

Sermon Title: **"A PAUSE TO SHARE THE GOSPEL!"**

Sermon Text: **ACTS 8: 1-8**

***Introduction:***

**GOOD MORNING TO ALL! THANK YOU FOR JOINING US IN OUR WORSHIP SERVICE TODAY! AGAIN, I WOULD LIKE TO WELCOME ALL YOU WHO ARE JOINING US FOR THE FIRST TIME TODAY IN OUR SUNDAY SERVICE CELEBRATION.**

**FOR THOSE JOINING US FOR THE FIRST TIME, WE ARE STUDYING THE SERIES CALLED "THE LORD'S PAUSE: A CALL TO SPIRITUAL RENEWAL!" WE BELIEVED THAT ONE OF THE REASONS THE LORD ALLOWED THIS COVID CRISIS IS TO GIVE NATURE A BREAK FROM MAN-MADE POLLUTION & DESTRUCTION AS WELL AS TO FORCE HUMANITY TO TAKE A BREAK, A PAUSE TO WHAT WE ARE DOING & REVIEW OUR LIFE. FOR THE LORD'S PEOPLE OR CHURCH, THIS IS HIS WAY OF FORCING US TO LOOK AT OUR SPIRITUAL CONDITION/STATUS & SEE WHERE WE ARE AS FAR AS OUR RELATIONSHIP W/ HIM IS CONCERNED. THIS PAUSE I BELIEVE IS A TIME OF GRACE OR A TIME FOR US TO SEE WHERE WE HAVE FALLEN FROM OUR FIRST LOVE & RENEW OUR RELATIONSHIP W/ THE LORD THROUGH THE DISCIPLINES OF GRACE. WE HAVE LOOKED AT THE WORD, PRAYER & WORSHIP, AND TODAY, WE ARE GOING TO LOOK AT THE HABIT/DISCIPLINE OF SHARING OR PREACHING THE GOSPEL OR JESUS TO OTHERS.**

**LET US PRAY!!!**

**PASSAGE BACKGROUND. NOW, BEFORE WE PROCEED TO OUR MESSAGE, LET ME GIVE A LITTLE BACKGROUND OF OUR TEXT TO THOSE OF YOU ARE NOT FAMILIAR WITH THE BOOK OF ACTS. THE BOOK OF ACTS IS WRITTEN BY LUKE AND IS ACTUALLY A CONTINUATION OF HIS FIRST BOOK/LETTER, THE GOSPEL OF LUKE TO, A NEW BELIEVER IN THE LORD, THEOPHILUS. HERE IN ACTS, DOCTOR LUKE NARRATES TO THEOPHILUS HOW THE EARLY CHURCH STARTED & SPREAD THROUGHOUT THE ROMAN EMPIRE. IN CHAPTER 1-6 OF ACTS, LUKE WILL SHOW US HOW THE CHURCH GREW FROM 120 TO THOUSANDS OF DISCIPLES & ALSO HOW IT ENRAGED/ANGERED THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS & SCRIBES AT THAT**

TIME. IN CHAPTER 7, SAUL, A DEVOTED PHARISEE & A FANATIC OF JUDAISM, WHO IS AGAINST THIS GROWING RELIGIOUS SECT KNOWN AS THE “WAY” JUST APPROVED THE STONING TO DEATH OF STEPHEN, THE FIRST MARTYR OF THE CHURCH. THIS IS THE IMMEDIATE CONTEXT OF OUR TEXT TODAY.

A. SAUL & THE JEWISH AUTHORITIES **PERSECUTES** & **RAVAGES** THE LORD’S CHURCH!

AS I HAVE MENTIONED EARLIER, SAUL HAS BEGAN PERSECUTING THE CHURCH BY APPROVING THE DEATH OF STEPHEN BY STONING IN THE PREVIOUS CHAPTER (7). BUT HERE IN CHAPTER 8, SAUL HEIGHTEN HIS PERSECUTION BY RAVAGING THE CHURCH; THAT IS, BY ARRESTING & IMPRISONING BELIEVERS OF THE LORD.

*“Saul agreed with putting him to death. **On that day a severe persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem**, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout the land of Judea and Samaria. Devout men buried Stephen and mourned deeply over him. **Saul, however, was ravaging the church. He would enter house after house, drag off men and women, and put them in prison.**” (vv. 1-3)*

B. THE LORD’S CHURCH **PREACHES** THE GOSPEL & **PROSPERS** AMIDST SEVERE PERSECUTION!

NOW, THE CHURCH’S PERSECUTION WAS SO INTENSE THAT THE BELIEVERS HAVE TO FLEE FROM THEIR CURRENT PLACES & HIDE IN OTHER PLACES OUTSIDE JERUSALEM. BUT CONTRARY TO LOGIC OR REASON, THE BELIEVERS, INSTEAD OF COWERING IN FEAR & STOPPING WHAT THEY WERE DOING, SCATTERED & STILL CONTINUED SHARING THE GOSPEL OR JESUS TO PEOPLE WHEREVER THEY WENT!

THE PERSECUTION, INSTEAD OF BEING A **STOPPER** BECAME THE VERY **FUEL OR CATALYST** THAT IGNITED THEIR PASSION TO SHARE THE GOSPEL TO EVERY PERSON THEY MEET IN THEIR “DIASPORA” OR SCATTERING.

***“So those who were scattered went on their way preaching the word.” (v. 4)***

❖ PHILIP GOES TO **SAMARIA** & PREACH THE GOSPEL THERE!

DOCTOR LUKE PERSONALIZED THIS TRUTH/PRINCIPLE BY RECORDING THE EXPERIENCE OF PHILIP DURING THAT PERSECUTION (READ THE REST OF HIS STORY IN THE REST OF THE CHAPTER). HE WENT TO A CITY IN SAMARIA & THERE SHARE JESUS TO THE PEOPLE.

***“Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah to them. The crowds were all paying attention to what Philip said, as they listened and saw the signs he was performing. For unclean spirits, crying out with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed, and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. So there was great joy in that city.” (vv. 5-8)***

❖ PHILIP **PREACHES/SHARES** THE GOSPEL TO THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH! (vv. 26-40)

IN VERSES 26-40, DOCTOR LUKE SHOWED US HOW THE LORD USED PHILIP TO ACTUALLY SHARE JESUS TO THIS ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH & WE’RE GOING TO LOOK AT THIS FURTHER LATER.

❖ **PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS/LESSONS:**

***(1) CRISIS IN LIFE (LIKE PERSECUTION) SHOULD NOT BE A HINDRANCE TO BELIEVERS IN SHARING/PREACHING THE GOSPEL/JESUS TO OTHERS!***

WE CLEARLY SAW THIS IN THE LIFE OF THE EARLY CHURCH. THEY DID NOT HESITATE TO CONTINUE SHARING THE GOSPEL EVEN IF IT WILL PUT THEIR LIVES IN DANGER BECAUSE IT IS A HABIT & A LIFESTYLE.

IN FACT, BY HINDSIGHT, WE KNOW THAT THE LORD USED THIS PERSECUTION TO FURTHER SPREAD THE GOSPEL BEYOND JUDEA & SAMARIA. ACTUALLY, THIS PERSECUTION PAVED THE WAY FOR

THE CONVERSION & SALVATION OF SAUL WHO BECAME PAUL. THROUGH HIS MINISTRY TO THE GENTILES, THE GOSPEL SPREAD TO THE REST OF THE NATIONS.

WITH THIS IN MIND, WE SHOULD NEVER USE THIS PRESENT CRISIS THAT WE HAVE RIGHT AS AN EXCUSE NOT TO SHARE JESUS TO OTHERS. ON THE OTHER HAND, PERHAPS, THIS IS THE MEANS THE LORD WANTS US TO USE TO CHECK ON THE SPIRITUAL CONDITIONS OF THE PEOPLE AROUND US & BE SENSITIVE TO THOSE WHO ARE SEEKING FOR MEANING & PURPOSE OF LIFE & BE ALWAYS READY TO SHARE THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST!

THIS COVID-19 CRISIS IS ACTUALLY FORCING THE CHURCH TODAY TO RETHINK OUR EVANGELISM STRATEGY & FIND CREATIVE WAYS TO SHARE THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST TO MORE PEOPLE!

THEREFORE, IN CRISIS OR OUT OF CRISIS, WE, THE CHURCH, ARE TO EARNESTLY & FAITHFULLY PREACH/SHARE THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST TO OTHERS!

*(2) LET US EMULATE & IMITATE THE EARLY CHURCH'S HEART/PASSION FOR GOSPEL SHARING. LET US MAKE GOSPEL SHARING OUR HABIT & LIFESTYLE!*

NOW, IF GOSPEL SHARING IS TO BECOME OUR HABIT/DISCIPLINE & LIFESTYLE AS A CHURCH, THEN WE NEED TO AFFIRM CERTAIN BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES/TRUTHS & PRACTICES ABOUT SHARING THE GOSPEL. WE SAW THIS IN PHILIP'S SHARING OF THE GOSPEL TO THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH. THESE ARE THE FFG.:

❖ BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES & PRACTICES:

AS WE STUDY CLOSELY THIS EXAMPLE OF SHARING THE GOSPEL, WE LEARNED THAT THERE ARE THREE IMPORTANT FACTORS THAT ARE INVOLVED FOR IT TO HAPPEN – THE SOVEREIGN WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE BELIEVER & THE RESPONSE OF THE UNBELIEVER.

*(1) WE ARE TO RECOGNIZE THE HOLY SPIRIT AS THE SOVEREIGN*

## **LORD OF THE HARVEST!**

**WE KNOW THAT THE LORD JESUS IS THE LORD OF THE HARVEST, BUT WE ALSO KNOW THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT TOOK OVER JESUS WHEN HE CAME AT PENTECOST. IN FACT, THE BOOK OF ACTS IS ALSO KNOWN AS THE ACTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT BECAUSE HE IS THE MAJOR PLAYER/CHARACTER IN THIS BOOK. THE APOSTLE PAUL REFERRED TO THE HOLY SPIRIT AS THE SPIRIT OF GOD & OF THE LORD JESUS! (Rom. 8: 9) AGAIN, PROVING THE CONCEPT OF TRINITY OR GODHEAD.**

***“You, however, are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to him.” (Rom. 8:9)***

**HERE, IN OUR PASSAGE, CLEARLY THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE ONE DIRECTING & LEADING PHILIP IN SHARING THE GOSPEL!**

***An angel of the Lord spoke to Philip: “Get up and go south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” (This is the desert road. So he got up and went. There was an Ethiopian man, a eunuch and high official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to worship in Jerusalem and was sitting in his chariot on his way home, reading the prophet Isaiah aloud. The Spirit told Philip, “Go and join that chariot.” (vv. 26-29)***

***“When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him any longer but went on his way rejoicing. Philip appeared in Azotus, and he was traveling and preaching the gospel in all the towns until he came to Caesarea.” (vv. 39-40)***

- ❖ **THE HOLY SPIRIT CONVICTS A SINNER OF SINS, CAUSES HIM/HER TO BE BORN AGAIN, & CONFORMS HIM/HER TO CHRIST’S IMAGE! He calls sinners to repent & believe the gospel! He gives spiritual & eternal life to all who believes! He makes them holy like Christ!**

***“Nevertheless, I am telling you the truth. It is for your benefit that I***

*go away, because if I don't go away the Counselor will not come to you. If I go, I will send him to you. **When he comes, he will convict the world about sin, righteousness, and judgment.**" (John 16: 7-8)*

*Jesus answered, "**Truly I tell you, unless someone is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.** Whatever is born of the flesh is flesh, and whatever is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be amazed that I told you that you must be born again."*  
(John 3: 5-7)

*"Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. **We all, with unveiled faces, are looking as in a mirror at the glory of the Lord and are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory; this is from the Lord who is the Spirit.**"*  
(2 Cor. 3: 17-18)

**THEREFORE, WE NEED THE SUPERNATURAL HELP & POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT TO BE EFFECTIVE WITNESS FOR JESUS. WE ARE TO REMEMBER THAT HE IS THE ONE WHO SAVES & CONVERTS PEOPLE TO CHRIST! THIS MEANS WE HAVE TO PRAY & FULLY DEPEND ON HIS POWER & GRACE FOR PEOPLE. WE ARE TO INTERCEDE & PLEAD FOR MERCY FROM THE FATHER TO SAVE SINNERS & THE SPIRIT TO WORK IN THEIR HEARTS!**

**(2) BELIEVERS ARE TO BE RESPONSIBLE TO SHARE OR PREACH THE GOSPEL!**

**TAKE NOTE THAT THE GREAT COMMISSION WAS GIVEN TO EVERY MEMBER OF THE CHURCH. AND SEEN IN THE BOOK OF ACTS, THE HOLY SPIRIT TOOK OVER JESUS & DIRECTS THE CHURCH OR BELIEVERS TO BRING THE GOSPEL TO THE NATIONS. HOW ARE WE TO DO THIS? OUR PASSAGE GIVES/TEACHES US THE BASICS HOW TO DO IT.**

❖ **THE BELIEVER IS TO CONVERSE/ENGAGE WITH THE SINNER, TO COMMUNICATE THE GOSPEL TRUTHS, & TO CHALLENGE HIM/HER TO TRUST/OBEY THE GOSPEL'S COMMANDS!**

*"So those who were scattered **went on their way preaching the***



**word.**" (Acts 8: 4)

***When Philip ran up to it, he heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, "Do you understand what you're reading?" "How can I," he said, "unless someone guides me?" So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him." (vv. 30-31)***

***The eunuch said to Philip, "I ask you, who is the prophet saying this about—himself or someone else?" Philip proceeded to tell him the good news about Jesus, beginning with that Scripture. (vv. 34-35)***

**NOTE HERE THAT PHILIP BEGAN TO SHARE THE GOSPEL MESSAGE TO THE EUNUCH USING ISAIAH 53 AS A JUMPING BOARD TO EXPLAIN THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS. PAUL SUMMARIZED THE GOSPEL TRUTHS TO US.**

***"Now I want to make clear for you, brothers and sisters, the gospel I preached to you, which you received...that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve." (1 Cor. 15: 1-5)***

**FINALLY, THE BELIEVER IS TO CHALLENGE THE PERSON HE IS SHARING TO PUT HIS/HER TRUST IN JESUS AS SAVIOR!**

***As they were traveling down the road, they came to some water. The eunuch said, "Look, there's water. What would keep me from being baptized?" Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart you may." And he replied, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." So he ordered the chariot to stop, and both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. (vv. 36-38)***

**(3) THE SINNER IS TO RESPOND TO THE CLAIMS/COMMAND OF THE GOSPEL!**

**THE LAST PRINCIPLE WE LEARN HERE IS THAT THE SINNER IS TO RESPOND TO THE COMMAND OF THE GOSPEL!**

***As they were traveling down the road, they came to some water. The eunuch said, "Look, there's water. What would keep me from***

*being baptized?” Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart you may.” **And he replied, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”** So he ordered the chariot to stop, and both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. (vv. 36-38)*

**THREE ESSENTIAL CLAIMS/COMMANDS OF THE GOSPEL TO THE SINNER. THESE ARE FOLLOWING:**

- ❖ THE SINNER IS TO **ADMIT** HIS/HER **REBELLION & SINFULNESS**, TO **BELIEVE** THE GOSPEL TRUTHS, & TO **CONFESS** THE LORD JESUS CHRIST AS SAVIOR & LORD! THIS IS ALSO KNOWN AS The “A-B-C” OF SALVATION.

*When they heard this, they were pierced to the heart and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what should we do?” Peter replied, “**Repent and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.** For the promise is for you and for your children, and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call.” (Acts 2: 37-39)*

*The jailer called for lights, rushed in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. He escorted them out and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” They said, “**Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.**” (Acts 16: 29-31)*

*“**If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.**” (Rom. 10: 9)*

**THEREFORE, WE ARE TO GIVE THE PERSON WE ARE SHARING TO THE OPPORTUNITY TO CONSIDER SERIOUSLY THE COMMANDS OF CHRIST & GIVE THEM TIME TO RESPOND TO IT WILLINGLY & SINCERELY FROM THEIR HEART!**

**CLOSING CHALLENGE:**

**CHURCH/FRIENDS, WE HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY THESE DAYS TO SHARE THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST TO PEOPLE AROUND US**



**ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO ARE BEING STRESSED OUT OR WORRIED OR ANXIOUS BECAUSE OF THIS ONGOING PANDEMIC. THE LORD IS REMINDING US TODAY THAT THIS CRISIS SHOULD NOT STOP US FROM PROCLAIMING GOD'S LOVE & GRACE THROUGH THE GOSPEL OR GOOD NEWS! LET US PRAY TO THE LORD TO USE US IN A SPECIAL & CREATIVE WAYS TO SHARE JESUS TO OTHERS.**

**NOW, HOW CAN WE DO THIS IN A PRACTICAL WAY? LET ME SHOW YOU HOW. CHURCH, **FBC MEMBERS, LET US CONTINUE DOING OUR THREE I'S STRATEGY – IDENTIFY! INTERCEDE! & INVEST!** LET US IDENTIFY THREE PEOPLE WHO ARE IN OUR NETWORK OF RELATIONSHIPS. LET US INTERCEDE & PRAY FOR THE SALVATION OF THESE THREE PEOPLE. AND THEN LET US INVEST IN THE LIVES OF THESE THREE PEOPLE. LET US DO THEM GOOD DEEDS! LET US INVITE THEM TO OUR ONLINE SMALL GROUP OR SERVICES! WHEN GIVE THE OPPORTUNITY, LET US SHARE THE GOSPEL TO THEM PERSONALLY!**

**HOW ABOUT THIS CHURCH/ FRIENDS! CALL ONE OF THESE THREE PEOPLE YOU HAVE BEEN PRAYING TO KNOW THE LORD AND TELL HIM THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE SOMETHING TO HIM/HER IN THREE MINUTES THAT YOU LEARN IN THE WORD OF GOD THAT YOU JUST READ & MEDITATED UPON. AND THAT'S ALL & SEE HOW THE LORD WILL WORK! THAT IS IF YOU HAVE DEVELOP THAT HABIT OF THE WORD & PRAYER IN YOUR LIFE. THESE ARE INTER-RELATED & OVERLAPPING DISCIPLINES.**

**REMEMBER THAT IN EVANGELISM OR GOSPEL SHARING WE ARE NEVER ALONE. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS ALWAYS WORKING IN THE HEARTS OF PEOPLE BUT HE DOES NOT WORK ALONE. HE WAITS FOR US TO DO OUR PART. GOD BLESS!**  
**CLOSING PRAYER:**

***“OUR HEAVENLY FATHER, THANK YOU FOR REMINDING US TODAY THAT EVEN THIS PRESENT CRISIS THAT WE ARE FACING SHOULD NOT DETER US FROM OBEYING YOUR WILL & PURPOSE FOR US; THAT IS - TO SHARE THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST & MAKE DISCIPLES OF THE NATIONS!***

**"OUR HEAVENLY FATHER, THANK YOU FOR REMINDING US OF THE GREAT COMMISSION! FORGIVE US FOR NOT MAKING IT GREAT IN OUR LIVES & FOR TAKING IT FOR GRANTED. INDEED, IT HAS BECOME NOW THE GREAT OMISSION IN OUR LIVES. WE PAY LIP SERVICE ONLY TO IT BUT OUR HEARTS ARE WANDERING & MORE PREOCCUPIED WITH OUR NEEDS & PLEASURES.**

**"FATHER GOD, FOCUS OUR HEARTS TO YOU & YOUR CAUSE AGAIN. REVIVE THE PASSION IN OUR HEART FOR THE GREAT COMMISSION - TO SHARE JESUS & HELP NEW BELIEVERS TO GROW IN THEIR WALK WITH YOU. EMPOWER US WITH YOUR HOLY SPIRIT US TO SPEAK THE GOSPEL IN TRUTHFUL SIMPLICITY STARTING TODAY. INCREASE OUR DESIRE TO PUT YOU FIRST IN OUR LIVES AND USE YOUR WORD TO FUEL A CHANGE FROM WITHIN US. WE TRUST THAT YOUR GRACE WILL ACCOMPANY OUR WORDS AND MAKE UP FOR ANY LACK. MAY YOUR SPIRIT FILL US WITH A THIRST FOR HOLINESS AND RIGHTEOUSNESS IN EVERY AREA OF OUR LIVES. MAY YOU USE US IN POWERFUL WAY TO BRING OTHERS TO THE SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS OUR LORD. FATHER GOD, REVIVE MY SOUL! REVIVE MY HEART FOR THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST!**

**FATHER GOD, CONTINUE TO USE THIS CRISIS WE ARE FACING TO BE THE FUEL THAT WILL IGNITE OUR SOULS TO BE VIBRANT & PASSIONATE AGAIN TO SHARE CHRIST TO OTHERS. FATHER GOD, USE US & MAKE US CHANNELS OF YOUR BLESSINGS TO OUR FRIENDS, RELATIVES, ACQUAINTANCES, & NEIGHBORS! TEACH ME TO DO THE THREE I'S STRATEGY TO SHARE THE GOSPEL – TO IDENTIFY PEOPLE THAT I WILL REACH FOR CHRIST, TO INTERCEDE FOR THEM, & TO INVEST MY TIME, TALENTS, TREASURES, & ENERGY IN THEM.**

**FATHER GOD, CONTINUE TO HEAL OUR LAND! AND HELP OUR LEADERS FROM THE PRESIDENT TO THE MUNICIPAL LEVEL TO HUMBLE THEMSELVES & SEEK YOUR GUIDANCE & WISDOM IN LEADING THIS NATION. FATHER GOD, SAVE US FROM HATRED, VIOLENCE, BITTERNES & CONFLICTS. BUT INSTEAD, MAY YOUR PEACE & JUST REIGN IN OUR MIDST. TEACH US ALL TO LIVE HUMBLY, JUSTLY & LOVINGLY! ALL IN THE NAME OF JESUS UR**

***LORD! AMEN!!!!***