St Marks Avalon & St Davids Palm Beach
ANGLICAN CHURCH

8

Acts: God in Action through Us

Acts 8:1-25
From Jerusalem and Judea, to Samaria

Discussion Starter: *What would happen if 'spiritual authority' could be bought?*

We read in Acts 8:1-4 that, following the stoning of Stephen, great persecution broke out in Jerusalem against the Christians. The Church was scattered. It seemed disastrous. But instead, the gospel of Jesus the resurrected Messiah spread much more rapidly. One of Stephens fellow table-waiters (literally, 'deacons') went to Samaria.

Read Acts 8:4-25.

1. What do you know already about Samaria and the way that Jerusalem Jews feel about Samaritans? (see also Luke 9:51-56; John 4:9,20-22)

2. What evidence is there that Simon had genuinely become a Christian? If Simon was not a Christian, what might Peter have said to Simon in response to his request in verse 19?

3. In the face of Simon's attempted bribery, what does Peter actually call Simon to do (v 20-23)?

4. No matter how 'wicked' our sins might be, the right response is always to repent and pray for forgiveness (v22). When you recognise sin in your own life, what helps you to repent and seek God's forgiveness? How do you go about this?

5. It seems odd to us that God would delay sending the Holy Spirit to the Samaritans until the arrival of the apostles Peter and John. What do you think might have been the effect on the church when the Samaritans were shown this demonstration of apostolic authority?

6. How do we acknowledge the authoritative witness of the apostles in our church? What happens when people ignore or sideline their testimony?