

They Went Preaching

Acts 8:1-4

With Saul having just witnessed the stoning of Stephen, Saul continues persecuting the church and wreaking havoc (to lay waste, devastate, wide & general destruction) among the Christians. Their houses were broken into, they were arrested & taken forcibly and thrown into jail for their beliefs, some were even executed. Due to these circumstances, the early Christians were scattered abroad, going to many different countries and territories. All along their way as well as the areas they settled in, what did they do? They preached the word. Were these people preachers? No. Were they apostles? No. Were they prophets? No. Who were they? They were believers, saved people, plain & simple followers of Christ. They were ordinary people beginning to help fulfill the great commission. Jesus said in *Mt 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

What I want you to see, is that this job of preaching isn't just for us preachers. We are to ALL go everywhere and preach Jesus Christ, to declare Him as our Lord and Savior and show & tell others all about Him & His good news.

Opening Prayer

8:4 is where I'll be taking my message from. I want you to pay attention to 3 words in that verse, **They, Went, Preaching.** If I had a title that's what it would be, They went preaching. First off, lets look at who these "**they**" people are. I mentioned before that these were saved believers, believers that were being persecuted by Saul and his "witch" hunt. They were from the church at Jerusalem, as verse one mentions "*And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem*". These are people just like you and me. People who came to the realization that they were just ungodly sinners and that Jesus Christ had been crucified for them. They believed He was the son of God, otherwise, they would have just recanted, or told Saul and his minions, "No, I don't believe he was the Christ" they would have denied him, and saved themselves and their families.

But they didn't deny Him, they were willing to suffer this persecution, risking getting arrested, imprisoned, possibly executed. Why be willing to pick up everything you have and move to a far country and start over, why put up with that aggravation? Why put up with any of this when it would have been so easy to deny their beliefs? You know why I think? Its because they loved Jesus, they had their hope in Him, they truly & fully believed upon Him and they were listening to His teachings like what He told the apostles in *Mt 10:22 And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.*

23 But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.

They were everyday common people, trying to live their life and their beliefs, and yet they were what? (read **v4**) **scattered & went (2nd pt)**. This word scattered means to scatter seed. These believers were seeds for the Word of God to be taken and scattered into the wind, into foreign lands, so the Word could be planted and sowed and a greater harvest reaped. There was a reason for this persecution and it was to scatter the believers. Persecution tends to grow &

promote the very thing which it desires to destroy. Persecution does to belief what wind does to seed, ever see a dandelion and those seeds get caught by the wind, they go all over the place. And what happens next, you have dandelions everywhere, your yard, your neighbor's yard, the person that lives 5 miles down road's yard.

When Jesus explains the parable of the tares of the field to the apostles He says, Mt 13:37 *He answered and said unto them, **He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man;***

*38 **The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom;** but the tares are the children of the wicked one;*

When believers get scattered, their beliefs go with them. Even Paul wrote in Php 1:12 *But I would ye should understand, brethren, **that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel;*** Persecution and suffering causes belief and faith to grow, not diminish.

Not only can you scatter seed, you can scatter sheep as well, and we as believers are compared to sheep multiple times in the Scriptures. When Jesus spoke to the apostles at the last supper Mt 26:31 *Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, **I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.***

As these believers were scattered abroad, what happened? They **went** everywhere. From **8:1** we see some went thruout Judea & Samaria and **Acts 11:19** we see some went "as far as Phenice {fiH-NI-see}, and Cyprus, and Antioch" In my Schofield Bible I have a little title above verse 4 that says "the first missionaries". That's exactly what these people were doing, they were being missionaries, taking the Word, the Gospel of Jesus Christ to those who had not heard. They were scattered and went every where, anybody they ran into to got a taste, every town they passed by heard a story, those along the road got told about somebody they had never heard before. They went, with the hounds of Saul at their back, with persecution and hatred driving them, they went and multiplied, Saul wasn't hurting them, he was helping them, helping them to go out into a lost and dieing world and do what? Preach! Preach the Word! Preach Jesus Christ, our savior and master!

Maybe that's why we see intolerance growing towards Christians in this country. We've lumped up and settled & stagnated in our mission. Persecution coming to this country will scatter us and our message. I've heard a saying, Christians are like cow manure, all lumped up they cause a big stink, but spread them around and they will do a lot of good.

Before I go into my third point of preaching I want to ask you all a question. Could you do this? Could you give up all you have because of your beliefs and pick up and move and still tell others of your beliefs, those very beliefs that you had to move for in the first place? or would you try to hide them, or deny them just to protect yourself or your family? These people didn't, they picked up and moved and let everybody know why. How strong is your faith?, do you think God could see you thru something like this? Way things are going we might find out. Could you be scattered and have to go hundreds or thousands of miles away because of Jesus Christ and when you got to where you was going still tell others about Jesus? Could you preach Jesus wherever you went? Are you preaching Jesus where you are now, if not I doubt you could do this.

Now you may say, what do you mean preach Jesus, preacher? That's for preachers isn't? That's half right, it is a preacher's job to preach Jesus, it's a holy, divine calling, but you know these people weren't all preachers, **yet they went preaching the Word**. Whats the Word?

*Joh 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
Joh 1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory
as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*

The Word is Jesus Christ, they preached Jesus to everybody they met every where they went. They announced His glory, they declared His goodness & righteousness. Paul tells Timothy to preach the word. The message of the Gospel was spread by everyday, common people. You can't expect just a select few, just a few preachers to do all this work. Us preachers may not ever come into contact with some of the people you meet, who's going to tell them about Christ then? That's you!

Let me define this word preach for you, it means to announce the good news, to declare, to show good or glad tidings. Its ever last one of our jobs to tell others about our Savior and the plan of salvation. We're to tell others the good news from a far country. That's why these people didn't care to move, they knew they were just passing thru, they were pilgrims, our home is on the other side of eternity. It doesn't matter where we are down here on this earth, whether we are in Watauga County, NC, TN, USA, North America, South America, land, sea, or air because we are just passing thru. Our life is to be Christ centered, Christ focused. Paul said to live is Christ to die is gain, while he lived on this earth he would preach Jesus, sleep Jesus, pray Jesus, everything Jesus and if he died he got Jesus. It was all about Jesus. That's what our lives are supposed to be, an example, a reflection of Christ living within us. For us to be likeminded as Christ and give all we can to the glory of God. *Lu 9:23 And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.* Take up your cross daily, your persecutions, deal with them and keep following Jesus Christ, don't let it get you down, there is no such thing as bad circumstances only opportunities, you'll only have to suffer a little while down here, and while you do your faith will grow. Just look at what Paul had to suffer **II Corinthians 11:23-28** yet he could still glorify God.

We think we suffer now, people we haven't seen suffering for our beliefs, yeah, people may laugh at us, poke fun at us and it may hurt our feelings, but they done a whole lot more to my precious Jesus when they put him on that cross, they beat Him, and spat upon Him, humiliated Him, all because of my sins, because of my sins He had to die, but He got up out of that grave, and now because of Him I have been forgiven, forgiven eternally, and we turn around and say we can't deal with a little persecution to further our beliefs. *Php 4:13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me* These people in these verse were risking their lives and their families lives to tell others about Jesus. Did you know in some countries now its against the law to convert to Christianity, do you know what the penalty is if you are caught? Death. Death. Yet people are being converted, there are people preaching in those countries because they do not fear the persecution, *2Ti 1:7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.* They understand this is a life & death struggle, not physical life & physical death but an eternal life & death struggle. They fear failing God more than they care about their own safety, their own lives, their own families' lives *Pr 10:21 The lips of the righteous feed many: but fools die for want of wisdom.*

So we, each and everyone, should tell others about Jesus. Just to give you some examples from the scriptures... in Mark 5:19 Jesus says to the maniac at Gadara, one he just cast out devils from, *Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.* Brag on God – personal testimony!

After Saul was converted on the road to Damascus *Ac 9:19 And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus.*

20 And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. He preached as soon as he was converted. Paul not only spread Christianity thru persecution but he spread it thru his preaching as well.

Even Jesus, always our supreme example preached *Lu 8:1 And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him,*

And some even when told not to say anything couldn't help but preach. When Jesus healed the deaf and dumb man *Mr 7:36 And he charged them that they should tell no man: but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it;* They were excited about what Jesus done in their lives & couldn't wait to tell others, not only the man that was healed but those who witnessed it. Once you have had a taste you want to tell everybody, *Ps 34:8 O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.* {example – try a bit – share – tell others about the restaurant}

Now I realize some of those are preachers but my point stands, we are ALL to tell others about Christ. *Ro 10:13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

*15 And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, **How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!***

How can anyone be saved unless Jesus is declared unto them? How can they hear unless we tell them, each and every one of us, need to declare Jesus as Lord and Savior to those we meet. Now I don't mean going around and trying to cram it down their throat, not yelling at them or the like, but let the Holy Spirit guide you and do it in the right spirit, otherwise you'll make more enemies than friends. *Prov 18:24 A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.* Its your job to present the plan of salvation, but its their choice to make, not yours.

Read **8:4**. So that's nice and simple, they, meaning the church/beleivers, were scattered and went everywhere, all nations, preaching the word, declaring Jesus Christ. That's not just my job, that's ever last one of our jobs, wherever we go, to tell others about Jesus Christ, what He done for us, what He continually does for us. He is worth showing to others, He is worth suffering for.

Persecution should make us stronger even though we may run like sheep or be blown by the wind, we have a task, a duty to be a witness to a lost and dieing world. And I truly believe our time is running out, I think God's getting ready to stand up and say to Lord Jesus Go, bring your bride home. We must see the urgent need for the gospel throughout this wicked and sinful world, Jesus says in *Mt 24:14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.* Do you think the gospel has reached everywhere by now, with tv, radio, internet, publishing. I think its only a short matter of time. So go tell others NOW before its too late. You can't preach Him if you don't know Him.

Mr 16:15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

They went preaching & so should we.