full of bitterness and he is bound by sin. Why? Because he lost his position, power, and prestige to Philip and he wanted it back.

God doesn't want us to be like Simon where our pride is what drives us. God wants us to confess our sins and remain humble with him so that he can use us to take the gospel of Jesus Christ to a world that desperately needs him.

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Jeremiah 29	Jeremiah 30	Jeremiah 31	Jeremiah 32	Jeremiah 33	Jeremiah 34	Jeremiah 35

Reading from this past week: Acts 8:4-25

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Acts 8:26-40

Family Worship

Song - *The Lord My God, My Salvation*

<https://youtu.be/RgikQg40ZEw>

Gospel Project

Unit: King Saul

Story: God Made Saul King

Big Picture Question: Why does sin separate us from God?

Answer: Because God is holy, sin has broken our relationship with God

Scripture: 1 Samuel 11

New City Catechism

Question #24: Why was it necessary for Christ, the Redeemer, to die?

Answer: Christ died willingly in our place to deliver us from the power and penalty of sin and bring us back to God.

Verse: Colossians 1:21-22

Scripture

Acts 8:4-25

- What people are the "Samaritans" for those in the culture of Eureka.
- How did God prove to the early church that He had included the Samaritans in His people? Why is this important in this story and for us?
- What are some ways that you can be tempted to be like Simon in the story?

Prayer

*Pray for Nick & Lorraine Mosca and their family as they prepare to return to Papua New Guinea to serve as missionaries.

*Pray for the Legends Neighborhood

*Pray that we as a church would be willing to cross any boundary to proclaim Christ.