

June 22/25 Small Group Questions

Acts 8:4-24 “A Pastoral Word to Hesitant Hearts”

1. Have you been in church settings or heard about church settings where the activity and gifts of the Holy Spirit were a source of hurt?

Read Acts 8:4-24

2. (vs. 4-8) Samaritans and Jews hated one another so the good news of the kingdom was not being shared with Samaritans. Where do we see the activity of God in bringing the good news to the Samaritans?
3. (vs. 9-13) Who was Simon? What evidence does Luke give us for the mixed nature of Simon's heart?

Read Acts 2:38

4. What is the normative pattern for reception of the Holy Spirit?
5. (vs. 14-17) This text is often seen as a proof text for a two-stage initiation theology. First receive Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins, and then the baptism of the Spirit through the laying on of hands. What affirmation of this theology can you find in the text? What are the potential pitfalls of such a theology?

Read Acts 10: 23b-48 *note - this was with a large group of Gentiles

6. This and Acts 8 are the two stories where God breaks out of the normative pattern found in Acts 2. If not affirming a two-stage initiation what do these texts tell us about why God is breaking out of the normative pattern for reception of the Spirit?
7. (vs.18-24) How does Peter respond when he sees Simon's heart?
8. As an application Tim invited us not to denigrate the gifts of the spirit but rather to discern the heart of the one wielding the gifts and respond accordingly. How might this work itself out in the life of our church?