



▶ DAILY DEVOTIONAL.

Saturday/Sunday, 6/2-3/18

“New People, New Places”

Acts 8:1-8

On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him. But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off both men and women and put them in prison.

Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went. Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah there. When the crowds heard Philip and saw the signs he performed, they all paid close attention to what he said. For with shrieks, impure spirits came out of many, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. So there was great joy in that city.

Family Activity: School is officially out and we get to go to new places over the summer. Our scripture for this weekend talks about the believers being scattered and preaching the word and serving God wherever they went. Summer break is a great time to try new things. As a family, take time to set a date to serve God together. Be sure to send a picture to Pastor Jessica (jrichard@plattewoodschurch.org) and we will celebrate with a photo collage of all of the awesome ways we served this summer!

A Few Family-Friendly Service Ideas:

- Earn money to bring for our VBS mission project Charity:Water through a garage sale, lemonade stand, etc.
- Make and/or serve a meal at the Ronald McDonald House or Children’s Mercy
- Serve at KC Pet Project
- Volunteer with Harvesters (kids 8 and up)

Monday, 6/4/18

“Expanding the Reach of the Gospel”

Acts 8:9-25

Now for some time a man named Simon had practiced sorcery in the city and amazed all the people of Samaria. He boasted that he was someone great, and all the people, both high and low, gave him their attention and exclaimed, “This man is rightly called the Great Power of God.” They followed him because he had amazed them for a long time with his sorcery. But when they believed Philip as he proclaimed the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Simon himself believed and was baptized. And he followed Philip everywhere, astonished by the great signs and miracles he saw.

When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to Samaria. When they arrived, they prayed for the new believers there that they might receive the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit had not yet come on any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money and said, "Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit."

Peter answered: "May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money! You have no part or share in this ministry, because your heart is not right before God. Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord in the hope that he may forgive you for having such a thought in your heart. For I see that you are full of bitterness and captive to sin."

Then Simon answered, "Pray to the Lord for me so that nothing you have said may happen to me."

After they had further proclaimed the word of the Lord and testified about Jesus, Peter and John returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many Samaritan villages.

- The book of Acts begins with the giving of the Holy Spirit and the empowerment of Jesus' disciples to go out and proclaim the Gospel in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth. This plays out throughout the book of Acts, with an ever-expanding reach of the Gospel from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth. In this passage, we find Peter and John proclaiming the Gospel in Samaria, a place occupied by people who were only half Jewish. As such, the Samaritans were seen as lesser people by most Jews, unworthy of their time or attention — they were detestable in most Jews' eyes. The Gospel — Jesus' redemption, salvation, grace and mercy—is for all people. So, Peter and John were there, outside their comfort zones, proclaiming the Good News. With whom are you most comfortable being open about your faith? With whom are you least comfortable? Who are the people that you encounter day-to-day that are typically seen as "detestable" or "lesser than"? What are some ways that you can begin a conversation or relationship with someone outside your comfort zone?

Prayer: Holy God, we know that your Spirit dwells just outside of our comfort zones, and that you call us to follow you there. Give us courage and boldness to step out in faith, and to share the amazing reality of your love for us and all people. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Tuesday, 6/5/18

"Even Greater Things"

John 14:12-17a

Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it. If you love me, keep my commands. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever — the Spirit of truth.

In this passage, Jesus makes some truly amazing promises. He says, that by believing in him, we will do the things he has done. Not just that, but we will do even greater things. Think about Jesus' life and earthly ministry. What are the things that Jesus did? Where do you see the Church doing the things that Jesus did? How might you participate in the work of Jesus?

- To do even greater things than Jesus seems so far-fetched. However, Jesus promises an advocate to help us — the Holy Spirit. We receive the Holy Spirit when we love Jesus and keep his commands. In light of this, what "greater things" might Jesus be calling the church to? What "greater things" might Jesus be calling you to?

Prayer: Lord, we find that we are completely inadequate to live fully into what you call us to, and find it difficult to believe that we could do even greater things than you. Help us to trust in your promises and in the power of the Holy Spirit. May we live out our trust in you through our love of you and others. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Wednesday, 6/6/18

“Temple of the Holy Spirit”

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your bodies.

- Sometimes we overspiritualize our faith to the neglect of our bodies. The reality is that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit — the vessels through which the Holy Spirit often works. Our bodies are the vessels through which we love and serve God and other people. They are the vessels through which we proclaim the Good News of Jesus and work to build his Kingdom. What do you think it means for your body to be a temple of the Holy Spirit?
- What do you think Paul means by saying that “you are not your own”? What are some ways that the Holy Spirit might use you to make Jesus known to the people you encounter in your life?

Prayer: Holy God, we thank you that we are fearfully and wonderfully made in your image. Holy Spirit, use us for your purposes in this world, and help us to care for the temples you have given us. Help us to be yours. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Thursday, 6/7/18

“Empowerment”

1 Corinthians 12:4-6

There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

- In chapter 12 of his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul opens by stressing the reality that the church cannot afford anyone not to know of the importance of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, because the accomplishment of the mission of the church depends on it. He then outlines the three steps of how the Holy Spirit implements the mission of the church in vv. 4-6: equipping the church with a variety of spiritual gifts, opening up various avenues of ministry that match the gifts of each member of the Body, and empowering the members of the Body. We are all created differently, with different gifts, and given various avenues to use our gifts — we are not all supposed to look completely alike and do the exact same acts of service. The Body is meant to be much more diverse than that. As you think about the Holy Spirit's work in the church Body as a whole, what are some of the spiritual gifts that you see others exhibiting in our church? What different kinds of service do you see being done through various people in the church? What gifts of the Holy Spirit might you possess? How is the Holy Spirit equipping you for service to others?
- The Holy Spirit also empowers us to be about his work in the world. The Greek word for “empower” is *energemata*, from which we get our word “energy.” What do you think it looks like to be empowered by the Holy Spirit — to be energized for the purposes of God's work in the world? Have you experienced that empowerment? In what ways?

Prayer: Holy God, empower and energize us for your work in this world. Help us to use our various gifts for the various kinds of service you call all of us to, so that we may be used in the building of your Kingdom. Amen.

Friday, 6/8/18

“Let Everything That Has Breath”

Psalm 150

Praise the LORD.

Praise God in his sanctuary;

praise him in his mighty heavens.

Praise him for his acts of power;

praise him for his surpassing greatness.

Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet,

praise him with the harp and lyre,

praise him with timbrel and dancing,

praise him with the strings and pipe,

praise him with the clash of cymbals,

praise him with resounding cymbals.

Let everything that has breath praise the LORD.

Praise the LORD.

- We are made to praise God. Our praise is one way that God makes himself known to the world around us. The psalmist, in psalm 150, is praising God for everything God is and has done, through song and dance and everything the psalmist is and has. I personally gravitate to the words, “Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.” We are *all* meant to praise God, but what I latch onto most is the word *breath*. Throughout the past few weeks, we have been seeking to garner an awareness of the Holy Spirit — the way the Holy Spirit works, and how the Holy Spirit is at work in and through us. The Hebrew word for the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament is *ruah*, which means *wind* or *breath*. We read in Genesis 1 of the Spirit of God being present at the very beginning, and we read in Genesis 2 of God *breathing* life in to humanity to give us life. The Holy Spirit is always present with us, is always working in and through us, gives us life, and is the source of our praise for God. What are you thankful for? What praise wells up within you when you think of all that God is and has done? How do you live out your praise of God in your day-to-day life?

Prayer: Allow the Holy Spirit to imprint these words from Psalm 150 on your heart and use them as a source of prayer throughout the day.

**This week’s devotional was written by Pastor Jake Schneider
(jschneider@plattewoodschurch.org).**