



SERIES: ACTS - WHEN THE WORLD TURNED UPSIDE DOWN
MESSAGE TITLE: RESIST, ADOPT, OR SYNCRETIZE

SPEAKER: BRAD WILLIAMS
DATE: SUNDAY, JUNE 14, 2020

MESSAGE SUMMARY

BIBLICAL TEXT(S): Acts 8:3-25

In the first part of Acts chapter 8, three responses to the Gospel are clearly laid out. Saul illustrates the first response. He is resistant to the Gospel. He sees the Gospel message as a threat and starts to persecute the church. Phillip and the Samaritans he preaches the Gospel message to represent a second response. They adopt the Gospel message and are filled with joy. The third response is represented by Simon the magician. He wants to use the power of the Holy Spirit in his own quest for power and influence. He tries to syncretize the Gospel. All three of these responses to the Gospel are still possible today.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help lead your group through a progression of engagement with the Bible passage(s) and the speaker's message. These can help your group understand and apply the teaching more profitably

LEAN IN

These are icebreakers and warm ups, mostly just to get the group talking and start the flow of conversation. Choose one and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.

1. Are you an early adaptor or late adaptor of new technology? Why?
2. Are you a natural risk-taker or naturally more conservative?
3. What example or story stood out to you in Sunday's sermon? Why was it significant to you?
4. Last time we met, we talked about [whatever you talked about]. Has anyone had a chance to put that lesson into practice? Has it had an impact on your life in any way?

LOOK DOWN

These are questions about the Bible passage(s) and observations about what's been read. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max.

1. How did Saul respond to the Gospel? What was an unintended consequence of the persecution of those that followed Jesus?
2. Where did Phillip go and what did he do there? What was the result of his actions?
3. What do we learn about Simon in verses 9-11? How was his magic similar to or different from what Phillip was doing? How did he respond to Phillip and his message?

cont.

CONTINUED:

4. How did Simon respond to this outpouring of the Holy Spirit? What did he ask in response?
5. How did Peter respond to Simon?

LOOK OUT

These questions help connect the world of the Bible to today. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max.

1. Saul was initially a resistor to the Gospel. How have you seen people resist the Bible today or in history? What are some of the possible outcomes to resistance to the Gospel?
2. Phillip was given the power to do amazing things and it gave him a platform to share the message of the Gospel. He was an adopter. Who are other adopters that have been given similar opportunities, either currently or in history?
3. Simon also did amazing things, but he used his influence to build up his own ego and power. Can you think of a person or a group that acts like Simon? Are there any people or groups like that in the church?
4. What do you think of Peter's response to Simon? What words would you use to describe it? Does he offer Simon hope, grace, condemnation, something else, or a combination?
5. Who are people or groups today (or in history) that try to syncretize the Gospel and something else? What outcomes have you seen from this?

LOOK IN

These are questions that help you consider personal application. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max.

1. Have you ever been a resistor of the Gospel (or are you one now)? What was that like and what was the eventual outcome? How has it changed your heart towards those that seem to resist?
2. What opportunities has God given you to do something that would draw the attention of others? How could you use those opportunities to be an adopter of the Gospel? What might that look like in your life?
3. Do you ever find yourself using your abilities and opportunities to bring power and influence to yourself? How does this passage challenge or encourage you?
4. What do you learn from this passage about how to respond to people who are in progress or people whose motives are less than pure?

cont.

CONTINUED:

5. Have there been times in your life where you have tried to syncretize the Gospel to something (or maybe you realize you're doing that currently)? What did/does that look like in your life? How did/could you move towards adopting the Gospel more fully?

LIVE IT OUT

These action steps help apply this week's message to day to day life. Choose one question and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.

1. If you are currently resistant to the Gospel and to God, be honest with your group about how you're feeling and why. Spend some time this week being honest before God about how you're feeling. Ask your group to pray that you might be able to accept God's love and grace.
2. What's one thing you could do this week to adopt the message and lifestyle of the Gospel more fully?
3. Have you realized that you have been tempted to syncretize the Gospel with something else? What's one thing that you could do or change in your attitude or behavior this week to combat this? Ask your group to pray for and encourage you as you seek to embrace the Gospel more fully.

Thanks to Ashleigh Rich and the Adult Discipleship Team for this week's notes and questions, as well as Charissa Burns (@charissaburnsstudio on Instagram) for her illustrated notes, which normally appear on the following page.

When the world turned upside down **RESIST, ADOPT, SYNCRETIZE**
 ACTS 8:1-25 6-14-2020
 BRAD WILLIAMS - B4Church

We all know and feel that we live in a broken world, there is a separation between us and our loving God

→ **THE GOSPEL** - bridges the gap!
 - it restores the connection with God
 - it is available to everyone
 - grace changes everything

PEOPLE RESPOND TO THE GOSPEL IN RADICALLY DIFFERENT WAYS.

- The church is under persecution and scattered.

THE RESISTOR

- Saul resists the gospel
- He knows that he has too much to lose.
- People today feel the same way. They hear the gospel and realize their lives would have to change. But to them it's too much to give up and change.
- They resist, reject coming to Jesus.

THE ADOPTER

- Philip chooses to be part of this movement/revolution
- The church gets scattered
- Philip was all in, committed to the gospel life.
- No matter an adopter goes they will live a gospel life and spread the gospel
- They adopt HIS plans for their lives!
- It's giving control over to Jesus.

THE SYNCRETIST

- Simon was a magician of some sort
- he had real influence over the people
- when Philip comes, the people become adopters ↳ to Samaria
- Simon believes too and is amazed by the signs and miracles
- the apostles come to check on what's happening in Samaria
- People were receiving the Holy Spirit
- Simon asks for the Holy Spirit power and offers the apostles money
- Peter unleashes on Simon
↳ Acts 8:21 "You have neither part or lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God."
- This response is about the power not the person of Jesus.
- It's about what they can get out of it.
- Syncretism is the amalgamation, or attempted amalgamation of different religions, cultures, or schools of thought
- It's turning Jesus into a means to an end.

JESUS WANTS OUR HEARTS FOR OUR SAKE!