

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

APRIL 12TH, 2026 // THE BOOK OF ACTS

UNSTOPPABLE (ACTS 8:1-8)

SAUL AGREED

Chapter 7 finished with the execution of Stephen. Saul stood over the garments of the council and watched in approval as Stephen cried out for their forgiveness.

- That moment may not have changed Saul, but it did create a lasting memory. In Acts 22:20, his testimony included what he did that day.

- **Our testimony is about how God has changed us—even the worst of us.**

SEVERE PERSECUTION

Empowered by the death of Stephen, the religious leaders began to persecute the new Believers in Jerusalem.

- They may have been chased out of town, but they continued to share the gospel of Jesus, just as He predicted in 1:8.
- **Persecution does not stop the gospel; it actually causes it to be shared even more. The truth is unstoppable.**

SAUL RAVAGED THE CHURCH

As the word spread, Saul sought to eliminate it by destroying the community of Believers.

- Paul's response was brutal, but he was also devout. He saw the Church as deliberate imposters who spoke and taught blasphemy against a holy God. He believed they must be stopped, and he wouldn't quit.
- **Losing or not having community will weaken authentic Believers. What will we do to stay in community?**

PHILIP PROCLAIMED THE MESSIAH

As many left Jerusalem, they continued to preach the word, establishing communities of Believers wherever they went.

- Luke specifically mentions Philip as he goes to speak to the Samaritans.
- Philip left the persecution to share the gospel with a community despised by Jerusalem.
- **Who do we tell? Will we tell the people who don't like us?**

THEY WERE ALL PAYING ATTENTION

During this unique time of transition for the early Church, some were gifted by the Holy Spirit to perform miracles as they shared the truth of Jesus and His resurrection.

- The miracles were meant to authenticate the message by revealing the power of God.
- **When God does amazing things, some will see Him, while others will see opportunities for themselves.**

ARTIFICIAL (ACTS 8:9-13)

SIMON THE SORCERER

Luke introduces Simon before continuing the story of the Samaritans.

- Simon had been in town before Philip and was already an influential character because of his demon-empowered magic.
- **While charisma, confidence, and even miracles may be impressive, they alone do not indicate gifts or power from God.**

THEY BELIEVED PHILIP

When the Samaritans heard the truth about Jesus from Philip, they believed him and became followers of Jesus.

- They didn't believe because of the miracles; they believed because the Kingdom of God was established in Jesus Christ.
- **We must understand that what we have been seeking is a savior who delivers us from the eternal penalty of sin, not earthly consequences.**

EVEN SIMON BELIEVED

Luke oddly says that "even Simon" believed.

- So, he was baptized, and then he began following Philip everywhere, amazed at the signs and miracles.
- It seems that Simon had become as infatuated with the events as his followers had been with his magic.
- Prayer and service are clearer signs of authentic faith than obsession with power.

AUTHENTIC (ACTS 8:14-25)

PETER, JOHN, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

After the Word of God had been shared with the Samaritans and many believed, Peter and John arrived to unite the Jews and Samaritans.

- This was a unique transitional time in the early Church, and an apostolic witness was an affirmation of their authentic faith in Christ.
- This initial growth began in Jerusalem, spread to the Samaritans, and will continue to the Gentiles in Chapter 10, as Believers around the world begin to enter into fellowship with Christ.

SIMON EXPOSED

Driven by a desire for spiritual power, Simon tries to buy the power he just witnessed.

- He doesn't understand the grace of God, and his heart is not right before God.
- He wanted their religion to be his new tool.
- Whenever religion is used to make its leaders seem great and powerful, or it becomes a tool to make money, it has become corrupt!

"YOU HAVE NO PART...IN THIS MATTER"

Peter sees Simon and all of his deceitfulness, then makes a strong statement about Simon's future.

- He would be destroyed with his money because his heart was poisoned by bitterness and bound by wickedness.
- It was a hard truth, and Peter was right to tell it. But He didn't stop there.

"PRAY TO THE LORD"

Peter instructs Simon to pray for forgiveness and repent of the wickedness in his heart.

- Simon's response reveals that he is still unwilling to admit his sin. He is also afraid.
- No one else can repent of our sin. Even if confronted with conviction, we must confess and repent.
- God is not the one giving us fear. He is offering freedom from sin.

"THEY TRAVELED BACK TO JERUSALEM"

Simon isn't mentioned again, and we can't be sure of his final destination.

- As Peter and John traveled back to Jerusalem, they continued to preach the same gospel that every authentic Believer was sharing all throughout the land.
- **Even when the Church was in danger of being corrupted from within, God protected it and made it stronger.**

ZEAL

- Zeal is being passionate for a cause.
- **Being zealous can be positive.**
- **Problems happen when we are zealous for the wrong things or the wrong reasons. What are we so passionate about that we are almost unstoppable? How far down the list is our relationship with Christ?**

PREPARED

- Everyone has plans and opinions.
- **Some want to destroy their opposition, and some want to take over.**
- **How will we handle those who want to destroy us? How will we handle those who have an agenda that doesn't align with God's Word? We must be prepared to respond with truth and patience.**

COMPASSION

- Everyone needs compassion.
- **We can easily forget how God has been patient and compassionate with us.**
- **How people respond to the gospel may reveal what they believe, but how we respond to them may reveal our relationship with Christ. Every response is an open door. Will we take the next opportunity to listen? To share?**