# "A.D. The Bible Continues"- Week 7 "A Wider Circle" New Life Community Church

#### INTRODUCTION

As Saul's persecution of the early church intensified, and believers scattered, Philip chose to go to Samaria. The Jews and Samaritans were bitterly divided for generations. Samaritans were despised and rejected by the Jews. But when Philip brought the Gospel to Samaria, he followed Jesus' example, and broke down cultural barriers to extend God's love to those who desperately needed to hear it. This study considers how we can extend God's love to the "Samaritans" of our day.

### Ice Breaker (Optional-8 min)

Have you ever experienced exclusion from a group you wanted to join?

### **STUDY QUESTIONS (45 MIN)**

#### Look to the Edges Q1. Read Acts 8:4-5, 1:8; Luke 4:18, 5:32

Sometimes we are called to an unlikely mission field. As Philip fled persecution in Jerusalem he chose the city of Samaria, a people despised by the Jews. This scenario had been prophesied by Jesus and enabled through the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). To whom did Jesus direct His ministry according to Luke 4:18 and 5:32? When you consider those who are captives and oppressed in our culture, which groups comes to mind?

#### Listen with your Heart Q2. Read John 4:5-25

As you read the account of Jesus and the Samaritan woman, note that He both answered her questions and posed questions of His own. Why do you think He carried on this conversation rather than simply proclaiming to her that He was Messiah? What was gained by allowing her to share her experiences and hurts? Discuss with your group how "listening with your heart" might benefit a person who is an outcast, and how it can change your own heart.

#### Identify the Samaritans around you Q3. Read Romans 12:16, Luke 14:13, James 2:5

In going to Samaria, Philip associated with the outcasts. Who are the "people of low position" God calls us to? (see above verses) The ministry of Teen Challenge showed us this weekend how "those who heard God's call" reached out to those in need. With your group, make a list of the ways you can make a connection with someone who might be the "Samaritan" in your life.

### **Right Thing, Wrong Reason Q4. Read Acts 8:9, 18-23**

Simon the magician is described as someone who amazed the crowds and declared "he himself was somebody great." Even after he had believed Philip and was baptized, he tried to buy the power of the Holy Spirit from Peter. Desiring the Holy Spirit was not in itself wrong, but what did Peter reveal about the condition of Simon's heart? What are some ways we might seek the right thing for the wrong reason? What helps to keep us from falling into that trap ourselves?

### **Expanding God's Kingdom**

### Q5. Read Acts 8:5-8, Acts 4:11-12; Luke 9:2, 10:9; 11:20

Philip advanced God's kingdom powerfully in Samaria. He proclaimed Christ first and then saw the healing of those who were physically and spiritually captive, because it is only in the name of Jesus we find true freedom. This weekend we heard the testimony of Teen Challenge members who were similarly saved and released in Jesus' name and in His power. Do you know of anyone, who is under physical and/or spiritual bondage (captivity)? What are some ways you can bring the kingdom of God and the power of Jesus' name to set them free?

## WRAP-UP

God wants to expand His kingdom to the outcasts of our culture. They may be held captive by addictions like those who came to Teen Challenge, or they might be the poor, those handicapped or literally in prison. Whoever they are, He calls us to go to the captives, listen with our hearts to their hurts and bring the power of God to set them free, keeping our own hearts right before Him. In doing this we can help to advance the Kingdom of God.

## **Memory Verse**

- and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal. Luke 9:2 ESV

## PRAYER (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life:\_\_\_\_\_

Pray for your group members' needs: (see back for more space)\_\_\_\_\_

Challenge: Ask God to widen your heart with His grace and love, and widen your circle of influence as you embrace those on the outside with open arms and the good news of Jesus's love this week.

### Q1

Acts 8:4-5 ESV - 4 Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word. 5 Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ.

Acts 1:8 ESV - 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Luke 4:18 ESV - 18 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed,

Luke 5:32 ESV - 32 I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."

### Q2

Read John 4:5-25 in your Bible

## **Q3**

Romans 12:16 NIV - 16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

Luke 14:13 NIV - 13 But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind,

James 2:5 NIV - 5 Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?

### **Q4**

Acts 8:9 ESV - 9 But there was a man named Simon, who had previously practiced magic in the city and amazed the people of Samaria, saying that he himself was somebody great.

Acts 8:18-23 ESV - 18 Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, 19 saying, "Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." 20 But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! 21 You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. 22 Repent, therefore, of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you. 23 For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity."

### **Q5**

Acts 8:5-8 ESV - 5 Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ. 6 And the crowds with one accord paid attention to what was being said by Philip when they heard him and saw the signs that he did. 7 For unclean spirits, crying out with a loud voice, came out of many who had them, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. 8 So there was much joy in that city.

Acts 4:11-12 ESV - 11 This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. 12 And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

Luke 9:2 ESV - 2 and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal.

Luke 10:9 ESV - 9 Heal the sick in it and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'

Luke 11:20 ESV - 20 But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

#### Prayer requests con't \_\_\_\_\_