

THE ABUNDANT SAVING GRACE DESPISED

~Other Speakers S-Z: John Sung:

Acts 8

Vs 1 It records Jerusalem's great persecution from which results in great revival. Several tens of thousands who believed congregated in Jerusalem. There was no great auditorium nor a gigantic mat-shed like this. The people gathered in their homes.

Before the Ascension Jesus gave the disciples a greatest responsibility --- "Go into all the world and preach the gospel." But the disciples forgot about it. They forgot the Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should be saved. So they remained congregated in Jerusalem. God sent a great persecution that sent them to Judea and Samaria. With bombs and mines exploding, with all kinds of means the persecution was set in motion in order that "all might be saved." Beloved brothers and sisters let us enlarge our vision beyond Fukien to all China, to the whole world, to bring them to Christ. Jesus says, "I am the light of the world." Not only of Amoy, Fukien, China but of the whole world. Praise the Lord. He has called me not to Fukien, not to China but to the whole world. So He gave me a globe! The day after I was born again someone gave me a globe, which I have kept to this day. I did not understand what this was all about. When I asked the Lord He said, "I want you to go into all the world to bring all to Christ." Praise the Lord! God used a great persecution to disperse the disciples everywhere.

Vs 2,3 Paul waxed fiercer after Stephen's stoning. He entered every house to arrest every man and woman to prison. This caused them to scatter everywhere. Like seed they were scattered for they went everywhere scattering the seed of the Word.

In my botany study I learned that in every bud are contained many seeds. When it ripens the seeds are scattered by the wind far and wide, from these spring up new life. Beloved brothers and sisters, may you go everywhere to shine for Christ.

God loved the Samaritans who had not heard the Gospel. No preacher went there. God used the persecution to send the disciples there. As it "fired cannons and machine guns" in Jerusalem, they had to run. "All things work together for good," even persecutions. How did God show love to Samaria?

Vs 4,5 Those scattered went about preaching the Word. Every true Christian cannot but preach, or else they have no peace. There was a man called Philip. He went to Samaria. He did not go there to be an officer or to trade and make money. He went to preach the Gospel. In Samaria there were big stores and banks. He went alone. Was he lonely? No, the Lord went with him. Praise the Lord! Thousands of angels accompanied him. I remember when I prayed for the sick on Mar.7, a woman of a distant province who was fallen ill and could not come sent relatives to ask me to pray for her. I prayed, "O God, You send angels to heal her." Praise the Lord! On the 12th I received her letter. She was restored the same afternoon we prayed for her. Brothers and sisters, we are not alone. Philip had the Holy Spirit with him when he went to Samaria. What did he do?

Vs 6-8 Philip preached with power in Samaria. True preachers have power and authority in their sermons. God grants miracles and signs to attest their preaching. Philip in the Name of the Lord healed all manner of disease --- headache, earache, backache, demon-possession, paralysis, lameness, leprosy, etc., so that the whole city gladly heard the Name of the Lord. Brothers and sisters, when a man preaches in the Name of God with God's power, he will shake up the whole city. Praise the Lord. God's grace is bountiful. Unless God shows forth with miracles, the people will not believe. These are last days. God has used miracles to prove His Word. Brothers and sisters, I hope the Gospel will be preached throughout China before long. Wonderful is God's power and also His grace. The Lord desires all to be saved and not any should perish. His grace is above our estimation. Now let me speak of one who received such grace.

Vs 9 There was a man called Simon, a sorcerer, feared by the whole city. He was such a big shot as to command everybody's hearing. But Philip had greater power. In Jesus' Name Philip preached the Gospel of God's kingdom. All the city, big and small, man and woman, were baptized. The opportunist Simon also believed and was baptized. He was very zealous. He made headlines in the daily newspapers: "Simon the Great Also Believes Jesus". But he remained unsaved. He believed, but was not saved. Many just preach, "believe and be saved". But Simon, though believing, was not saved. Baptized, sprinkled or immersed, and not saved. Simon believed with his head, his mouth, his nose, his ears, his eyes, but remained a hypocrite. His heart was a sealed coffin. He remained unsaved. Many were saved, but Simon was a hypocrite. Beloved brothers and sisters, God has done many miracles in Fukien, but many are still unsaved. Why? Hypocrisy! Day

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before yesterday, a dumb man came to testify saying, "I'm O.K." The previous occasion when I came to Amoy he had become well. When he went home, he thanked his idols. This brought back his dumbness. This time. He repented. I prayed for him again. Now, miracles cannot save, neither sprinkling nor immersion. Only one way of salvation --- trusting in Jesus' precious blood. His precious blood cleanses us and save us. Simon had abused God's grace. When Philip was preaching in Samaria, Simon came along. He bearded many sermons. Yet he was not saved. Hypocrite! Not only was Simon baptized; he was Philip's constant companion. While Philip was pastor, Simon was either elder or deacon. He carried Philip's bag. He heard Philip's sermons everyday. But Simon was a hypocrite. Beloved, God has so loved us, but we remain hypocrites. Pity! Simon walked closely in Philip's footsteps and even praised the Lord for his salvation. Hypocrite! He saw only the miracles, but trusted not the precious blood of Jesus. Beloved, there are many elders, deacons who have followed God for years and though they have experienced God's grace they remain unsaved. Pity! Hypocrites! Judas walked with Christ three years. He saw Christ's miracles. He loved money, hypocrite! Finally he betrayed Jesus. Brothers and sisters, never, never, abuse God's grace.

Vs 14 God's grace in order to be perfect in Philip's preaching was manifested in the sending of Peter and John. The most faithful Jesus' disciples, Peter, No. 1 and John No. 3, the beloved of the Lord. Peter's power was greater. His shadow could heal the sick. They arrived for Samaria's Revival Campaign. "Grace upon grace," they could represent Jesus. Beloved brothers and sisters, never, never lose hold of God's grace or obstruct His work, like hypocrites. Simon was covetous of money. Though he had followed Philip he saw only gold not grace. He received no grace. I'm afraid of many merchants and tycoons cannot join our meetings. Though the messages are good, to them wealth is of greater importance. They are bound by gold chains. Pity!

Vs 15-17 Peter and John had great power in prayer. Although Philip had done many miracles in Samaria and many had believed unto salvation, none had yet received the Holy Spirit. Though baptized, they had not received the Holy Spirit. Saved but powerless. Many have asked me, "Mr. Sung, I have been saved for a long time. I know my Bible and I have gone out witnessing. But why no power?" Because these have not received the Holy Spirit. While Peter and John laid hands on them and prayed they received power. Beloved, a person has no power in prayer when he is hindered by sin. Beloved, if our hands, mouth, eyes, feet, nose, heart are unclean, our prayer has no power. Through Peter and John's prayers the lives of those people were transformed. What's the proof? I don't know, I can't say, unless I have received the Holy Spirit. I have been to many places and met many who really yearn for the Spirit. After the Lord's servant has prayed by laying on of hands they received great power. They are filled with joy. Prayer is alive and powerful. Now Simon also came. He said, "All have power. Why am I the odd one out?" Simon was covetous. He wanted to buy with money. He thought, "If I have the power by laying of hands so that sicknesses are cured, with such power I can make money." Beloved, many have used God's grace for an opportunity to get rich. Hypocrite of a Simon, he missed God's grace. Pity!

Vs 18,19 Simon came. He came in style and pomp, like a Mandarin, money in hand; but he was dreaming for such power could not be bought. Simon brought \$20,000 and placing it before Peter, said. "Give me this power!" Simon was more in a jumble than an old woman. Beloved, why did Peter have power? Because he was holy, holy throughout his being. An unholy person has no power. Preaching bands have no power because they are unholy. To obtain power let a person cleanse himself. Many times I have experienced loss of power because of ungodliness. I pray, "Lord, cleanse me". Then power returns. Simon thought power could be bought. Now you see how a surgeon must scrub his hands clean before he operates. How he has to be gloved in rubber. Cleansing is the order for his clothing, instruments, scalpels --- not one bacterium can be tolerated. Then only could operation on the patient begin. Beloved, Simon was covetous. He thought power could be bought as an instrument to money-making. Simon, hypocrite, never sought the Holy Spirit.

Peter came to hold revival meetings. Simon lost out. Beloved, many in Amoy who just look at money are not interested in the Word. Many have bought their eldership and deacon's office. Pity! God's grace visited Samaria. Sorry for Simon, he missed out. Was Peter covetous? He had no courtesy but the people respected him, and shook his hands. Seeing through Simon's hardened heart, Peter threw his money on the ground.

Vs 20 Peter said, "Simon, you're wrong. Pitiful Simon, you're mistaken. Your money perishes with you!" God's grace cannot be bought. Beloved, Simon was covetous, so might many in our midst whose hearts are inclined to money. Judas perished with his \$30. Maybe a day will come when God says, "Your money perish with you."

Vs 21 Peter said, "You pay no attention to the preaching. Elder or deacon, you have no portion in the Word. Your heart is not straight. You are honored before men. But before God your heart is slanted." This is Peter's forthright rebuke. God's servant stands on no ceremony. Simon, Simon, you're a proprietor, tycoon, but you

have defaulted God's grace. Many hearing the Word are saved, born again, sanctified, filled with the Spirit. Simon with a crooked heart missed the blessing.

Vs 22 When Peter rebuked Ananias he fell dead, but not in his dealing with Simon. This was in order to cause him: 1) To repent from sin. 2) To trust in the blood for forgiveness of sin. So he said, "Simon, repent of your sin. Pray to the Lord that perhaps He might forgive you of your evil thoughts." Beloved, God's grace on us is free, grace upon grace. Simon, hypocrite, he got fouled up on the Doctrine. Peter still pitied him. He asked the Lord to forgive him.

Vs 23 Simon, I see you are in the gall of bitterness, bound by sin. Though you've been an elder for years in the Church, a deacon, baptized, stayed with Philip, but you're a hypocrite! The two-edged sword of the Word of the Holy Spirit can pierce every heart. Did Simon repent? Let's see.

Vs 24 When Simon heard these words his heart made a somersault. He was immensely afraid. He was nervous. Simon said, "Mr. Peter, Rev. Peter, please pray for me that what you said will not fall on me." He was afraid. He asked Peter to pray "that the disaster might not fall on me." He feared hell. He looked at the present; he did not fear the future. Though he asked Peter to pray he did not repent. Pity! God had given him all kinds of grace. 1) God's grace of sending the Gospel to Samaria. 2) Philip's miracles to awaken him. 3) His baptism (sprinkling or immersion). 4) Peter and John's revival campaign. 5) The Holy Spirit's Word like a sword piercing his heart. Ah, Simon was still unsaved. How was it the adulterous woman of Samaria was saved? Why? God said, "She repented." But Simon was a hypocrite. He prayed again, "Oh God!" How was Zacchaeus saved? I have been baptized. I'm somebody in Church How is it I can't be saved? God said, "Simon, you're a hypocrite." Too far gone to repent. He never obtained saving grace. I sigh for him too! Simon, with all these years of opportunity, with such a great evangelist, where were you? You've heard, but you're not saved. Hypocrite! Beloved, how pitiful!