

Acts 8:9-25 (Advance Part 2)  
God Moves and Leads His People by Showing Us Needs

One of the things that I have struggled with the most in my Christian life has been -

A) Knowing if God is leading me in a situation or opportunity -

B) I would guess that many of you struggle with the same thing -

1) the number 1 question I get from believers over the 38 years of Pastoral ministry has been this: how can I know the will of God

C) And isn't it a wonderful feeling when you can move in a situation or circumstance knowing -

1) God is in this.

The Beautiful thing about the Christian life is that God wants to move and lead his people.

A) He wants us to be a people who are governed and led by Him in all facets of our lives

B) That is one of the things I love about Acts chapter 8 - in this chapter we see three ways that God moves and leads his people.

C) We looked at the first one last week - God moved and led the early church by shaking them out of their comfort zones

1) He did that by allowing persecution to come upon them

D) We saw the result of that persecution in V. 1,4 and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. V.4 Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word

God allowed the persecution to get the church moving in the direction they were supposed to go.

A) The mission for the church that was given to them by Jesus was to take the gospel to Jerusalem - Judea - Samaria .....earth

B) Jerusalem was accomplished but nothing else - Until the persecution - sent them scattering - those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word

C) That is what God will often do in our lives - to get us where He wants us to go -

1) He will allow your comfortable space to get shaken

God will Stir things up in order to send you out -

A) To send you in the direction he wants you to go

B) So we said last week: When God is allowing your life to be SHAKEN

C) The question you need to ask NOT WHY is this happening God

1) But WHAT are you wanting to do in and through my life - because of this shake up.

Last week we saw in the midst of the shakeup - that Philip went to the city of Samaria

A) That was Huge - because the Jews and Samaritans didn't get along - be like crossing into rival gang territory

B) These two groups of people despised each other

C) Simple - explanation to the tension: The Samaritans were half Jews and half Gentiles

1) Considered half breeds -

D) Because of that mixture the Orthodox Jews didn't accept them - so the Samaritan people built their own place to worship

1) Not welcome in Jerusalem & the fact that they created their own house of worship only furthered the animosity

E) So the fact that Philip went to Samaria was a big deal - revealing that he was willing to go anywhere to be USED by THE Lord

God did a great work in Samaria - he preached Jesus and people were getting radically saved - Revival is breaking out

A) Today we are going to see a 2<sup>nd</sup> way that God moves and leads his people - He SHOWS you a need.

B) TODAY We are going to be looking at a larger portion of scripture V. 9-25 today - start w/ V.9-13  
9 But there was a certain man called Simon, who previously practiced sorcery in the city and astonished the people of Samaria, claiming that he was someone great, 10 to whom they all gave heed,

from the least to the greatest, saying, “This man is the great power of God.” 11 And they heeded him because he had astonished them with his sorceries for a long time 12 But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized. 13 Then Simon himself also believed; and when he was baptized he continued with Philip, and was amazed, seeing the miracles and signs which were done.

**So God is moving radically in Samaria - many people are believing.**

A) And this interesting guy Simon - also seems to get converted to Jesus

B) Simon we are told was previously a Sorcerer -

C) He comes to Samaria and intermixes some occultic practices with Judaism

**D) There seems to be a power that is attached to him**

1) To the point where people are mesmerized by him.

**But in V.9 we are also told that Simon was a self-promoter - he claimed to be great.**

A) Simon was a braggart, a boaster, obsessed with his own greatness. He made mighty claims about his own person and powers.

**B) Recall Mohammed Ali who went around saying, “I am the greatest; I am the greatest.”**

C) Super man don't need no Seatbelt ..... Airplane

D) So Simon is a Boaster - backs it up w/ Power

**But when Philip arrives in Samaria - and starts preaching Jesus - people are getting saved.**

A) In this we see this great contrast between Philip and Simon.

- Philip preached Christ,
- Simon preached himself.
- Philip pointed people to Jesus and the redemption offered through the work of Jesus - Cross/ Resurrection

- Simon dazzled people with signs and wonders in order to point people to himself

**B) People noticed the difference:** Those who had previously been **astonished** by Simon and **his sorceries** now **believed Philip's message**

C) **They embraced the gospel of Jesus**

1) Those who believed proclaimed their faith when they were baptized.

**D) But V.13 Tells us that Simon believed and got baptized also. Starts hanging with Philip -**

1) The question is was Simon's conversion a real conversion

**E) Let's move on - So God is moving and working in Samaria**

<sup>14</sup> Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, <sup>15</sup> who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. <sup>16</sup> For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. <sup>17</sup> Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

**Now this is interesting: The Apostles hear what is going on in Samaria -**

A) They send Peter and John down there: Reason the Holy Spirit had not yet fallen upon any of them.

**B) This is that experience that Jesus described in Acts 1 - the Holy Spirit was going to baptize the Disciples -**

1) He described it this way, the Holy Spirit **-come upon them**

C) Previously - John 14 - **With you** - Shall be **IN You** -

D) **IN YOU** - happens in John 20 - SAVED

**E) But THEN Jesus said to them - but you need to go and wait for the Holy Spirit to come upon you -**

1) **Purpose: To Empower them for ministry - Empower them to be witnesses**

F) Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria .....earth

**Note: V.16 Those in Samaria had only been baptized in the name of Jesus - they had only received the Baptism for Salvation**

A)They had not received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit -

B)This means there was a work of the Holy Spirit that went beyond salvation

C)Now -There are those in the church today - **who teach that you are actually baptized with the Spirit when you get saved -**

1)No need for a 2<sup>nd</sup> work

D)But the book of Acts contradicts that teaching: **CONSIDER**

**Apostles Saved in John 20 - But the Holy Spirit comes upon them in Acts 2 - When they were baptized w/ the Holy Spirit**

A)Here the Samaritans were saved through the preaching of Philip

B)But they needed to have Peter and John come so the Holy Spirit could come upon them

C)See in Acts 9 - Paul the Apostle is saved on the road to Damascus

1)but it is not until Ananias comes and prays for him that he is baptized with the Holy Spirit

D)**Acts 19 - Paul asked have you .....believed?**

**Now there is one account where a group did get it all at once - that was Acts 10 - Cornelius**

A)I point this out because in many churches the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is never talked about -

B)I think the saddest thing in the world is to see Believers in Jesus trying to live the Christian life in their own strength - **FAILING**

**C)WE NEED THE Holy Spirit TO COME UPON US TO:**

1)Gives us power to Serve Jesus Acts 1:8

2) To Help us live boldly for Jesus Acts 4:29-31

3) To gives us power to stand strong in Spiritual Battle - Ephesians 6:10-18

4)To Help us be the Husbands and Wives God has called us to be Ephesians 5:18

**So here is in Samaria - the Apostles were not content that these people were saved. -**

A)They needed the Power of the Holy Spirit in order to be the Christ followers God was calling them to be.

B)So Peter and John are sent down there to pray for them to be baptized w/ the Spirit

C)**And it is in this scenario that we see a 2<sup>nd</sup> way that God moves and leads his people -**

1)He shows you a need. - You respond to that need

**Peter and John are being led by God by responding to this need.**

A)Now understand something here: Not every need is God's will for your life.

B)There are way too many needs for you to respond to all of them -

C)So this also involves a CALL

D)The Apostles knew at this particular time in the life of the church-

**1)that part of their Calling was to lay hands on people to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit.**

**So that raises the question: How do I discover what my calling is?**

A)God can and sometimes does make that clear to you - supernatural way - **my calling into ministry**

B)But I think most people would tell you this: The way that they discover their calling is trial and error

C)Example: Early on when I was getting involved in Ministry: **I responded to every need and every opportunity.**

1)Street witnessing - lets go for it - Never led a single person to Jesus street witnessing -

2)Almost been beat up a few times

**D)Jail ministry - Yes - No fruit - never been to jail**

E)Convalescent home - lacked the patience

**But when I responded to the need to do a Bible study on a High School Campus - BOOM**

A)OK - I SEEM TO HAVE A CONNECTION with Holy Spirit students/

B)FCA - Sports background - Largest in SD

C)High School was my thing - Not Jr. High - not Children's ministry - 4-5 grade Linda singing

D)With High School students God used me: For Years I taught at youth camps - all over the country.

1)Too old - invites stopped

E)God started using me in different ways: Pastor - a church - Led us to Oregon then/ back here to Vista

### TODAY 3 AREAS - GOD USES ME:

A)MEN, MARRIAGE AND PASTORS

B)When I get asked to do those things - the answer is almost always yes

C)MY Point - I discovered what my calling is-through trial and error -

1)responding to some needs - more than once

Our church: We have done a lot of ministry.

A)So many needs - get request constantly -

B)Through a lot of trial and error we have discovered - that aside from ministry to our City

C)And the Precious people who call CV - home

D)Our Focus outside of Vista is to come alongside church planters - encourage and support churches

1)And build up other Pastors

So this is my point: How do you discover your calling?

A)Respond to a need - and as you do - God will show you- if that is something he is calling you to.

B)See I would much rather see people respond to a need and discover that God wasn't calling them to that

1)Than to see People not respond at all

C)We over complicate things: See someone that needs to hear the gospel - U get a prompting

1)I don't know if it is the Lord - What if is the Devil...

D)The Devil is not going to tell you to go share Jesus with someone - Ok

1)Some plant the seed of the gospel - others water it - and someone else comes along and reaps the harvest

E)You might just be the seed sower - that gets people thinking about Jesus and eternity

OR You see a need in the community - or the fellowship - or your neighborhood -

A)The Mental gymnastics start - I Am I supposed to meet that need..

B)I don't feel gifted in that area - I don't know if it is the Lord - maybe it is my flesh -

1)Can I encourage you - JUST RESPOND

C)BECAUSE here is what might happen - You might respond to a need - that you think -

1)God could never use me in that era

D)But there is a need - I have time - so why not - and God might surprise you - CALLING YOU TO THAT

E)USE YOU IN A WAY THAT YOU COULD NEVER IMAGINE - Jim Leach

So Peter and John Respond to the need - lets see what happens

<sup>17</sup> Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

<sup>18</sup> And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, <sup>19</sup> saying, "Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit."

Some visible manifestations - / Simon wants that power

Peter deals with Simon

A)Here is another thing the disciples discovered in responding to the need.

B)There was a guy in Samaria who had the potential to cause great damage in the church

C)Philip doesn't seem to have the discernment about Simon - -

1) Philip seems to just think it is cool that Simon got saved

**D) Simon is hanging with him**

**1) Peter seems the problem**

### **So Notice how Peter deals with this situation**

<sup>20</sup> But Peter said to him, "Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money! <sup>21</sup> You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God.

**Note that: God's gifts can't be purchased - that is why they are called gifts -**

**Phillips translates the phrase your money perish with you like this: *To hell with you and your money.***

**A) Now I don't know if that is an accurate description of what Peter was saying - but I can tell you this:**

**B) Peter's STRONG words were meant to shake SIMON UP.**

**C) But I also want you to note - that Peter was not just content to tell Simon off -**

**1) He was concerned for his soul**

<sup>22</sup> Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray to God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. <sup>23</sup> For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity."

**D) Note that last Phrase you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity."**

**I think Peter is getting what we would call a word of Knowledge here about Simon -**

**A) All of Simon's problems and self-promotion and craving of attention - were connected to a past hurt in his life that made him bitter**

**B) That is one of the ways that people deal with bitterness-**

**1) they tend to prop themselves up by tearing other down**

**C) They deal with their bitterness and rejection they have experienced by trying extra hard to be liked by others -**

**D) This root of bitterness in Simon's life is the thing that has him bound**

**But Peter understands that Jesus wants to set him free. Repent therefore:**

**A) Repent = to do a 180 - turn from your sin and turn to Jesus**

**B) Peter was telling Simon - there is still hope for you**

**C) Message to some here today: There is still hope for you - if you are willing - Repent**

**1) Turn from your sin - the bitterness or whatever has you bound - and turn to Jesus - SET FREE**

**D) Question: Was Simon really saved through the ministry of Philip ? - Scholars are divided**

**Simon gave many evidences of conversion - at least to outward observation.**

**A) Simon expressed belief in the preaching of Philip**

**And was baptized**

**B) Philip received Simon as a kind of follower**

**C) Simon attended meetings of Christians**

**D) For all these reasons, Philip regarded Simon as a Christian - a follower of Jesus - and baptized him (Acts 8:13).**

**Others point to Peter's statement V.21 "You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God"**

**They see that statement as evidence that Simon was not a true convert with sincere faith.**

**A) Bible commentator James M. Boice - makes this observation:**

"When Peter says, 'You have no part or share in this ministry,' it is interesting that he employs the same words Jesus used for him when Peter had objected to Jesus' washing his feet in the Upper Room. Jesus said, 'Unless I wash you, you have no part with me' (John 13:8).

**B) The point being Those were also Strong words that Jesus spoke to Peter who was a true follower of Jesus 1) But the words of Jesus indicated - that Peter was just not in the will of God at that moment**

C) So was Simon saved or was he a fake believer -  
THE ANSWER: I don't know

**If Simon was saved: Lesson for us is this: Don't get sidetracked by the signs and wonders and lose sight of Jesus**

A) Don't pursue Power - Pursue the person

B) If Simon was not saved and this was just an emotional reaction - The seed sown amongst the thorns -

C) Lesson: Beware of those in the church who pursue power and position -but really don't know Jesus

**D) Note this: it is possible to be in church - profess faith in Jesus but be a fake believer -**

1) never really surrendered to Jesus

**As a Pastor I have seen this a lot - People who turn to Jesus for the wrong reason.**

A) Many Husbands who blew it in their marriages - Wife is ready to be done with them -

B) The Husband turns to Jesus - Don't turn to Jesus - to get your wife back -

1) turn to Jesus because you realize you are a sinner and need a savior -

C) If your wife comes back to you - that is icing on the cake

D) See people turn to Jesus in hopes - rescue their business or make them successful -

1) not a reason to turn to Jesus

E) Turn to Jesus realizing you are going to hell - without him

**So real Believer or fake believer - I'm not sure**

A) But Peter challenges Simon to Repent: Notice Simon's reaction V.24 : <sup>24</sup> Then Simon answered and said, "Pray to the Lord for me, that none of the things which you have spoken may come upon me."  
<sup>25</sup> So when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.

**Here is what I want you to see - we don't know how Simon's story ended -**

A) We don't know if he repented turned to Jesus

B) But you can know how your story is going to end if you Repent today - Turn to Jesus

C) Doesn't matter how bad your life has been - how many mistakes you have made -

1) Jesus is ready to receive you today - if you will turn to him.

**Before Philip went to Samaria - Jesus went there - several yrs earlier**

A) John 4 - A woman with a sordid past - been married 5 times - **and was currently living with a man - { none of that was common those days**

B) Her past filled her with Shame - so much so - she wouldn't come to the well when the other ladies were there -

C) She came during the hottest part of the day - when no one else would be there -

1) avoid the looks and whispers

**There She meets Jesus - Jesus knows everything about her life - her Sordid past -**

A) He says to her - everyone who drinks from the water from this well will thirst again

**B) But whoever drinks from the water - or the life that I am offering will never thirst again -**

1) fully satisfied

C) This woman turns to Jesus and gets saved - Thirst quenched and the void in her heart was satisfied

**D) That can be your story today as well - Repent - Turn from your sin and turn to Jesus**