

RADICAL DISCIPLESHIP (LESSON 54)

REACHING SAMARIA. The Jerusalem church became less radical to the point of distraction. Discipleship became less radical. They got caught up in their own miracles and forgot about what Jesus said about reaching the world. Even the apostles seemed to forget what was supposed to come next. The Good News stayed within Judea, while the world waited. In order to take the gospel to the world, Jewish Christians would have to face their hatred for their neighbors to the north. Acts 1:8 was not going away: "...you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." Finally, persecution scattered them throughout the region into Samaria (Acts 8:1). It started with the martyrdom of Stephen. Christians went everywhere to escape arrest and victimization. The Samaritans became the recipients of this migration. All the pride and prejudice of Judea couldn't keep the Gospel from reaching the second stage of Christ's commission – Samaria. God would wait no longer. The Spirit spread like wild-fire. Samaria was Jesus' idea, not the church's. "He needed to go through Samaria" (John 4:4). It was in Samaria that Jesus first shared His vision of a harvest outside the borders of Israel. It was to Samaria the Gospel had to go next. "Therefore, they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word" (Acts 8:4). God chose a radical disciple named Philip to move the Pentecostal revival into Samaria. "And the multitudes...heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did" (Acts 8:6). Samaritan disciples got saved and baptized (Acts 8:12) and received the Holy Spirit when Peter and John came up from Jerusalem. It is safe to assume that the four essential experiences of Acts 2:42 were transplanted to Samaria – the apostles, teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread (communion), and prayer. These are necessary to radical discipleship. It took persecution to take revival to Samaria. Revival is a radical change in the status quo. It took a radical disciple named Philip to take a radical step to bring a radical Savior to a people the Jews hated.