

## Community Group Discussion Questions

---

### **“The Sin of Simon”**

#### **Acts 8:4-25**

**Sermon Series Title:** “Church Beginnings”

**Sermon Series Summary:** From now until around Easter, we will be in the book of Acts, covering chapters 1-12. After the Ascension of Jesus Christ, we see the NT church being born by the power of the Holy Spirit. Through this series, we see the church being built, the kingdom going forth, and the gospel being proclaimed.

**Setting:** The book of Acts is a transitional book between the resurrection of Jesus and the established local churches of the epistles. With Jesus’ call to the church in Acts 1, we see how the gospel spreads to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the end of the earth.

**Summary:** For the past few weeks, we looked at the ministry and martyrdom of Stephen, the Deacon. For this and next week, we will be looking at the ministry of Philip, another Deacon. We see Philip scattered to Samaria and proclaiming the gospel to them. Then, Simon the Magician attempts to buy the power of the Spirit and is condemned for it. In the same way, we try to buy or earn the Spirit and other blessings in Christ. This passage teaches us that salvation is a gift that brings us to the Giver Himself.

**Sermon Points:**

1. The Salvation of the Samaritans
2. The Sending of the Spirit
3. The Sin of Simon
4. The Story of our Savior

**Main Idea:** *“Jesus has paid it all, and now we can proclaim Him.”*

**Opening Question**

1. Share a story about when you or someone else have shared the gospel with an unbeliever. What stuck out to you? Any lessons learned?

*(Answers will vary.)*

## Community Group Discussion Questions

***We saw last week that persecution led to the scattering of the church, but the church continued to preach the gospel. We will see the ministry of Philip in our passage today as he shares the gospel with unbelieving Samaria.***

### ***Read Acts 8:4-25***

2. What do you think about Philip's story and how God used it for His purposes?  
How does that shed light on your story?

*(Philip wasn't planning on going to Samaria, but he went there because of persecution. However, that didn't deter him from proclaiming Christ. Instead, we see that he proclaims Christ, accompanied by signs, and many confess faith and are baptized, including Simon the Magician.*

*We see that this is the perfect instrument for God's salvation for Samaria. The Jews and Samaritans were enemies. They hated each other. After the Assyrian exile in 721 BC, the Jews intermarried with the Cushites and Assyrians, while the Jews from the Babylonian exile in 586 BC remained ethnically pure after Ezra and Nehemiah called them not to intermarry. This was a point of contention that led to division and differences in theology. The Samaritans had a different temple (Mt. Gerizim) and Scripture (only the first five books).*

*Philip is the man for the job. He is not a Hebrew Jew but a Hellenist Jew. He didn't speak Aramaic but Greek. He wasn't an apostle, but he was a Deacon. He knew what it meant to be kicked out of one's land as he was driven out because of persecution, just like the Samaritans' ancestors because of the Assyrian exile. Philip wasn't bringing another Jewish religion, but he was bringing a new religion altogether.*

*God has created us and shaped our stories for our good and for His glory. There may have been trials we have gone through and struggles we may have had that allow us to speak better and more powerfully into other people's lives with the message of Christ. God may have saved us from a dark place, and now we are able to speak to the people in those dark places with the hope of Christ. God has provided us with gifts and relationships that have opened the door for the gospel.)*

3. The Samaritans being baptized and receiving the Holy Spirit shows us that there are no second-class citizens in the kingdom of God. How does that make you feel about your place in the kingdom of God?

*(Answers will vary.)*

## Community Group Discussion Questions

---

### 4. What was Simon the Magician's sin? How do we fall into that sin?

*(Simon wants more fame and power than he had with just his magic. Because Philip had a great following and people were receiving the Holy Spirit through the apostles, Simon wants that following and the power to give the Holy Spirit as well. To obtain it, he tries to pay for it. He thinks he can buy/earn salvation and the Holy Spirit.)*

*We fall into this sin whenever we think we can buy/earn our salvation or favor from God. This includes times when we trust in our works and goodness for our forgiveness, when we think God loves/hates us based on our performance, when we try to obey and follow God's commands to receive a certain outcome, when we think God owes us something because of something we have done, etc.*

*When we do this, we do not fully trust in Christ as our Lord and Savior. We desire the gift more than the Giver. We only see God as a transaction for us to receive our idols.*

*Jesus paid it all. He alone is our Savior. We must trust in Him alone, and through our faith, He becomes our joy and desire. He doesn't become a means to obtain the idols we worship/love, but He is the object of our worship/love because of His love for us first.)*

**Final Thoughts:** *In our passage, we see the joy of our salvation come upon Samaria. We see the Lord using Philip to share Christ with them, and we see the sovereignty of God, shaping Philip to be the instrument of God for the proclamation of the gospel. This shows us that God has shaped us to be the people we are today for His glory and kingdom. Simon's sin shows us our sin whenever we try to earn/buy the blessing, salvation, power, and favor of God. However, we must trust in Christ alone for our salvation. Jesus paid it all fully for our sin, drinking the cup of the wrath of God dry. When we trust, He becomes the center. Our hearts grow to love and desire Him more than all the gifts He sends. Who is Jesus to you?*