



# SERMON NOTES

Sunday, April 11, 2021 | Pastor Scott Boerckel

## **“The Persecution and Growth of the Church”**

Acts 8:1-8

1. The beginning of great persecution of the church (Acts 8:1-3)
2. The great persecution leads to much joy. (Acts 8:4-8)

## Table Talk

- 1) Does persecution come little by little or all at once? How do we see both in this passage? What are some signs that persecution of Christians is coming to our present world little by little? What parts of the world has it come all at once?
- 2) Does the scattering of believers mean that they were lacking courage or giving in to fear? (v. 1) Why do you think that most were scattered but the apostles stayed in Jerusalem? What relationship does this scattering have to Jesus' command in Acts 1:8? How does that relationship assure us of God's good purposes in persecution?
- 3) How does the burial of Stephen demonstrate the courage of the first church? (v. 2) What kinds of actions was Saul taking? (v. 3) What might be hinted at in the phrase "house after house" regarding the organization of the pathways to discipleship in the first church? (v. 3)
- 4) What did those who were scattered do? (v. 4) Why should we think deeply about what these scattered ones did? What was the intention of the persecutors, like Saul? What actually happened?
- 5) What was Philip's official ministry position (see Acts 6:3-6)? What did he do in addition to his official ministry position? (v. 5) Is it important that every believer not only have "official" places of ministry but also that each believer is active in sharing his or her faith? Why or why not?
- 6) How did the crowds in Samaria respond to Philip's preaching? (v. 6) What kinds of signs did Philip do to confirm the Gospel message? (v. 7) Why might the Jews of this time period think it unusual that the first detailed account of the Gospel spreading outside Jerusalem is in Samaria? Where is your "Samaria"? What other examples can you think of where great persecution led to much joy?