

***The Persecuted Church***  
***Acts 8:1-8***

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**Getting Started**

- ❖ When have you seen resistance, subtle or overt, to the gospel of Christ?

**Key Ideas for Discussion**

1. God is sovereignly superintending His people during times of persecution and abuse. (v.1-3)
2. (Takeaway Truth) God redeems the pain of persecution and abuse by growing His Kingdom in us and through us. (v.4-8)

**Digging Deeper**

- ❖ Revisit the sermon text and the sermon and answer the following:
  - In this chapter the command to be witnesses in Judea and Samaria (see Acts 1:8) is fulfilled. What are the causes and extent of the spread of the gospel?
  - What can you learn from observing the effects of persecution on the church in Acts?
  - The hostility between Jews and Samaritans had lasted a thousand years. It began with the monarchy in the tenth century b.c. when ten tribes defected, making Samaria their capital, and only two tribes remained loyal to Jerusalem. It became steadily worse when Samaria was captured by Assyria in 722 b.c. Thousands of its inhabitants were deported, and the country was repopulated by foreigners. In the sixth century b.c., when the Jews returned to their land, they refused the help of the Samaritans in the rebuilding of the temple. Not till the fourth century b.c., however, did the Samaritan schism harden, with the building of their rival temple on Mount Gerizim and their rejection of all Old Testament Scripture except the Pentateuch. The Samaritans were despised by the Jews. How is it significant that Philip, a Hellenistic Jew, went to Samaria (v. 5)?
  - In what ways do you see God's sovereign superintendence of His people in this passage?
  - How did Philip present the gospel to the Samaritan city?
  - Today, persecution of believers is at an historic high point. 1 out of every 7 Christians face ongoing suffering, torture, and even death simply because of their commitment to Jesus Christ. What can you do for them? How can you encourage them? (Hint: Check out the website [www.persecutedchurch.org](http://www.persecutedchurch.org).) How would you answer the person who stated: "I don't see any way that any good can possibly come from the suffering and persecution of Christians!"?

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**Apply It!**

- ❖ Who is suffering persecution for the gospel that you could be praying for?
- ❖ When people oppose you for your faith do you become more bold or timid? Why?
- ❖ Do you think the day will come when Christians in this country will be persecuted on a wider scale than the current day? Why or why not?

**Think About It!**

*Now I begin to be a disciple of Christ. I care for nothing, of visible or invisible things, so that I may but win Christ. Let fire and the cross, let the companies of wild beasts, let breaking of bones and tearing of limbs, let the grinding of the whole body, and all the malice of the devil, come upon me; be it so, only may I win Jesus Christ.” (Ignatius, Apostolic Father in a letter as he traveled to Rome to be Martyred)*

Note from Pastor Jerry: For this year’s CG questions, group resources and Bible studies from John Stott (Acts Seeing the Spirit at Work), John MacArthur (MacArthur Bible Studies: Acts), Jack Hayford (Kingdom Power) and Max Lucado (Life Lessons from the Book of Acts) are used in addition to original material.

## WORSHIP RESOURCE

January 23, 2022 | Third Sunday after Epiphany

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### WORSHIP SONGS

#### PRAISE TO THE LORD, THE ALMIGHTY

*Words by Joachim Neander, 1680 | German Melody, 1665*

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty the King of creation! O my soul,  
praise Him, for He is thy health and salvation! All ye who hear, now to  
His temple draw near. Join me in glad adoration.

Praise to the Lord, who o'er all things so wondrously reigneth. Shel-  
ters thee under his wings, yea, so gently sustaineth! Hast thou not  
seen how thy desires e'er have been granted in what He ordaineth.

Praise to the Lord! O let all that is in me adore Him! All that hath life  
and breath, come now with praises before Him! Let the amen sound  
from His people again; gladly forever adore Him.

#### YES I WILL

*Words and Music by Eddie Hoagland, Mia Fieldes,  
and Jonathan Smith, 2018*

I count on one thing: the same God that never fails will not fail me  
now, You won't fail me now. In the waiting, the same God who's  
never late is working all things out. You're working all things out.

*Yes, I will lift You high in the lowest valley. Yes, I will  
bless Your name. Yes, I will sing for joy when my heart is heavy.  
All my days, yes, I will.*

I choose to praise, to glorify, glorify,  
the name of all names that nothing can stand against.

#### I SPEAK JESUS

*Words and Music by Abby Benton, Carlen Prince, Dustin Smith,  
Jesse Reeves, Kristen Dutton, and Raina Pratt, 2019*

I just want to speak the Name of Jesus  
over ev'ry heart and ev'ry mind.  
'Cause I know there is peace within Your presence, I speak Jesus.

I just want to speak the Name of Jesus  
'till ev'ry dark addiction starts to break.  
Declaring there is hope and there is freedom, I speak Jesus.

*Your Name is power, Your Name is healing, Your Name is life.  
Break ev'ry stronghold, shine through the shadows, burn like a fire.*

I just want to speak the Name of Jesus  
over fear and all anxiety.  
To ev'ry soul held captive by depression, I speak Jesus.

Shout Jesus from the mountains, and Jesus in the streets,  
Jesus in the darkness over ev'ry enemy.  
Jesus for my fam'ly, I speak the holy Name Jesus.

## THE CHURCH'S ONE FOUNDATION

*Words by Samuel J. Stone, 1866 / Music by Samuel S. Wesley, 1864*

The church's one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord;  
She is his new creation by water and the Word.  
From heav'n he came and sought her to be his holy Bride;  
with his own blood he bought her and for her life he died.

Elect from ev'ry nation, yet one o'er all the earth;  
her charter of salvation, one Lord, one faith, one birth.  
One holy name she blesses, partakes one holy food.  
And to one hope she presses with ev'ry grace endued.

Mid toil and tribulation and tumult of her war,  
she waits the consummation of peace forevermore;  
'Till with the vision glorious her longing eyes are blest,  
and the great church victorious shall be the church at rest.

Yet she on earth hath union with God the three in One,  
and mystic, sweet communion with those whose rest is won;  
O happy ones and holy! Lord, give us grace that we,  
like them, the meek and lowly, on high may dwell with thee.

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## DAILY READINGS | BOOK OF COMMON WORSHIP

SUNDAY | Ps. 93; Genesis 3:2-18; Galatians 2:1-10; Mark 7:31-37  
MONDAY | Ps. 57; Genesis 14:1-24; Hebrews 8:1-13; John 4:43-54  
TUESDAY | Ps. 54; Genesis 15:1-21; Hebrews 9:1-14; John 5:1-18  
WEDNESDAY | Ps. 65; Genesis 16:1-14; Heb. 9:15-28; John 5:19-29  
THURSDAY | Ps. 81; Genesis 16:15-17:14; Heb. 10:1-10; John 5:30-47  
FRIDAY | Ps. 6; Genesis 17:15-27; Hebrews 10:11-25; John 6:1-15  
SATURDAY | Ps. 100; Genesis 18:1-16; Heb. 10:26-39; John 6:16-27

## PRAYER OF RENEWAL

Holy God, we know your law is perfect, reviving the soul; your decrees  
are sure, making wise the simple; your precepts are right, rejoicing  
the heart; your commandments are clear, enlightening the eyes. We  
know that reverence for you is pure, enduring forever; your ordinanc-  
es are true and righteous altogether. May we desire these things  
more than gold, and may our experience of them be sweeter than  
honey. Your law protects us; in keeping it there is great reward. But  
we confess that we cannot detect all of our errors; so we ask you to  
clear us from our hidden faults. Let the words of our mouths and the  
meditations of our hearts be acceptable to you, O Lord, our rock and  
our redeemer. Amen.

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