

TAKEAWAY

EVERYONE, EVERYWHERE

Part Fourteen: Acts 8:1-15



At Maybridge we want to be a church of disciples who make disciples – we hope this takeaway session encourages practical outcomes in the lives of the individuals in your group. The focus of group discussion should be on becoming 'doers of the word' and not just hearers or people who enjoy a good discussion!

SHARE

Spend some time sharing how the group have been getting on with the try outs from the previous few sessions:

- What is something you care so much about that you'd stick with it, even if it became difficult?

INTRODUCTION

The book of Acts shares the account of the early church as they take the gospel, which is for everyone everywhere, to everyone everywhere.

This next section of Acts can read like a simple summary of events, but really it demonstrates how the gospel message of Jesus continued to spread and outwork in the lives of the early church on a 'street level'. In this session we explore how the gospel turns great persecution to great joy.

READ

Acts 8:1-8

DISCUSS

After all that had happened to them, why do you think the Christians continued talking about Jesus even after being forced from their homes?

'God allows His people to experience suffering and persecution'. How does that challenge the way we might normally think about what it means for God to be good?

Is there a danger in assuming that a comfortable life means we must be doing well spiritually? What might that look like in practice?

Saul was actively persecuting Christians, yet later became Paul and devoted his life to Jesus. What does his story tell us about who might be "beyond reach"?

Why do you think Christians can sometimes fall into the pattern of seeing church leaders as the people who "do ministry" while everyone else simply attends? How does this passage challenge that assumption?

If Christianity reached us because ordinary Christians kept passing it on, what might it look like for us to continue that chain?

Philip went to Samaria even though there was significant hostility between Jews and Samaritans. Who might be the equivalent of "Samaria" for us today—people or communities we might naturally avoid?

EXPLAIN

By way of review, on Sunday we drew out eight points from Acts 8:1-8:

1. God allows His people to be persecuted.
2. God uses our hardships to spread the message about Jesus.
3. God affirms that death is always sad.
4. God brings about astonishing redemption stories along the way.
5. God uses ordinary people to change the world.
6. God sends people to tell their enemies about Jesus.
7. God cares about the 'whole person'.
8. God turns pain into joy.

What would it look like, specifically, for our Christian faith to change the way we treat people we disagree with, dislike, or find difficult to understand?

Philip's ministry involved both proclaiming Jesus and responding to people's physical and practical needs. What does this suggest about the relationship between sharing the gospel and caring for people's practical needs?

Which of the eight points mentioned in the talk challenged you most? Why?

What's one practical way you can grow in that area?

How does this section of Acts change the way we think about evangelism, suffering or taking a stand for Jesus?

TRY OUT

- Which of the eight points mentioned in the talk challenged you most? Share a practical way you can grow in that area in the weeks ahead.
- The talk suggested that long-term relationships, listening, prayer and genuine care are often more effective than simply trying to persuade people. Who can you be praying for and what actions might you take to encourage or make those in your life feel safe enough to have open and honest conversations about faith?
- Continue to pray for our brothers and sisters around the world who are persecuted for their faith in Jesus. Open Doors has lots of resources to help you pray at [opendoorsuk.org/resources/prayer](https://media.opendoorsuk.org/resources/prayer). View their prayer diary online at: https://media.opendoorsuk.org/document/pdf/Prayer%20Diary.pdf?_gl=1*eu9tgi*_gcl_au*MTA2MTA5OTk1MC4xNzkwNDk4Mjl0

PRAY

- Pray for anything that has come up in your discussion and ask for the Holy Spirit's help in boldly sharing the gospel of Jesus and living out what you've discussed and learnt together.
- Pray for the persecuted church.