

sermon notes

Pastor Tony Caffey, VBVF | No Other Name

May 4, 2025 | “Opportunities and Threats in the Church” | **Acts 8:4–25**

Opportunities and Threats to the Church’s Mission:

1) The opportunity is _____ and the threat is _____
_____ (8:4–8)

2) The opportunity is _____ and the threat is _____
_____ (8:9–13)

3) The opportunity is _____ and the threat is _____
_____ (8:14–25)

Questions for further application of God’s Word:

GO DEEPER

Read Acts 8:4–8. How did God use persecution to increase the work of evangelism in the early church? Why is evangelism important in the life of a church? What happens when churches don’t evangelize?

Read Acts 8:9–25. Contrast Simon with Philip and Stephen. Why do you think Simon is in the Bible? What might God be teaching us through this individual? What are some lessons that we can learn from his actions? Is there anything commendable about Simon and his actions in Acts 8?

How did Peter handle Simon’s request in Acts 8:19? Was Peter too harsh with him? Why or why not? How does spiritual instruction help with issues of sinful ignorance?

GET PERSONAL

Acts 8:8 says that there was great joy in the city after Philip preached Christ. Describe the joy you felt when you first heard the gospel and believed. In what ways has the Lord grown your joy in Christ over the years? Share how God’s Word and God’s Spirit has worked in your life recently to produce new experiences of joy and gladness. How do you express that joy and gratitude to the Lord? How do you express it to fellow Christians? Is your joy different now than when you first got saved?

How can we ensure that our desire to serve God is motivated by genuine faith rather than selfish ambition, like Simon’s? What are some old habits that God has broken in your life through the illumination of Scripture and the Holy Spirit? What habits is he in the process of breaking right now?

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Peter challenged Simon to repent and align his heart with God (see Acts 8:22–23). Ask God to reveal any pride or wrong motives in your heart that require repentance. Consider also asking a trusted spiritual leader if they see anything in your life that reflects “the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity.”

ADVANCED QUESTION

Why do you think God used a two-step process for the Samaritans—first salvation, then the receiving of the Holy Spirit? Should this be considered normative for a Christian? What other New Testament passages shape our understanding of when the Holy Spirit indwells a believer? What role does the Holy Spirit play in a believer’s life after indwelling them?