

# *The Power Of The Gospel Preached*

## TEACHING NOTES

### KEY VERSES

Acts 8:1-9:31

### KEY THEMES

The power of the Gospel for those who believe

God uses people of faith



**Persecution of the Church (Acts 8:1-3)**



**The Church scattered (Acts 8:4)**

The Good News


**Philip (Acts 8:5-40)**




Ready to give an answer (1 Peter 3:13-16)



The power of the Gospel for those who believe (Acts 8:12, 25)

 **Saul, Pharisee of Pharisees (Acts 9:1-2)** Saul's worldview (Philippians 3:5-11) **Meeting Jesus (Acts 9:3-6)** Blind (Acts 9:7-9)**Becoming Paul (Acts 9:10-30)**

*And immediately he began preaching about Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is indeed the Son of God!" – Acts 9:20*

 Taught by Jesus (Galatians 1:15-18) **The Church grew (Acts 9:31)****Lesson Objective**

*To see the power of the Gospel in people's lives*

## PERSONAL STUDY

This is your opportunity for ongoing study of the material from our recent session. God is the one who is actively revealing His character and His plan as we interact with His Word.

### Study 1

#### Prepare your heart and mind

Whenever we spend time reading and studying God's Word, we should ask God to prepare our hearts and minds to receive the truth that He has for us. Take a moment to do this now.

#### God uses people of faith

#### Read Acts 6:1-6

In this passage we are introduced to Philip, one of the seven men chosen to help with the daily distribution of food in Jerusalem so the apostles could continue their focus of prayer, preaching and teaching.

What does verse 3 say about the character of Philip and the other men?

#### Read Acts 8:4-8

What was happening in Jerusalem that caused Philip to end up in Samaria?

How did God use Philip differently in Samaria than He did in Jerusalem?

Philip was appointed to distribute food in Jerusalem, but as the church was scattered, he found himself in Samaria. Having been equipped by the Apostle's teaching, he began to share with the locals about the biggest thing impacting his life at the time – Christ.

#### Read Acts 8:26-29

Does it make sense that Philip would leave Samaria, a territory where the Gospel was taking-off, and go to the Gaza Desert?

Why did he go?

Philip receives little information from the angel other than to go. That he went demonstrates his faith. It's not until Philip sees the Ethiopian and is prompted by the Holy Spirit to go closer that he begins to understand why he is directed there.

Have you ever had a time when God led you away from your normal plans? How did you respond?

Think about these two men – one an ordinary man and the other a Treasurer of Ethiopia. Without the Spirit's leading, do you think these two men would have interacted due to their different cultural and social backgrounds?

This is insight into the obedience and boldness of Philip to act outside of his worldview. Because Philip understood God's plan to spread His message, when he met an Ethiopian with questions he saw the opportunity for what it was. He responded in faith to what God was leading him to do.



### **Read Acts 8:30-40**

How did Philip proceed and eventually lead this man to repentance and baptism?

Do you believe that the same God that directed Philip, an ordinary man of faith, might direct you into the path of someone who needs Christ?

Are you equipped so that if you were asked to share about Jesus, you could? If you're not, what are you unsure about? Who could you pursue to become more confident?

Reading stories like this one, seeing over and over the faithfulness of God to be with His disciples, is one of the ways that your faith will be built. Another way is experiencing God's faithfulness firsthand in your own life. When an opportunity is placed in front of you, step out in obedience, be bold, and let God show you His faithfulness.

### **Key verse**

Put to memory 1 Peter 3:15b. Place the provided scripture card somewhere you can see it throughout the day.

**Prayer time**

Think back to last week's lesson on prayer. Incorporate some of the elements we discussed into this prayer time.

**Study 2****Prepare your heart and mind**

Take a moment to just be silent before God. Try to push away all of life's distractions. Ask God to focus your attention on Him and His Word during this time.

**Read Philippians 3:5-11**

Based on verses 5-6, give a summary of who Saul was.

Saul was a Pharisee of Pharisees. He followed all the rules all the time. He was zealous and persecuted the Church. While we cannot fully understand Saul's transformation because we were never Pharisees, we often have a similar attitude. Think of the times in your life that you thought being a Christian meant following a bunch of rules: do this, don't do that, say that, don't go there, don't hang out with those people...

What are some Christian rules that you followed in the past? Why did you follow them?

Did any good come out of following such strict rules? Did they bring you any closer to God?

In verses 7-8 Paul points out how all the things he used to think were so important mean nothing to him anymore because of what Christ did for him. Nothing can compare to knowing Christ.

What does it mean to know Christ?

Do you know Christ or do you just know about Him? Do you want to know Him more?

Saul's past and what he thought made someone a righteous person originally got in the way of him knowing Christ. What are things in your life that get in the way of you knowing Him?

Pause a moment and ask God to make you aware of any hindrances in your life that prevent you from knowing Him more.

How did someone become righteous in the past? How does someone become righteous now? (See verse 9)

Righteousness is no longer based on doing all the right things – like obeying the Law. Our righteousness depends on our faith.

Read verse 10 again. As you read, think about who Saul once was. What an incredible transformation he went through. He transformed from a Pharisee of Pharisees to a devoted Christ follower who wanted to experience God's mighty power and share in Christ's death.

Keeping Saul's story in your mind, how has God transformed you?

Because of your relationship with God, what things do you long for?

### **Key verse**

Continue to work on memorizing 1 Peter 3:15b. See if you can write it out from memory below.

### **Prayer time**

Thank God for this time you've spent studying His Word. Thank Him for the example of Saul's transformation. Ask Him to continue to show you how He has, and still is, transforming you. Thank Him that our righteousness no longer comes from attempting to obey the Law but from our faith in Christ.

## PARENT GUIDE

The story of Saul's conversion is a great bedtime story to read to your children. The majority of us don't have an elaborate conversion story like this one, but we do have a story of faith. Use the story of Saul's conversion to share your faith story with your children. Share how God has changed your heart.

### Bedtime Story

**Say:** We all go through changes in our lives. But when we believe in Jesus, He changes us in big ways. Listen to this story from the Bible about a man whose life was changed when he saw who Jesus was.

**Read:** Acts 9:1-19. If you have older children, take turns reading the chapter together. If you have younger kids, summarize the story for them.

**Say:** At the time of the events of Acts 9, many Christians had fled from persecution in Jerusalem. Saul was intent on tracking down Christians, even traveling the 150 miles to Damascus to bring Christians back to Jerusalem as prisoners. But Saul discovered that God had other plans for his life.

After encountering the risen Jesus on the road to Damascus, Saul saw Jesus as Lord and lived his life telling others about the good news of Jesus. The intensity with which he pursued Christians before meeting Jesus remained, but its purpose changed to telling people about Jesus.

**Discuss:** What changed in Saul's heart after meeting Jesus?  
How has knowing Jesus changed your heart? (This is the perfect time to share your faith story.)

Ananias knew who Saul was and what he did to Christians. What do you think he was feeling as he followed God's call to go and see Saul? Why?

**Say:** Sometimes God may ask us to do something that makes us a little uneasy or nervous, but just like He did for Ananias, God will prepare the way for us. We just have to be willing to obey Him.

**Read and pray:** Pray together using Psalm 51:10, *Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a loyal spirit within me.*

**OPTIONAL STUDY**

The book of Acts is the account of the newly empowered Church preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ to the world around them. We see the disciples speak the message of repentance from sin and faith in Jesus, and the hearers believe. Notice the hearers of the Gospel did not run to an altar and there was no special prayer prayed but they simply believed the message about Jesus and their sins were forgiven. In John 6, Jesus' followers asked Him what they must do to accomplish the works of God. Jesus responded by telling them that believing in the One that God sent was the work that God required. It was not good works the Father was looking for, but it was faith in His Son. The Bible is clear that good works flow out of real faith (James 2), it is not the works that appease God. It is faith from the heart that alone pleases God (Hebrews 11) and allows the blood of Jesus to pay for our sins.

**Read Acts 8:26-40**

Who sent Philip to the Ethiopian?

What was God using to draw the Ethiopian to Himself and why was he not able to understand the message in Isaiah?

What message was the Ethiopian missing? (verse 35)

What was the Ethiopian's response that allowed him to be baptized into the family of God?

We see then that we become a child of God only by faith in the fact that Jesus is the Son of God. It was only after this realization that the Ethiopian responded and was baptized. The baptism was an outward response of what could only happen first in the heart. Romans 10:10 says, *For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by confessing with your mouth that you are saved.* The only way for mankind to please the perfect and Holy God is by faith in His Son Jesus.