

UNSTOPPABLE

THE CHURCH JESUS INTENDED

STUDY TOOLS

Sunday, May 31, 2026

Teaching: *When Bad is Good*

Key Scripture: Acts 8:1–8

CEDAR VALLEY

5-DAY READING PLAN WITH QUESTIONS:

Monday: Acts 21:27–22:29

Tuesday: Acts 22:30–23:35

Wednesday: Acts 24:1–27

Thursday: Acts 25:1–27

Friday: Acts 26:1–23

1. What does this passage tell you about God?
2. What does this passage tell you about people?
3. If this is God's Word (The Bible), what do I need to do?
4. What's your takeaway?
5. Who would you tell?

MEMORY VERSE:

Romans 8:28

And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to His purpose for them.

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION:

When bad things happen, it's painful. How can we ever view them as good? Acts 8 reminds us that God can use even the hardest moments for His purposes and glory. After Stephen is killed in Acts 7, a massive wave of persecution breaks out against the church led by Saul, and believers are scattered everywhere. You would think this would mean the Church is crushed! But instead of stopping the gospel, the persecution actually spreads it. Sometimes the very thing we would never choose becomes the very thing God uses to position us, grow us, and shine through us. The mission of God is not dependent on perfect circumstances. When it feels like something is falling apart, God may be putting something together. God can use pressure to unleash purpose.

Questions:

Ice Breaker: If you had to live this week over again, would you change anything? If so, what would that be?

1. Read Acts 8:1-8 together as a group. In Acts 8:1, what are your initial impressions of Saul? What do the details tell us about his attitude toward the church at this point in the story? How do verses 1–3 help us understand how serious and widespread this persecution was?
2. Verse 3 says Saul went "from house to house" dragging men and women into prison. What does this tell us about the personal cost of following Jesus for the early believers?
3. Before reading verse 4, what would you naturally expect to happen to the church after this kind of suffering and persecution?
4. Verse 4 says the scattered believers "preached the Good News wherever they went." What stands out to you about the response of the believers?

5. Why is Philip going to Samaria such a surprising and important moment in the story? What tensions existed between Jews and Samaritans? (See Notes)
6. What is one hard situation you're currently facing where you can begin asking, "God, what are You doing through this?"
7. In his sermon, Pastor Neal said, "What if God is not abandoning you, but repositioning you? What if the pressure you're feeling isn't to crush you, it's to spread something?" How does this help bring perspective to your situation?

NOTES

Question 5—

Samaria was the capital of the northern kingdom. After Assyria conquered it, they took all the people who had any wealth captive, pretty much just the poor people were left. The people then intermarried with a lot of the non-Jews who moved in. After that, Jews looked at Samaritans and said:

- You're compromised.
- You're unclean.
- You're not really us!

There was deep racial, cultural, and religious tension. In John 4 we're told that the Jews refused to have anything to do with the Samaritans.

In Luke 9 it says that the disciples wanted to call down fire from heaven on the Samaritans. That tells us what they thought of Samaritans! And this is where Philip goes—not because he planned it or it was comfortable, but because he was scattered.