

GROWTH + GROUPS

NAVIGATE LIFE TOGETHER

Maranatha Chapel Sermon Based Study Guide SB 11.08.2020

REJOICE IN TRIBULATIONS – ACTS 8:1-25

Receiving the Message and Relating to the Study

What insights, principles, or observations stood out to you from this week's message? Discuss with your group.

Stephen's death was the catalyst that set the motion of the wheels to carry the gospel beyond the walls of Jerusalem. The tragedy of Stephen's death scattered the believers and sparked a movement that proclaimed the gospel in Jerusalem, in all Judea, Samaria, and to the end of the earth (Acts 8:1). The scattering of believers was essentially the start of the first gospel missions. It was during a time of heavy persecution; however, the believers received power when the Holy Spirit fell upon them, a power that ignited a wild fire that continues to burn and proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ to this very day. Terullianus, an early Christian theologian born in the mid-2nd century, summed up the persecution to authorities as, "the more we are mown down by you, the more numerous we grow; the blood of Christians is seed" (Apology, ch. 50). Even in the midst of trials and tribulations, God is able to bring the hope of Jesus through the work of the Holy Spirit into a lost world, so rejoice. There is "glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope (Romans 5:3-4). Let's get into our study.

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

1. What struck you most or spoke to you from Pastor Ray's message this last weekend?
2. What are some trials and tribulations we face today?
3. Describe a time when you may have witnessed a trial or tribulation producing hope as described in Romans 5:3-4.

Digging Deeper in God's Word: Life Lessons

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 8:1-8

The persecutors of the early church, including Saul, awakened a new voice of hope in a lost world. Lay pastors, such as Philip, were appointed by the disciples to preach the gospel. Philip was set apart to minister in the temporal affairs of the church, but was so faithful in his responsibilities, he was chosen to go and preach the message of salvation to the people of Samaria. Although the Samaritans were hated by Jews, there were some believers already in Samaria. Remember, Jesus passed through Samaria on various occasions and many had already accepted Jesus as Messiah. When Philip arrived in Samaria, multitudes (1 multitude is a myriad = 10,000) received the things spoken and they witnessed the power of the Holy Spirit working miracles.

1. Notice in verse 1, during the persecution of the early church, the apostles remained in Jerusalem. Phillip, a lay pastor, baptized in the Holy Spirit, was sent to Samaria and Judea to proclaim the good news of Jesus. Who are appointed to proclaim the good news of Jesus today? (Matthew 28:19, 1 Peter 2:9)
2. The Samaritans were hated by the Jews, yet Philip did not go to Samaria on the basis of political debate, but he went there to preach Christ. In a season of political debate, how can believers bring the hope of Jesus in a political world?
3. What does a Spirit filled awakening look like in our home, our neighborhood, our city, our nation, and our world?

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 8:9-17

Many people of Samaria believed Philip, as he preached the salvation message of Jesus. Both men and women received Jesus and were baptized in the name of Jesus. Peter and John were then sent and baptized them with the Holy Spirit. To distinguish the differences, the baptism, or indwelling of the Holy Spirit occurs once at salvation. The baptism of the Holy Spirit occurs when the believers asks the Holy Spirit to fall upon them. When a believer receives the baptism of the Holy Spirit, dunamis, or dynamite power is received. This is a super natural power of the Holy Spirit and miracles will follow according to God's purpose.

1. Have you experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon you? Describe the experience.
2. Have you ever experienced the super natural power of the Holy Spirit in your life? How did this bring glory to God?

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 8:18-25

Simon, a wicked sorcerer, attracted a large following of people in Samaria. He was also described as believing after hearing the message of the gospel. When Simon saw the powerful miracles and signs that were a result of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, he wanted to purchase the baptism in the Holy Spirit. But Peter said to him, "Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be with money!" If the gift of God could be purchased, it would not be a gift. We do not receive the Holy Spirit without salvation or the baptism of the Holy Spirit through anything from the world, it is without price, but through the gift of the finished work of His beloved Son. Peter then instructs Simon to repent, or turn from his wickedness. Then Simon turned to Peter for repentance and said "Pray to the Lord for me".

1. One can believe a great deal about Jesus and not yet truly be saved. How does one know if they are truly saved? (Romans 10:9, John 15:4).
2. When Simon asked Peter to pray for his repentance, he essentially said "Peter, I put my case in your hands". Jesus is the one mediator between God and Man (John 14:6). No other person, whether we look to a priest, pastor, teacher etc., can fulfill this task, only Jesus. We come to Him and repent. (John 7:37-38). How does this encourage you?

Applying God's Word

What did you learn from this study and how does this personally speak to you? Discuss with your group.

Church history later recorded Simon Magus as a leading heretic who opposed the gospel. He later proclaimed to be the incarnation of the highest god and was a strong supporter of Gnosticism, a religious sect that believed the Hebrew Bible was the written revelation of an inferior creator god (dêmiourgos), filled with lies intended to cloud the minds and judgment of the spiritual human beings. It is important today, especially with all the fear that surrounds us, that no one deceives you. For many will come in Jesus's name claiming "I am the Messiah" (Matthew 24:4-5). We need to be awake and persevere through fear because there is "glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope (Romans 5:3-4).

1. How might you point others to the hope that is in Jesus in this fearful world?
2. The Holy Spirit desires for all believers to have Him upon us through the baptism of the Holy Spirit, giving great authority and power in His wake-up call! How will you answer that call?

PRAYER

Jesus, Your name is above every name. You are the only One who could ever save. You are worthy of every breath. We live for you. Show us Your ways and pour Your Holy Spirit upon us. Lead us in the steps of righteousness and let us shine a beacon of hope in this dark world, proclaiming the good news of salvation to all.

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes" Romans 1:16).