

**Date** : 14 June 2026  
**Theme** : The Holy Spirit in building the Kingdom of God  
**Topic** : The Spirit at Work with believers everywhere  
**Passage** : Acts 8  
**Key Verse** : *“Those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word”  
Acts 8:4 (NIV)*

## Introduction

Acts 8 serves as the fulfillment of the prophetic roadmap laid out by Jesus in *Acts 1:8*: “...you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Acts 8 opens with the church under pressure in Jerusalem. Stephen had just given his bold testimony before the Sanhedrin, and for it, he was stoned to death. Saul stood by and gave his approval which launched a fierce persecution against the believers in Jerusalem.

The church from Jerusalem scattered into Judea and Samaria. What looked like a crisis was turned into God’s strategy. Instead of silencing the gospel, the scattering spread it. *Acts 8:4* says, “*Those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word.*”

This scattering accelerated the pace of the church to fulfil *Acts 1:8* everywhere as the Holy Spirit empowered them. Ordinary men and women filled with the Holy Spirit became bold witnesses.

### **1. God reigns in all circumstance, especially in persecution (Acts 8:1-8)**

#### (a) God is the Master strategist

- Grab *kairos* opportunities
- The persecution scattered believers out of Jerusalem, into Judea, Samaria and beyond, those who were scattered preached the word wherever they went (*Acts 8:4*)
  - Scatter = sowing seeds, in a sense of sowing and reaping.  
Sometimes we have to be shaken out of our comfortable state before we start to exercise our Holy Spirit power.
  - Be weary of prosperity and excessive ease (living in our comfort zone). Blessed are the persecuted, because God wants us to experience the joy in flexing our spiritual muscles and to attain to eternal glory.
- Preach the Any 3 way (Anyone, Anywhere, Anytime)
  - God provides open door.
  - Don’t look for professional preachers. We are the witnesses.

#### (b) Stephen provided the courageous model in a hostile world

*Acts 11:19* mentions: “... the persecution that broke out when Stephen was killed.”

God foresaw the pushback from the enemy. God’s strategy was to prepare the church for combat. So, He positioned His best combatant to fire the first salvo. Stephen’s fearless attack on the corrupt religious leadership provided the inspiration for the church to keep preaching and not to back down. Stephen, who won the *stephanos*, the victor’s crown, set the example the church needed.

## 2. Preachers bring good news and impact the world (Acts 8:4-25)

“... there was great joy in the city” (Acts 8:8)

(a) How did great joy come to the city? Philip went to Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah there (Acts 8:6)

- Who was Philip?
- A table server, one who served the church family in practical ways. As a Hellenistic Jew with Greek background, it positioned him to communicate with the Samaritans.
- The Hebraic Jews were too tradition bound, to cross the language and cultural gaps. Cross cultural Christians are God’s chosen combatants. We too need to be cross cultural in our outlook.

(b) What should be expected? (Acts 8:5-24)

Demons were cast out and the paralyzed healed to authenticate the gospel.

(i) Persecution enhanced the spread of the gospel rather than hindered it.

(ii) The power and speed of Philip’s ministry in Samaria was so great that re-enforcement was needed. Peter and John came to pray for the Samaritans and to conduct the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Opportunities were everywhere. Philip was so busy. But when labourers are few God has to send Philip. (Acts 8:14-17).

(iii) Philip’s ministry to the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-40) shows us 2 principles:

- Availability is more valuable than ability. God had to re-direct busy Philip in the far north to go to the far South about 150km. The window of opportunity could not wait.
- Why didn’t the Jerusalem believers recognize the Ethiopian official - a man of colour and influence — standing among them?

Believers’ biggest failure is lack of availability. We seize every life change to be excused from service. Parents use their children as excuse. Fathers say they are busy with job obligations.

Philip rushed to the Gaza road with minimum information; preached the gospel, travelled south accompanying the Ethiopian, explained the gospel from the Greek bible and then baptized him. Thus, launching the Ethiopian church. Needless to say Philip was provided with a ‘helicopter service’ to get back quickly.

## 3. How does Acts 8 shape BC church culture

How would the believers’ response to persecution and proclamation of the gospel in Acts 8 determine the culture of how BC will do church?

(a) The scattering forced believers out, turning ordinary believers into witnesses, directly executing Jesus’ command.

Each week, we too gather to worship and then the church ‘scatters’. We are a scattering people. So, may we scatter doing the preaching of the Word. The Lord is orchestrating all this in our lives, opening up opportunities for the proclamation of the Word.

But alas, unless everyone makes himself available to God, we will fail to catch the *kairos* opportunities presented.

(b) The hindrance blocking fruitfulness – serving with selfish motives

- Simon's history of showing off caused him to covet power.  
*Acts 8:13* seems to suggest Simon was converted and baptized. But his heart remained carnal.  
*Acts 8:18-19* shows Simon's unchanged nature, asking to buy the ability to give people the Holy Spirit. Untutored Christians think transactionally and selfishly.  
Peter's word of wisdom – "*your heart is not right*" (*Acts 8:21*), "*full of bitterness*" (*Acts 8:23*).  
Peter was trying to help Simon repent.  
Unforgiveness and other strongholds must be broken. We do so in our Spiritual Formation event.
- Warning to us: Outward baptism and merely hanging out with Christians (attending cell) do not solve old habits of sin in our heart. This is where follow up in discipleship comes in after baptism. This is the heart of BC's culture.

**Application**

1. Preaching:

The Spirit worked powerfully mainly through church members not just the apostles in *Acts 8*. He's here now. And He wants to work through available, faithful you.  
Can you make yourself available to serve?  
Ask God for alertness to spot open doors for greater impact.

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2. The Availability Audit

On a scale of 1-10, how available will you be for the Holy Spirit this week?  
Not how busy you are for church. How available are you if God interrupts your plan for 1 person?

0    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

What's 1 thing you can clear this week so God has space to use you?

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3. Who's in Your Chariot?

Name 1 person in your daily life who's reading 'Isaiah' seeking understanding?

Who's your 'Ethiopian official'? - A colleague, neighbour, relative? \_\_\_\_\_

What's 1 simple step you'll take to reach him/her before next Sunday?

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