**Unstoppable - wk 12 – Simon Says**

**Acts is Jesus: The Sequel. Luke Vol 2 – The “what now?”**

**Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”**

**They began to experience supernatural growth and persecution. Yet unstoppable. We know it happened, because we are here.**

**Last week Stephen seals his testimony in blood - the first person to die for preaching Jesus occurs, attacked and stoned to death in the street.**

**Acts 8:1 - And Saul approved of (oversaw) their killing him. (of Stephen)**

**Religious Pharisee assigned to arrest those who spoke out on Jesus. He was tasked to stop the movement of “The Way.”**

**Act 8:1b On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. (Acts 1:8) 2 Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him.**

**3 But Saul began to destroy (ravaging) the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off both men and women and put them in prison. (was a catalyst) 4 Those who had been scattered preached the word (evangelize – announced the good news of Jesus) wherever they went.**

**Major transitional moment, before apostles did most preaching - now all the believers - everywhere they went. \*\*Told the news**

**The good news is a message that must be told & received**

**We can do a lot of things to help people, but if we do not proclaim Jesus - we miss the mission - it's an essential. It is the very reason we breath air - proclaim & build the kingdom**

* **If you are a Follower of Jesus, you are a missionary - At home, work, school, errands, when the electric guy comes to your door.**

**Church has 2 parts: Gather (Ekklesia = come) & Go (Commission) Both are a follower of Jesus. In one we grow - the other we live it and tell it.**

**The persecution that escalated was the catalyst for a greater move of God all over the region. What was meant to smother it, fueled it!**

**I think about Jim Elliot, Nate Saint and 3 others - January 8, 1956 in jungles of Ecuador, with a call from God to share the good news to an indigenous cannibal tribe in the jungle. On one visit, all attacked and killed. Jim’s wife (Elizabeth and child) and Nate’ Sister (Rachel) returned to preach the good news to the same tribe, eventually moved in w/ the tribe. Amazed at the grace of God - a revival among the tribe - soon sending their missionaries to local tribes. This started one of the greatest missionary movements of all time. Resulting ins hundreds of missionary organizations. In the same way – Stephen’s was the seed…**

**They began to go to places they never had gone to before - Today we look at one of those disciples - another delegated deacon - Phillip.**

**Acts 8:5 Philip (One of the 7 picked to wait tables – ch 6) went down (elevation wise) to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah there. (were avoided and considered lot causes – same area as the woman at the well – John 4) 6 When the crowds heard Philip and saw the signs he performed, they all paid close attention to what he said. (show and tell faith) 7 For with shrieks, impure spirits came out of many, and many who were paralyzed, or lame were healed. (Cast our demons and healed the sick) 8 So there was great joy in that city.**

**GUESS WHO GOD INVITED TO CHURCH? God's Surprise Guest List**

**5 in the next three chapters – only 2 today.**

**1. Samaritans – Lost causes - people you avoid at all cost - John 4:1-22**

**Like the Hatfield and McCoy's - (700 yrs) long Feud - Even the disciples had problems with them while with Jesus.**

**Samaritans were half-breeds with false beliefs, false view of God and traditions - and Samaritans did not like them.**

**Philip evangelized – shared the good news w/ the Samaritans.**

**People you avoid, God says, they are invited to meet Jesus.**

**2nd guest – Acts 8:9 Now for some time a man named Simon had practiced sorcery (pharmakeia / pharmacy - mind altering drugs - shaman) in the city and amazed all the people of Samaria. He boasted that he was someone great, (Philip promoted Jesus – Simon promoted himself) 10 and all the people, both high and low (status), gave him their attention and exclaimed, “This man is rightly called the Great Power of God.” (Deceived by this drug dealer) 11 They followed him because he had amazed them for a long time with his sorcery.**

**Be careful of those who claim to have supernatural abilities and promote themselves. We will see their heart w/ God is not right.**

**12 But when they believed Philip as he proclaimed the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. 13 Simon himself believed and was baptized. And he followed Philip everywhere, astonished by the great signs and miracles he saw.**

**2. Simon - Local drug dealer / cult leader - local pond scum**

**Here is person - confusing - deceiving – using – abusing people**

**That person who got your kid on drugs - the dealer on the corner who hurts others - God says - they are invited to meet Jesus.**

**14 When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to Samaria. (big guns came to check this out – is this legit? BTW – this is the last time we see John the book of Acts) 15 When they arrived, they prayed for the new believers there that they might receive the Holy Spirit, 16 because the Holy Spirit had not yet come on any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. (Water Baptism) 17 Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.**

**Two Big Questions in this passage (controversial passage 1)**

**1. Is the filling of the HS separate from salvation? (non-essential)**

**Some use this passage to say it is a separate event.**

**The Bible over and over – says when you are born again the HS moves in. You are deposited with the Spirit given the Spirit inside.**

**Then what is happening here?**

* **The HS was in them – but not upon them. (1 Cor 12:7-10)**
* **This is about the equipping power of the HS (Acts 1:8, Acts 2 and 4)**

**After salvation when the Holy Spirit falls upon God’s disciples for the purpose of doing God’s will and preaching His word.**

**These moments are unique and come and go. (1 Cor 12:11)**

**17 Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. (Better understood as they received the gifts of the Spirit – see 1 Cor 12)**

**Many suspect what happened in Acts 2 – happened here. It was something visible (manifestation - 1 Cor 12) Simon saw it.**

**Simons Offer**

**18 When Simon (formerly the sorcerer) saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles’ hands, (The Apostles had authority to bestow Spiritual gifts) he offered them money 19 and said, “Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.”**

**He didn’t just want the gifts of Spirit, he wanted authority to give them to others. He saw a power to preplace his former life – He wanted the power not the person of the HS. Give me this authority!**

**Some people in churches still do the same – seeking to use or create manifestations that they can use for their own selfish gain, authority, and wealth.**

**Peters Response**

**20 Peter answered: “May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money! (How dare you? God is not a vending machine! Check out JB Phillips translation) 21 You have no part or share in this ministry, because your heart is not right before God. (Ironically this was the same rebuke Jesus gave peter less than a year earlier)**

**22 Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord in the hope that he may forgive you for having such a thought (scheme) in your heart. 23 For I see that you are full of bitterness and captive to sin.” 24 Then Simon answered, “Pray to the Lord for me so that nothing you have said may happen to me.” (His response was a humble - Pray for me!)**

**Two Big Questions in this passage (controversial passage 2)**

**2. Was Simon truly saved? (non-essential)**

**He believed the good news, was baptized, and no longer was sorcerer. (v13) Simon came to church gathers (v18). But then this happened…**

**Some say this was evidence of a false confession.**

**I think Simon is saved Luke says he is, Philip deemed him one, Peter never says he was not - but rather his heart is not right.**

**Simon’s request was for their authority as apostles (Peter said you have no part of this ministry v20) and was rebuked for seeking selfish authority.**

**We can learn from this:**

* **Believers will still struggle with sin**

**Being a Christian does mean we will be perfect. Some sins will try to hold us captive. Only through the HS can we overcome.**

* **Believers will still struggle with heart issues**

**A heart that’s not right with God. The outside might look good but inside the heart is still drawn to the past and bitter.**

* **Salvation is the beginning of a life of growth and accountability**

**It’s just the start – the journey is just beginning. Baptism is just the beginning. We need the HS to empower and guide us.**

**We are to walk with them. Go and make disciples… teaching them… (Mat 28)**

**We all need to grow, and we all need someone who can call us out.**

**Simon was young in his faith and still captive to his old thinking. Like him - we need adult mature leaders speaking into our life, telling us, “you need to repent!”**

**Peter addresses Simon’s issue head on. Bitterness – I want that! Covetousness for power and authority. You are in bondage to and crave power. Simon was rebuked – God is not for sale!**

**Simon need was not to repent for salvation but to repent of personal sin. Some of you Christians – need to repent.**

**Unverifiable Church tradition says Simon when on to be a gnostic and false teacher – but we do not know. The story is left open… but based on the response from Simon (“pray for me”) – his heart was humbled.**

**Christian, thank God there is grace & mercy in Jesus for us as we grow**

**1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.**

* **Bonus - Even leaders need prayer to overcome sin**

**We can be susceptible to pride and bitterness too. Pray for us!**

**Pray for me – your leaders in the church. We are still growing.**

**Acts 8:25 After they had further proclaimed the word of the Lord and testified about Jesus, Peter and John returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many Samaritan villages. (The avoided and abusers - Jesus says come)**

**The main point is not about Simon – that’s a side story – the main point is… Jesus is getting preached to more and more people. It’s not just for them – it is for all nations. The kingdom is growing.**