

“But the believers who were scattered preached the Good News about Jesus wherever they went. Philip, for example, went to the city of Samaria and told the people there about the Messiah.”
Acts of the Apostles 8:4-5 NLT

lectio // Acts 8:4-13

This whole passage is quite profound. Jesus commanded his followers to go, they stayed. Persecution forced them to scatter. Ask yourself, did God bring persecution to force obedience? Did God, knowing the evil in human hearts, allow persecution, therefore causing obedience? Did the devil try to thwart the gospel therefore bringing persecution, forcing them to leave to survive? All the above? Who knows! Results of persecution, one story accounted for, Simon! Philip goes to a hard area, Samaria. But maybe the no name woman at the well had done significant work and people were ready to receive. He comes with a words about the messiah. He comes with miracles, healings and throwing out demons. He comes demonstrating the gospel message and it catches the attention of a very well known, very popular magician - Simon. The called him, “The great one, the power of God.” What a title huh? Well, he believes and is baptized - the guy gets saved! This is all hinged on he fact that Philip LEFT his home and WENT! Rather than trying to figure out the mysteries of who did what and why about evil things, like persecution, I think it’s important to look at the miracles God does in spite of, because of or opposed to evil - His will, His way gets accomplished. And, it’s not just good, it’s great... for all. A side note, when the guys back in Jerusalem hear about the work of God, they head to Samaria, “When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that the people of Samaria had accepted God’s message, they sent Peter and John there.” What’s the first order of business among the new believers, who had assumably been baptized in water already? Pray that they would be filled with the spirit, “As soon as they arrived, they prayed for these new believers to receive the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them, for they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.” Of course, Simon, who is new in his faith wants to buy this power and Peter gets all over his case, but that’s another story. We’ve got a lot of believers out there that say, “this model is not for today.” This pattern that Peter and John followed is not appropriate, allowed and believed to be “un-biblical” today! What in the crazy? I’ll leave that up to you to decide. Me: I believe it and thank God for it.

Dad,

Not only do I believe this model; repentance, belief, water baptism and Spirit baptism, I want to live by it everyday. I want to be soaked, and inebriated by the Holy Spirit! I want to be led, just like Jesus, into daily assignments that further the Kingdom of God. May it be in Orange County as it is in heaven! Let me hear and obey when you direct my path today.