Worth it or not?

Acts 8:1-8 (ESV)

1 And Saul approved of his execution.

And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. **2** Devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him. **3** But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison.

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. **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.

Background

From Acts 6 to 7, we are introduced to seven men appointed to serve the church, described as men of "good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom".

One of them was Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit. He performed great wonders and signs, but some opposed him and tried to dispute with him. When they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking, they brought false accusations against him. Eventually, Stephen was seized, put on trial and killed.

His death marked the beginning of a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem. But as we will see, what seemed like a setback for the church became an opportunity for the gospel to spread.

DISCUSS

1. Faithful Even in Suffering(v1-4)

Persecution was never part of anyone's plan. When Stephen was killed and believers were driven out of Jerusalem, it looked like everything was falling apart. But something remarkable happened. Ordinary people, not pastors or trained evangelists, simply kept talking about Jesus wherever they went. Acts 8:4 captures it plainly: those who were scattered went about preaching the Word. No special title. No formal training. Just faithful people carrying the gospel into unfamiliar places.

That is an encouraging picture for us today. You do not need a platform or a ministry degree to share your faith. You just need to go where life takes you and be willing to speak. Your workplace, your neighborhood, your family dinner table. These are your

Judea and Samaria. The scattering of those early believers did not silence the gospel. It spread it further than anyone could have planned.

You may be in a season of unexpected change or difficulty right now. A job loss, a move, or a relationship that has ended. Even in these circumstances, God can use where you are and what you are going through to make Christ known to others.

In what specific area of your everyday life, your neighborhood, workplace, or family, are you most naturally positioned to share the gospel right now?

2. The Gospel Brings Great Joy (v5–8, 12)

Philip went down to Samaria and proclaimed Christ to a people who were traditionally hated and rejected by the Jews. Yet the Samaritans listened attentively to his message(v6). As they witnessed the signs and wonders, many believed the good news about Jesus and were baptized (v12).

Verse 8 tells us that "there was much joy in that city".

The same gospel that had led to Stephen's death now brought many Samaritans to faith and filled the city with joy. While preaching the gospel can bring suffering and rejection, it also brings people the far greater blessing of knowing Jesus, receiving eternal life and being united with God's people.

Philip crossed cultural barriers to bring the gospel to the Samaritans. What is one practical step you can take to be involved in cross-cultural missions?

3. Obey Because Jesus is Worthy

Throughout Acts, we see a recurring pattern: whenever the gospel is preached, opposition and suffering often follow. Yet the Christians continued Preaching. Why? Why keep sharing the gospel when it can bring so much pain, rejection, and even death?

The gospel brings something far greater: It removes the sting of death, brings eternal life, forgiveness of sins, and brings us into the glory of knowing Jesus.

Ultimately, we obey the great commission not because of the visible results we hope to see, or even to repay Jesus for what he has done. We obey because of Jesus himself.

In Matthew 28:18-20, Jesus commissions his disciples to make disciples of all nations because *all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to him.*

Our motivation for missions is not ultimately the results we see, but the One who sends us. Jesus is not just someone who gives us a mission. He is the risen Lord who has all authority, and who calls us to make him known.

This is the same Jesus who gave himself on the cross, bore our sins, and gave us everlasting life. He is worthy of our obedience. We obey him because he is worthy of our time, our efforts, and our lives, whether we see the fruit of our labour or not.

Where have you been discouraged by a lack of visible results in serving God or sharing the gospel? What would it look like to keep serving faithfully, not for the fruit you see, but because Jesus is worth it?

Pray For:

1. **Boldness to Make Christ Known**
   Pray that we would be faithful in sharing the gospel wherever God has placed us, even when we face opposition, difficulties or discouragement.

2. Hearts That Reach the Nations

Pray that God would give us hearts for those who have yet to hear the gospel, and a willingness to participate in missions through praying, giving, going and serving.

3. Faithfulness Because Jesus Is Worthy

Pray that we would not be discouraged by a lack of visible results, but remain faithful in obeying Christ's commission because Jesus is worthy.