

eKids: Sun 8th August

Today we will see that the **good news continues to spread** from Jerusalem, and we'll also be amazed at how God's **good gifts are free**, to be used for His work and His glory.

Acts 8:5-25

The believers who were scattered went everywhere, preaching the message. Philip went to the principal city in Samaria and preached the Messiah to the people there. The crowds paid close attention to what Philip said, as they listened to him and saw the miracles that he performed. Evil spirits came out from many people with a loud cry, and many paralyzed and lame people were healed. So there was great joy in that city.

A man named Simon lived there, who for some time had astounded the Samaritans with his magic. He claimed that he was someone great, and everyone in the city, from all classes of society, paid close attention to him.

"He is that power of God known as 'The Great Power,'" they said.

They paid this attention to him because for such a long time he had astonished them with his magic. But when they believed Philip's message about the good news of the Kingdom of God and about Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Simon himself also believed; and after being baptized, he stayed close to Philip and was astounded when he saw the great wonders and miracles that were being performed.

The apostles in Jerusalem heard that the people of Samaria had received the word of God, so they sent Peter and John to them. When they arrived, they prayed for the believers that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For the Holy Spirit had not yet come down on any of them; they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

Simon saw that the Spirit had been given to the believers when the apostles placed their hands on them. So he offered money to Peter and John, and said,

"Give this power to me too, so that anyone I place my hands on will receive the Holy Spirit."

But Peter answered him,

"May you and your money go to hell, for thinking that you can buy God's gift with money! You have no part or share in our work, because your heart is not right in God's sight. Repent, then, of this evil plan of yours, and pray to the Lord that he will forgive you for thinking such a thing as this. For I see that you are full of bitter envy and are a prisoner of sin."

Simon said to Peter and John,

"Please pray to the Lord for me, so that none of these things you spoke of will happen to me."

After they had given their testimony and proclaimed the Lord's message, Peter and John went back to Jerusalem. On their way they preached the Good News in many villages of Samaria.

Re-telling the story...

Remember that at the beginning of Acts Jesus told his apostles

"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 end of the earth." (Acts 1 verse 8)

At the beginning of this passage we are told that there are many Christians who are scattered and are preaching wherever they go. It's amazing that the bad things that are happening to these early followers are making them leave Jerusalem and fulfil Jesus' promise that the good news will go out to the whole world!

So that's how Philip (an early leader in the church) finds himself in Samaria.

Now the people in Samaria were NOT the Jews favourite type of people (understatement), so it's kind of important to see that this message is for everyone EVEN those people we don't like or don't think SHOULD hear. Philip knows this and preached to them, did wonderful miracles, people paid him attention and were joyful because of what he said and did.

ENTER SIMON.....

Now Simon was a sort of magician. He amazed the crowds, they liked to listen to him and followed him around. He was THE MAN. His stage name could've been "Stupendous Simon" or "Sorcery Is Us", or "Mr Magic", BUT he picked a far less humble name for himself, he liked to be called "THE GREAT POWER OF GOD". EEP!

When the crowds heard Philip speak about Jesus something amazing happened, a fantastic miracle - they believed, and were baptised - even Simon! Simon was amazed at what Philip could do.

The apostles Peter and John then came from Jerusalem to lay their hands on these new believers so they could receive the Spirit. Now this is a bit unusual - but let's just keep on with the story...

Simon was captivated by this ability to give the Spirit by laying hands on people and wanted it too. So in a rather strange move he asks "Here's some money, give me that power"

NOW - just remember that this power was given by God to the apostles to do their mission. The Spirit is a PERSON not a SUPER POWER, and is used for the spreading of the good news and for giving glory to God NOT as a way to bring in the crowds and have them be amazed at YOU.

So Simon got it badly wrong. And Peter is straight to the point, telling him "You and your money can DO one!"

There is a little hope for Simon, at least he recognises he is in deep trouble now, but will he repent? - We don't know.

The end of the story begins as upbeat as it starts - the apostles go home, and what do they do on their way through all the different villages? PREACH of course!

The mission IS ON!!

God's mission and the message will spread no matter what.

God's gift is FREE and is for God's work (not ours!).

Have a think....



❖ **Why was Philip in Samaria?**

The followers of Jesus had suffered many things and so had scattered into Judea and Samaria.



❖ **What did he do when he was there?**

He performed many miracles and was preaching about Jesus.

❖ **Have a look through the passage and see how many times you can see any word to do with preaching the good news**

(eg preach, believed, baptised, good news)

There are lots to be found....here are just a few: preached the Messiah, they believed, they were baptized, they received the Holy Spirit, they preached the Good News...



❖ **What do we find out about Simon from the passage?**

He is a very popular magician. He claims he is using power from God. He is boastful. He has lots of followers.

❖ **What did Peter and John do when they arrived and what was Simon's reaction?**

The 2 apostles lay their hands on the new believers, and they receive the Holy Spirit. Simon sees this power and wants it for himself, so he offers money for it!



❖ **Why did Peter get so cross?**

This "power" that Simon tries to buy is God's free gift from God to give to whom He chooses. The apostles have been given a mission to preach to the whole world BY JESUS! Simon possibly wants the power to have the attention back on him and to draw a crowd, but the Spirit's work points only to Jesus, not ourselves. Also worth remembering that the Spirit is a PERSON, not a SUPER POWER!!

TOUGHER QUESTIONS – EEK!

Are we sometimes more amazed by the world and its "stuff" than by God? (like Simon's "followers")

Simon amazed people with fancy tricks, what sort of things might you find amazing, what holds your attention MORE than God?

For me it might be a game on my phone that fascinates me more than reading my bible. or it might be trying to fit in with what others are doing forgetting that I'm a child of God and should be pleasing Him not being swayed by others.

What is it for you?



Why is it so important for us to know that God GIVES FREE gifts?

This is sort of a silly thought BUT...how much would we have to pay if they were for sale?! I mean when you think of it that way it's crazy isn't it!

The fabulous news is that God is so generous that he gives amazing things to people who don't deserve it at all, in fact we deserve NOTHING (well, worse than nothing really 😊) We can't earn God's love, we can't buy his gifts.

Remember from Romans 5 v 8

"But God has shown us how much he loves us—it was while we were still sinners that Christ died for us!"

God's grace is AMAZING, it's undeserved, always has been, always will be – HOORAY!



Can you think of any ways that you might be serving yourself instead of Jesus?

This is a tricky one....I find that even when I start serving with a right heart it can quickly turn into selfish pride. A bit like "hey everyone, look at me and how much I'm loving the Lord and serving him!"

Or maybe my prayers end up being super focused on me and my problems (not bad in itself, God our Father wants to hear our inner most desires and thoughts), rather than praising God and thanking him for the amazing things he is doing in me and those around me.

What might it be for you?

Remember – God loves us and the Spirit is in each of us to help us repent of sinful ways – hallelujah 😊



Why is it important to be part of a church family do you think? (HINT: think about how Peter speaks to Simon)

When we try and go it alone it would be really easy to get lost in our own thoughts, do our own thing, and stray from what God is asking of us because no-one would know (except us and God). This is why our family, church, and kids groups are super important, because they can help us to see the mistakes we are making and they love us enough to tell us.



Prayer ideas

Thank you that your message CANNOT be stopped.

Thank you that there IS good news because of the Lord Jesus.

Thank you that the gospel was and is unstoppable.

We are sorry that we sometimes make things about us and not Jesus.

Praise you that we can repent and be forgiven.

Praise you that you are a generous and gracious God

Help us to speak about Jesus and give you the glory you deserve.

Activities

- ❖ Crack the code
- ❖ Wordsearch
- ❖ Colour the map
- ❖ Craft – spread of the gospel
- ❖ Crossword

- ❖ *If you are accessing this via the website then worksheets are available via email – please contact Abby on 07950064272*