

Christ's Power and Zeal to Give New Hearts to Sinnersclick bit.ly/3ITwXPe to hear this lesson as taught (or scan QR code→)**Saturday, May 28, 2022 ▫ Read Acts 8:9–24**

Questions from the Scripture text: Whom does v9 introduce? What had he formerly done? How well? What had people done to him (v10)? Which people? What did they call him? What does v11 repeat that they did to him? Why did they? Whom did they now believe instead (v12)? What was he preaching? Which of the sexes received the sign of covenant initiation? What does v13 say that Simon did? What was done to him? then what did he do? What did he see? And what effect did this have upon him? Who in Jerusalem heard what (v14)? What did they do? When Peter and John came down, what did they do (v15)? Why (v16)? Then what did Peter and John do (v17)? Who saw this (v18)? What did he offer? For what did he ask (v19)? How does Peter answer (v20)? Why? What does he say Simon does not have (v21)? Why? What two things does he tell Simon to do (v22)? What two things does he say have done this to Simon (v23)? Now for what does Simon ask (v24)?

What are some ways that baptism can relate to our spiritual condition? Acts 8:9–24 looks forward to the morning sermon on the coming Lord's Day. In these seventeen verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that religiosity can be an obstacle not only to believing the gospel but also to recognizing whether your faith is genuine.

The gospel comes with power to overcome the greatest obstacles.

The Spirit has already told us in v6 that the multitudes in Samaria were heeding Philip with one accord. Now in vv9–11, we find out what a great obstacle this gospel preaching was overcoming. It was not the obstacle of atheism or polytheism, but under-informed religiosity, superstition, and spiritual excitement.

The Samaritans held to the first five books of the Bible and were monotheists, which we might have picked up from Jesus's conversation with the woman in John 4. At that time, there had been much professed belief in Jesus through His own preaching (v42). But since then, this man named Simon had been able to stir up some religious fervor by his "magic" (v11). This excitement had captivated people of all sorts (v10) for a long time (v11).

All of this information is designed to provide a backdrop against which we may be impressed with the effects of the gospel in v12. Philip, too, showed miracles and signs (v6–7) that put Simon's magic to shame (v13b). But the Spirit gives the credit to the conversions especially to the preaching (v12). The glory of the gospel was seen not only in that it was for small and great, and that it overcame the false religiosity of the "Simon Magus" cult, but also that it came with a new sign that would be not only upon males but upon females as well. Baptism itself was a sign of the power of God to save, and the doubling of its objects over those over circumcision showed the greatness of this gospel.

Sometimes (often), people receive the sign of the promise even before they come to faith in the promise. This was true of covenant children in the Old Testament who had been circumcised on the 8th day. Even for those who are baptized after believing, we see in that passage that some of what is signified to them comes after baptism. In this case, it was the outpouring and indwelling of the Holy Spirit (v14–17). Although the people had been converted through the evangelism of Philip, still God honored the ordinary office of the ministers of the gospel by bringing this part of their salvation through the means of their praying and laying on of Peter's and John's hands. Of course, the completion of our cleansing and resurrection in Christ is always future to us in this world. Baptism is a sign and seal of all of the believer's covenant benefits—past, present, and future.

But it's possible to have a pseudo-Christianity that is just a new religious excitement.

In the elect, the efficacy of baptism is not tied to the moment of its administration. But in others, it may also be the case that someone is not only baptized and also professes faith, but still is profoundly spiritually dead and lost.

Simon made a profession of faith, got baptized, and even joined the ministry team (v13). But he wasn't rejoicing in Christ alone as the life and power and authority of His church; Simon craved a bit of that old glory for himself and thought he could obtain it with money (v18–19).

This baptized man's heart was not right before God (v21). In fact, he was still poisoned by bitterness and bound by guiltiness (v23). Sadly, when given direct instruction by the apostle (repent and pray, v22), he doesn't do as told but asks the apostle to pray for him instead (v24).

The lesson is ultimately that saving faith is more than just intellectual agreement. It is the fruit of a changed heart. Even the thoughts of our hearts must be forgiven (v22), and it is especially our hearts that are counted righteous before God through saving faith (v21). Baptism reminds us that this is not something we can do to ourselves; it is God alone Who can give repentance and faith!

What are some examples of religious excitement that aren't necessarily Christian? What does baptism show to the elect? Why doesn't it do any good for those who are not elect? What does it tell us to do?

Sample prayer: Lord, we praise You for Your glorious salvation that overcomes even our false religiosity. Forgive us for whenever we think there is true spiritual life or power from anything but Christ. And grant unto us not only changed hearts, but the completion of our conformity to Christ and His perfect heart, which we ask in His Name, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP51A "God, Be Merciful to Me" or TPH51C "God, Be Merciful to Me"

For more Hopewell @Home devotionals, please visit bit.ly/harpcHAH

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording referenced above)

Acts chapter 8, verses 9 through 24. These are God's Words. There was a certain man called Simon who previously practiced sorcery in the city and astonished the people of Samaria. Claiming that he was someone great to him. They all gave heed from the least to the greatest saying, this man is the great power of God and they heeded him because he astonished them with his sorceries for a long time.

But when they believed, when they believed Philip as he preached, the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women. We're baptized Then, Simon himself also believed. And when he was baptized, he continued with Philip and was amazed seeing the miracles and signs which were done.

Now in the Apostles who are at Jerusalem, heard that Samaria had received the Word of God. They sent Peter and John to them. So when they had come down prayed for them that who when they had come down prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit for his yet.

He had fallen up all none of them that only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit. And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands, the Holy Spirit was given He offered the money saying, give me this power.

Also that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit but Peter said to him, your money perish with you because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money. You have neither part nor portion in this matter for your heart is not right?

And the sight of God. Repent. Therefore of this your wickedness and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart maybe forgiven you for I see that you are poisoned by bitterness bound by iniquity and Simon answered and said, pray to the Lord for me, that none of the things which you have spoken and they come upon me.

So far the reading of God's inspired and inherent work.

So, in the beginning of the passage, we begin to see and hear about the great power of the gospel. That the gospel overcomes, great obstacles. And in this case, one of the great obstacles was the spiritual excitement in the city about this, man? He himself claimed about himself that he was someone great and everyone gave heed from the least to the greatest to him.

Verse 10 to him. They all gave heed from the least of the greatest saying. This man is the great power of God.

There are many obstacles to our salvation, in our hearts, in our minds. In in our experience, our experiences, They all come from the Providence of God, and we deserve every obstacle that we have and more in our first father, Adam. And when we sinned in him and fell with him, but one of the the greatest obstacles to the gospel in our life is if we think we already have the power of God as if we think we already have salvation the most resistant.

When I used to go door to door Evangelizing, when we got to Orange City, the most resistant. People were the ones who thought they were already saved. Many of whom could not explain to me upon further conversation what salvation is who did not have a clear understanding of our sin and its guilt and who Christ is, and what he had done and yet, they were so sure that because they were upstanding people who attended church and had memorized a catechism.

Heidelberg Catechism in their case that taught them. All of the things that they couldn't articulate on their on their porches, or in their sitting rooms, some of them there. Nice fancy houses. They thought that because they're outstanding people who went to church, learn their catechism. Shook, the ministers hand on the way out, told him.

What a great sermon it was, we're part of the charitable societies, that many of those churches had or maybe a small group. They thought they were fine with God. They had looked at things that were impressive in the world and said, this is the great power of God. Well, the whole city of Samaria had this this great obstacle to them.

When he says, they all gave heed. That's a way generally speaking. Doesn't men mean every last one of them, but when he adds from the least to the greatest the Holy Spirit by the by Luke whom he carried along to write this portion of scripture is telling us just how pervasive this spiritual excitement about the cult around the cult of Simon Magus.

Was this man is a great power of God and so whatever he taught them to do, they would give him he'd verse 11. They heeded him because he had astonished them with his sorceries for a long time. So he's teaching some things. It doesn't tell us what he was teaching them and only tells us how in slaved they were, how bound they were to what this guy said, because he was the latest spiritual fad and there seemed to be something to it.

And so they were heeding, whatever. He said, and that's why it's such an amazing thing. When verse 6, the multitudes with one accord heeded, the things spoken by Philip hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. So Phillips sayings, were better than Simon. Magus is saying in Philips, miracles were better.

Praise God than Simon Magus's miracles or magic and we don't know if it was light and sleight of hand conman stuff or whether it was genuinely demonic, whether there was real power in it, He certainly by the end of the passage, recognizes that he could, certainly get himself a wonder working upgrade, which he tries to purchase, Apparently.

He did not become impoverished by the cult of Simon Magus and that had spread in Sumerian advance. But you see the display than the point that is being made of the power of God in the gospel to overcome, even the greatest spiritual obstacles to salvation, even their thinking that they already had the power of God.

So they hear Philip. When they believe Philip, when they believe Philip, as he preached, the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. That Jesus Christ is the Lord who came to save. So his name, Jesus means he is the Lord, the Savior, his name, Christ means he is anointed one.

The prophet that Moses had promised, the son of David that God had promised to David, which the Samaritans didn't even recognize up until this point, another great obstacle. And their stunted Old Testament theology because they only accepted the first five books. And so both of those names would have been wonderful names to this Samaritans.

As, as Philip was preaching who the Christ is and, you know, the Jews were right. And David was right? And yet the son of David is even first, Samaritans you have breeds from the northern tribes who rejected the House of David so early on and yet God and His mercy has given the Son of David for you.

Oh, and by the way, the son of David is the son of God, He is both Lord and Christ. His name is Yahweh saves because he is Yahweh in the flesh and he, his daddy got that name, not because he was Jesus's father, and got to decide what to name Jesus, but because he wasn't Jesus's father and God, who formed by the Holy Spirit in a woman, a human nature body, and soul for his son.

The second person of the Trinity, he's the one who picked the name and an angel came and told him about that name. And so Phillip is preaching. Both the kingdom, which was a very strange new thing in Samaritan's ears, and the name of Jesus Christ And this wonderful preaching.

What do you think? The good advice or or spiritual cult instructions. From Simon Magus lips sounded like compared to the preaching of Philip the Evangelist. Well probably about as well as Simon Magus's parlor, tricks or demonic. Tricks. Stood up against the casting out of demons and the raising up of paralytics.

So you see how the passage is emphasizing the infinite superiority of God and his gospel in this Jesus who is both Lord and Christ, And then you get not just the power of God to save, but the the zeal of God to save baptism, of course, a sign from God, showing his sincerity showing that is, his salvation is genuinely offered even to such sinners as they are.

We remember that? That's how baptism is functioning in this New Testament church, because how it functioned in the day of Pentecost, When Peter had preached, Jesus, as both Lord and Christ. And the people were cut to the heart and they said, what shall we do? And he said, repent and be baptized for the promises for you and for your children and for as many as RFR off and, you know, whoever believes.

And so in the context here, baptism is not just a display of the zeal of God to save in line with what he's shown in Acts chapter 2. It's also a display of God Godzilla to save over against someone else's zeal because this is not the first time in the flow of this passage.

As a whole that we hear the phrase men and women. In fact, just a few verses ago He said as for Saul he made havoc of the church and touring every house and dragging off, men and women committing them to prison. And when it said entering every house we we hear that Saul was a zealous to persecute the church as the apostles chapter 5, verse 42.

We're to preach Christ to the church that they preached Christ. Not just in the temple but in every house. So we come to act eight verse 3 and we hear it in the context of the book of Actress. Oh man, this Saul is a zealous to persecute the church as the apostles are to preach Christ to it.

But part of his zeal in his persecution of the church is dragging off men and women. And then we come just a few verses later, we say, see, when they believed Philip as he preached, the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. The power of God, to say, both men and women were baptized, as you have baptism as a sign of the earnestness of God to save sinners.

And then the fact that men and women are baptized here in the flow of the passage that God is just as zealous. And we know, of course, more zealous to save sinners. And then Saul of Tarsus is to persecute Christians and you have this expansion of the covenant sign emphasized in the context and flow of the passage, my dear daughters, I am so glad for you that each of you have had the covenant sign placed upon you.

That I'm so glad for us that we live in the age of the church that is under Jesus. Who is a son over the church? Faithful overall God's house and not just under the time of Abraham or under the time of Moses in which the covenant sign could only be applied to males and you would have been under a male, of course, you would be under your daddy's headship.

Until if God was pleased for you to be married, you came to be under your husband's headship. And if you are in a believing household you would have whoever was your head would have the covenant sign on him. But now in the age of the gospel, you each, get the covenant sign on.

You yourself in addition to being part of a believing household in which, your father has the sign on his head. And we see that, of course in the shift from individualized, not really, the shift in the description of baptism is something that is applied to every member of the household.

When the head of the household comes to believe, even in the case where you have a widow or an unmarried woman, in the case of believe, it's Lydia, his whole household is baptized when she believes. And so there's something wonderful there about not just the power of God to save and overcoming the obstacle in.

Simon Magus, but also the zeal of God to save as displayed by baptism. But sometimes, people get the sign of the zeal and genuineness of God's salvation before they get that salvation itself. Sometimes people get the zeal, the sign of the zeal and earnestness. And genuineness of God, salvation without ever being saved, God doesn't tell us, whether Simon Magus ever, got the new heart that he needed whether he ever was able enabled by God.

Genuinely to believe He just leaves us with the question of this baptized, man. It was a very zealous part of the church. He leaves off his own cult and comes under Philip and becomes a zealous part. And how do you think Philip and Peter and John would have responded at first?

Isn't it a wonderful thing? When someone leaves off their zeal for a false religion and they profess the name of Jesus Christ, and they come to be baptized and they continue with and under the leadership of the church, it seems like they've made this massive new change, but it's possible to have a new religious excitement and to be very involved in the church and still not genuinely, have a new heart or be saved.

And that's why verse 13 is our memory. Verse then, Simon himself. Also, believed He agreed with the theology of the church. He stopped saying all those things that he used to say before that everyone in Samaria had heeded him about and started repeating the things that Philip said. And he could have a theological conversation that sounded very Christian, then Simon himself also believed.

And when he was baptized he received The mark of salvation, the mark of being set apart in the church He continued with Philip. He joined the ministry team. He got involved right away with that new convert, enthusiasm. Did you know that new comfort enthusiasm is not exclusive to true churches.

All the cults have new convert enthusiasm in their cults and so this is something that enthusiasm that comes from joining and being a part of something new and something that as you, it seems to you think is better. That enthusiasm is something that can be aped or imitated by the flesh, just as much as it can be produced by the Holy Spirit.

So you don't put your hope in the sign that you've received. You don't put your hope in the profession of faith that you have made or that theology that you have learned. You don't put your hope in being part of the church and even zealously joining in the ministry of the church.

And you see has the comment about his enthusiasm. The enthusiasm was real. It just wasn't gracious. It wasn't sinus spiritual life. He was amazed seeing the miracles and signs which were done. Now the Apostles of Jerusalem here that Samaria has received the Word of God and they remember chapter 1 and verse 8.

Oh yes, we were supposed to be God's witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria. So Peter and John are sent by the rest of the apostles. They send probably the most prominent and whom they would consider the most mature. Perhaps, we don't know why John, but John was already kind of in the Gospels, the closest, to Jesus.

The one who they would have Jesus, ask something when they really wanted an answer and so forth. Can you do that in another direction? When you do that, um, they sent Peter and John to them who when they had come down Prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit.

Now remember it was basic to the apostolic message that the one who is both Lord and Christ is the one who pours out the Holy Spirit. So whom do you think to whom do you think they had prayed that this Samaritans might receive the Holy Spirit. Jesus, of course, for as yet, he had fallen upon none of them.

They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Now, this baptism in the name of the Lord, Jesus is baptism as commanded by Jesus. So, the name as the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and we know that not just from what Jesus had commanded in Matthew 28.

But also, the way, the not, then, Apostle, Paul. Praise God in chapter 19 response when he meets these people in Ephesus who are calling themselves. Believers. And haven't heard the Holy Spirit yet heard of the Holy Spirit. He says until what then were you baptized, right? You didn't receive Jesus's baptism.

Baptism in the name of Jesus, as baptism into the name singular of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. So they had received the name but they hadn't received the spirit yet. So Peter and John come and they pray that Jesus would send the Holy Spirit then they lay hands on them and they receive the Holy Spirit.

So there's this acknowledgment that even though this church in Samaria, was started by the preaching of Philip, the evangelist. It is an authentic church of Jesus Christ under the authority and leadership of his apostles, even though the apostles aren't going to stay there. When Peter and John are done with this, they're going to return home at the beginning of next.

Week's passage in verse 25 which were pick up Lord willing next week. So Simon saw that through the laying on of the Apostle's hands. The Holy Spirit was given, he doesn't pay attention to the fact that they prayed at first that it's Jesus, who gives the Holy Spirit and that it's not so much the laying on of the hands, but the laying on of the hands is actually designed to point back from themselves to the Lord Jesus who's apostles.

They were he just sees the action and says, ooh. Yeah. Give, I'll give you money and you let me do the handle anything too. As if it's up to any of us in the church, how to run the church, there's laying on of hands done and ordaining women against the authority and instruction of Jesus in the Bible.

And then women who have been ordained lay their hands on other people as if they have authority to ordain. Separating the mechanism on earth from the action in heaven of the Lord. Jesus Christ is an act of rebellion and unbelief that fails to recognize that we need Jesus to be personally involved in His church by the working of His Spirit.

So Peter here's Simon's offer and he realizes this person doesn't understand that Jesus. The Savior is Lord and Christ sitting at the right hand of majesty, pouring out his spirit. Bringing the people into salvation by his power and authority alone. He's he's become excited about this. This new spiritual thing called Christianity.

And he's saying a lot of the right things involved, in a lot of the right groups, doing a lot of the right things, but he doesn't have a new heart from the Holy Spirit in which he looks to Jesus personally, actively for his salvation. So Simon says give me this power.

Also that anyone on whom I lay vans may receive the Holy Spirit and Peter says to him your money perish with you because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money. You don't realize that the Lord Jesus is the one who saves that. The Lord Jesus is the one who personally from heaven operates in his church.

This is why Sophia we are. Also often praying to Jesus. Sophia that he would help you. As we worship God, that He would help all of us to trust in him and to know him that he would work in us in our hearts, by his power. Simon didn't understand that it was Jesus, who did this?

He didn't understand the baptism that he had received, right? The water baptism showed that it's Jesus. Who does this from heaven? He says you have neither a part nor portion in this matter. Why? For your heart is not right in the sight of God, so you can have new membership, you can have new covenant signs, you can have new theology, you can have new ministry, you can have new excitement.

But if you don't have a new heart, that knows Jesus, as your God and Savior and knows that all of the saving comes entirely from him by his power from Him personally by his power. If you don't have that new heart then you are still perishing. Whatever else it is that you have.

And so each of you need to need to recognize that Jesus is your Savior, like God, the Son has died for you and rules over you and that all of the new life that you can have all of the growing and holiness and serving and obedience, all of the spiritual effectiveness that you have that you hope to have that at all comes only personally from him in heaven and that you use means on earth, not because the means have power.

Not, you know, they're laying of hands. That doesn't have power in the hands as if you can purchase hand power but that you use a means on earth because you're trusting him, who has appointed them and who sits in heaven, each of you need to have that for yourself being part of this, family participating in this worship, maybe a member of the church, having received the sign of God's earnestness to save and God's power to save.

None of those things will save you apart from a new heart, which is what Simon Simon Magus needed. And so he says, repent, therefore of this, your wickedness and pray God. If perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven, you Remember that? We need atonement. Even for the thoughts of our hearts, that was what Job knew about his children.

This isn't a new thing, right? And they had their weekly gathered service of all of the households of his family. Why did they do that? Because he thought lest one of them have sinned against God, in their hearts, even without knowing it. And in Romans chapter 2, which will come to soon in the midweek.

Preaching by God's help. We hope to anyway. He'll say that. The according to his gospel, the secrets of men's hearts, our judged in Jesus Christ and says repent therefore of this year wickedness and pray God. If perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you for, I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity.

That's not how we would have summarized the guy that we heard about in verse 13 of the passage. So just remember that how everyone else sees you. How you may even see yourself spiritually apart from a new heart by God's power giving you life by his spirit. We can be very self deceived, it's not just others who can appear as an angel of light to us, but really be a demon or Satan himself.

Even according to the scripture, we ourselves maybe appear as an angels of light to ourselves and be self deceived. And so the apostle gives him instruction and tells him and it's a mercy when God comes to us in this word and he tells us the truth about our spiritual condition.

If we were self-deceived and right now you might be wondering, am I self deceived? And if you're wondering that about yourself, then you cling to Jesus by faith, you do what the Apostle said, You repent of your sin, all of us. Have had a measure of self-deceiving faking hypocrisy, and everything that we've done, You didn't cease to become fleshly the moment you believed in Jesus, if you're a believer, but you do what he says here, you're a pent and you pray.

God say oh Lord none can be lost. Who are in? Jesus have mercy on me. Me too, through your son, Jesus Christ and it doesn't matter. If it's the thousandth time, you've come to God and repentance and faith. They're the first time all of them are saving because none can be lost who belong to Christ through genuine faith.

And if you've had false faith all this time and you come for the first time in real faith, then you, you know that all who call up on the name of the Lord will be saved and none who call upon him will be put to shame. Simon doesn't obey.

He says you pray to the Lord for me that none other things that you have spoken may come up on me and I'm sure the apostles did pray for him and other believers did pray for him. But what he needed was for himself to turn from his, his own sin for himself to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, your parents have been praying for you.

Since before you were born that you would be forgiven. But when we come to instruct you from the Bible for how to be forgiven It is by your turning from your sin and you're calling upon the Lord to save you from your sin. The Lord grant each to us to have that new heart from Jesus Christ.

By his Spirit. Let's pray Our Father in heaven. We thank you for this passage. We thank you for how it testifies of your power to save and the genuineness of your salvation, how it? Testifies even of your zeal to say being stronger, then our zeal to sin and we pray that you would give each of us that new heart that faith in Jesus Christ that knowledge of him is not just the Savior of the church generally but each one of our us ours particular Savior particularly and personally we praise you O God for the reality of your salvation, make it a known and felt and lived reality for each one of us through Jesus Christ.

And his name. We ask it. Amen.