

Give Me Jesus

1. Last week we ended with the coats being placed at Saul's feet...and the death of Stephen
 - a. We looked at the law...which showed us...that Paul was most likely the person responsible for Stephen's death
 - b. Digging as deep as we did...it revealed the magnitude of Paul's conversion
 - c. The main thing I believe the Holy Spirit wants to show us to see is...
 - d. How Paul was one way as a Pharisees...focused on the law...to become a totally different born-again man...a Spirit filled bond slave to Christ
 - e. Paul was not a drunkard who one day found God...Paul was not a heathen who was radically got saved in a jail cell
 - f. No Paul was raised in a Jewish home...by 2 loving Jewish law keeping parents
 - g. Paul would have been around the things of God his whole life...because his father was a Pharisees
 - h. They would have went to the synagogue every week...they would have strictly followed the sabbath...all the feasts laws of God
 - i. Paul was gifted at keeping the law...a gifted student with a passion for God's law...and his parents sent Paul to Jerusalem to study under Gamliel
 - j. Even though...Paul had all these things going for him...as we saw in chapter 7...Paul still missed what God was doing

- k. Even though Paul was the son of a Pharisees...went to the right schools
...the right teacher...but Paul was still not right with God
 - l. Saul of Tarsus...was missing...the loving personal relationship with Jesus
 - m. Saul of Tarsus was missing the Holy Spirit...the changed heart...the new creation...the Spiritual awakening...to be born again
 - n. Paul was still stuck in religion...a prisoner to his upbringing...who stubbornly resisted...opening his heart to the love of Jesus
 - o. The problem with religion...with law keeping...it takes the focus off Jesus...and puts the focus on our ability to keep the law (Puase)
 - p. Last week I mentioned Philippians chapter 3...as a comparison to who Paul used to be
2. Phil 3:1 Whatever happens, my dear brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord. I never get tired of telling you these things, and I do it to safeguard your faith.
- a. Paul never gets tired of reminding them to rejoice in their salvation through faith
 - b. Paul wants to warn us...to safe guard our faith...by watching out for the people...who want to take us away from Jesus
3. Phil 3:2 Watch out for those dogs, those people who do evil, those mutilators who say you must be circumcised to be saved.
4. Slide...Paul calls religious people dogs, evil, and mutilators (He would know)
- a. First off...the only way to the Father...is through Jesus
 - b. Why does Paul warn the church of Philippi...because Paul used to be a unloving religious law keeper...

- c. All Paul's...self-effort...in keeping the law...caused a self-righteousness...
which left no room for the love of Jesus inside his heart
 - d. The true Jew is one who has a circumcised heart...one who obeys the
Spirit of God...not one who keeps the law of God perfectly
 - e. Listen...I am not saying...don't obey the law...I think you know me better
than that
 - f. But I can testify...that the law...never caused me...to desire to stop sinning
 - g. The law only showed me that I was a sinner...and what righteousness is
 - h. It was knowing that Christ loved me...that created a desire to stop
sinning...because I don't want to hurt the One who loved me first
 - i. Jesus doesn't expect us to do redemption on our own...because we can't
 - j. After Jesus took care of our sin...Jesus also sent to us the Holy Spirit...who
now helps us...who doesn't condemn us...because He is our helper...and
our guide
 - k. Religion causes us...to try to do things on our own...instead of allowing
Jesus...and allowing the Holy Spirit to cut in our hearts
5. Phil 3:3-4, 3 For we who worship by the Spirit of God are the ones who are truly
circumcised. We rely on what Christ Jesus has done for us. We put no confidence
in human effort, 4 though I could have confidence in my own effort if anyone
could. Indeed, if others have reason for confidence in their own efforts, I have
even more!
- a. Religion will try to kill the workings of the Holy Spirit...because they
believe they can do it themselves

- b. Being born again...relies on what Christ has done
 - c. Jesus died for sin...because of God's unconditional love for us...which now creates in our hearts...a desire to get right with God
 - d. The law only reveals our sinfulness...and shows us how to live righteously
 - e. But it is the love of Christ...that causes us to trust Christ in faith
6. Phil 3:5-11, 5 I was circumcised when I was eight days old. I am a pure-blooded citizen of Israel and a member of the tribe of Benjamin—a real Hebrew if there ever was one! I was a member of the Pharisees, who demand the strictest obedience to the Jewish law. 6 I was so zealous that I harshly persecuted the church. And as for righteousness, I obeyed the law without fault. 7 I once thought these things were valuable, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done. 8 Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ 9 and become one with him. I no longer count on my own righteousness through obeying the law; rather, I become righteous through faith in Christ. For God's way of making us right with himself depends on faith. 10 I want to know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised him from the dead. I want to suffer with him, sharing in his death, 11 so that one way or another I will experience the resurrection from the dead!
- a. If we are not careful...we can miss what Luke is pointing out to us in the book of Acts
 - b. This Saul of Tarsus...was changed by the love of Christ

- c. Remember Luke was a traveling companion of Paul through much of the book of Acts...and who wrote Paul's testimony in the book of Acts
 - d. Right now Saul is still stuck in religion...trying to destroy the church
 - e. But at the same time...God uses this event...to scatter the church...Jesus uses this persecution...to fulfil what Jesus said in ...acts 1:8
 - f. The church was supposed to go to Judea... Samaria, and to the ends of the earth...which now starting to happen because of Stephen's death
 - g. Chapter 8 is broken up into 3 sections of scripture
7. Slide...Verses 1-8 tells us of the scattering of the church to Judea and Samaria
 8. Slide...Verses 9-13 tell us of salvation in Samaria
 9. Slide...Verses 14-25 tell us of the Holy Spirit coming upon Samaria
 10. Acts 8:1 Saul was one of the witnesses, and he agreed completely with the killing of Stephen. A great wave of persecution began that day, sweeping over the church in Jerusalem; and all the believers except the apostles were scattered through the regions of Judea and Samaria.
 - a. Verse 1 tells us the scattering of the church...comes as a result of persecution by Saul...how do we know this
 11. Acts 11:19-21, 19 Meanwhile, the believers who had been scattered during the persecution after Stephen's death traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch of Syria. They preached the word of God, but only to Jews. 20 However, some of the believers who went to Antioch from Cyprus and Cyrene began preaching to the Gentiles about the Lord Jesus. 21 The power of the Lord was with them, and a large number of these Gentiles believed and turned to the Lord.

- a. What is interesting is how the last words of Jesus are partially being fulfilled because of the persecution
- b. Here is the last words of Jesus in Acts 1:8.

12. Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

- a. The thing to see is...they have not been to all the places Jesus told them they would go
- b. These guys were only hanging out in Jerusalem...and they were not going to the other places they were supposed to go.
- c. So God used persecution...to light a fire under them to start them to move.

13. Acts 8:2-3, 2 (Some devout men came and buried Stephen with great mourning.)

3 But Saul was going everywhere to destroy the church. He went from house to house, dragging out both men and women to throw them into prison.

- a. The word used to describe Saul actions in the original Greek language
- b. Describe Saul's actions like that of a wild animal...that is out of control...reckless with only one purpose
- c. We will see the result of Paul's persecution in verse 4.

14. Acts 8:4-8, 4 But the believers who were scattered preached the Good News about Jesus wherever they went. 5 Philip, for example, went to the city of Samaria and told the people there about the Messiah. 6 Crowds listened intently to Philip because they were eager to hear his message and see the miraculous signs he did.

7 Many evil spirits were cast out, screaming as they left their victims. And many who had been paralyzed or lame were healed. 8 So there was great joy in that city.

15. Slide...The scattered believers preached the Good News about Jesus

- a. Not only was Phillip preaching the word of God...but also displaying the power of God as mentioned in verse 7...not bad for a table waiter
- b. So God was not only moving them physically...but also spiritually
- c. Notice how God used persecution to move them physically...hello...and the Holy Spirit was with them...hello...which is how we should move also
- d. We are only responsible for the moving physically in faith...spreading the seed of the gospel in faith...and the Holy Spirit will do the rest
- e. In verse 8 we saw the result of preaching the good news...salvation...and there was great joy in that city
- f. But...Satan will not just let you have victory without a fight

16. Acts 8:9-11, 9 A man named Simon had been a sorcerer there for many years, amazing the people of Samaria and claiming to be someone great. 10 Everyone, from the least to the greatest, often spoke of him as "the Great One—the Power of God." 11 They listened closely to him because for a long time he had astounded them with his magic.

17. Slide...Simon the occultist is practicing sorcery claiming to be the power of God

- a. Here is a guy named Simon...who seems to have gotten his power from the demonic...that is an imitation of God's power

18. 2 Cor 11:13-15, 13 These people are false apostles. They are deceitful workers who disguise themselves as apostles of Christ. 14 But I am not surprised! Even

Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. 15 So it is no wonder that his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. In the end they will get the punishment their wicked deeds deserve.

- a. If Satan can disguise himself as light...it isn't much of a surprise that his demons can also
- b. These demons can work through people...and put on the appearance of light...but are actually working under the influence of darkness
- c. They look good...they may be doing good things...soon they start gaining a following...they even sound good...but listen closer
- d. If we who know the word of God listen closely to what is said...we will see they are spreading doctrine of demons
- e. This man's name is Simon Magus...is such a man...because when we look at church history...we will find out more about this guy
- f. A 2nd century man named Justin Martyr...who is from Samaria...writes about this Simon Magus
- g. Justin writes that this Simon Magus was considered to be a god by many ...not only by the people in Samaria...but also in Rome
- h. Many thought this Simon was actually a deity...there was even a statue build in Rome of Simon...that many people worshiped this statue in Rome
- i. Arminius...another writer from the 2nd century writes...Simon Magus was the founder...and developer...of a doctrine called Gnosticism
- j. Gnosticism is a Greek word that means enlightenment...or people with special mystical knowledge...that you don't have and you need

- k. So if serve me...I can teach you this special knowledge too...which has the finger prints of Satan's temptation of Eve in the garden
- l. This Gnosticism has continued to be developed over the centuries...and still influences people today...amazing

19. Acts 8:12 But now the people believed Philip's message of Good News concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. As a result, many men and women were baptized.

20. Slide...Philip preaches the Good News about the name of Jesus

- a. Don't miss what Philip taught The name of Jesus...the name of Jesus
- b. People are believing the good news of the gospel
- c. The people are receiving the kingdom of God...through their faith in the name of Jesus...and many were being baptized
- d. This is what the church is supposed to be doing...and the gates of hell will not be able to stop people from believing in the name of Jesus
- e. But Satan is smart...he knows he can't stop God...but he can influence man
- f. So what happens...this Simon puts on the show...a false front to get inside the church...where he will try to influence the church...from the inside
- g. Does Satan still use these tactics to get inside the church...sure does
- h. How do we know...listen closely to them...watch what they say and do
- i. When the department of treasury...teaches people to find counterfeit money...they teach them what the real thing looks like...and feels like
- j. So when they find money that doesn't look right or feel right...they recognize something different about the counterfeit

k. The same is true about the things of God...when we know our Bible...the real thing...it is easy to recognize the counterfeit

l. But they will still come in disguise

21. Acts 8:13 Then Simon himself believed and was baptized. He began following Philip wherever he went, and he was amazed by the signs and great miracles Philip performed.

a. We know from church history...Simon's conversion wasn't a real conversion

b. What attracted Simon to Phillip...was the miracles of the Holy Spirit

c. It seems...basis of Simon Magnus's historical actions...were not based in the God who does the miracles...but rather the miracles themselves

d. This same problem also happened when Jesus did miracles...meaning...that the people wanted the signs and wonders more than Jesus

22. John 2:23-25, 23 Because of the miraculous signs Jesus did in Jerusalem at the Passover celebration, many began to trust in him. 24 But Jesus didn't trust them, because he knew human nature. 25 No one needed to tell him what mankind is really like.

a. Jesus knew the only people were only interested in Him...was because of the miracles...not because He was the Messiah...or their Savior

b. Jesus said...only this perverse generation...would ask for a sign to believe

c. Jesus gave them...the sign of Jonah...which required faith...and points to Jesus's death and resurrection

- d. Simon Magnus was right on Phillip's heels all the time...Simon followed Phillip everywhere...he witnessed the power of the Holy Spirit
- e. But Simon missed that we are to worship the God of the miracles...not the miracles...which are a sign of God...but not God
- f. Salvation happens as a result of the gospel...which creates faith in Jesus...and we are to worship the name of Jesus...or Jesus as Lord
- g. There are many who are so hungry for something supernatural...that they fall to false imitation
- h. We need to be careful of this...Paul writes this in Romans

23. Romans 1:16-17, 16 For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes—the Jew first and also the Gentile. 17 This Good News tells us how God makes us right in his sight. This is accomplished from start to finish by faith. As the Scriptures say, "It is through faith that a righteous person has life."

- a. The good news tells us how...to get right with God...faith in Jesus
- b. From start to finish...requires faith in Jesus
- c. Jesus tells a story of a church who heals the sick...cast out demons...does miracles...and cries out...Lord...Lord...because they missed the rapture
- d. And Jesus says to them...flee for I know you not...they missed the God of the miracles...Jesus
- e. What we have learned today is 2 very important lessons
- f. To much zealouslyness to the law...kills the love of Jesus
- g. To much focus on the miracles of God...we miss the name of Jesus

h. Christianity is all about Jesus

24. Discussion time