Acts 8:1-8

What Are You Willing to Give Your Life For? | Kevin Queen

SUMMARY

Acts 8 begins in a difficult place. Stephen has been killed, Saul is persecuting the church and followers of Jesus are being scattered from their homes. Yet what could have stopped the movement of Jesus actually becomes part of how the gospel moves forward. The scattered believers preach wherever they go, and Philip carries the message of Jesus into Samaria.

Pastor Kevin reminded us that following Jesus does not mean avoiding hardship. Life is hard, and the Bible is honest about that. We can grieve what has been lost while still trusting that God is working. Grief is not the absence of faith, it is the presence of love.

Through Philip, we also see what an ordinary life surrendered to God can accomplish. Philip had faithfully served behind the scenes before God called him to Samaria. When that moment came, he obeyed. The invitation for us is the same: Go where God sends you, stay where He puts you, give what you have and watch God work.

INTRO PRAYER

God, thank You for bringing us together. As we open Your Word, help us hear what You want to say to us. Show us where we have become distracted, discouraged or comfortable. Give us eyes to see people the way You see them and courage to follow You wherever You lead. Help us trust that You are working even in circumstances we would never choose. Amen.

ICE BREAKER

Pastor Kevin opened the message with two questions: **Why are you alive, and what would you be willing to give your life for?**

Without overthinking it, what is something in your life that you care deeply enough about to make a significant sacrifice for?

KEY VERSES

Acts 8:1-4

“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."

Acts 8:5-8

"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."

QUESTIONS

1. Acts 8 begins with grief, persecution and disruption, but God uses those circumstances to spread the gospel. How have you seen God bring something meaningful or good out of a difficult season in your own life?

Pastor Kevin reminded us that life is hard and Scripture does not pretend otherwise. Every person we encounter is carrying some kind of hardship. At the same time, God can use uncomfortable circumstances to move us somewhere we never would have gone on our own.

Where is it difficult for you to believe that God is working right now?

2. Pastor Kevin said, "Grief is not the absence of faith, it's the presence of love." How does that change the way you think about grief?

The believers did not rush past Stephen's death. They "mourned deeply for him." They had hope, but their hope did not eliminate their grief.

Have you ever felt pressure to move past pain, disappointment or loss before you were ready? What might it look like to honestly grieve while still holding on to hope?

3. Pastor Kevin talked about how social media can cause us to romanticize someone else's life. Where are you most tempted to compare your life or calling to someone else's?

Pastor Kevin said, "As long as you're fantasizing about somebody else's life, you're not living your own."

Comparison can distract us from the people, opportunities and calling God has placed directly in front of us. What might you be overlooking in your own life because you are focused on what someone else has?

4. Philip had already been faithfully serving before God sent him to Samaria. What does his story teach us about the relationship between serving and leading?

Pastor Kevin reminded us, "If serving is beneath you, then leading is beyond you." Philip was willing to serve tables in Jerusalem before he ever preached to crowds in Samaria.

Where has God given you an opportunity to serve faithfully right now, even if it feels small or unnoticed?

5. Philip went somewhere many people would have avoided. Where might God be asking you to move beyond your comfort zone?

Samaria represented cultural and relational barriers, but Philip followed the example Jesus had already set by moving toward people others might have avoided.

Who are the people you might naturally overlook, avoid or assume are too different from you? What could it look like to intentionally move toward them with the love of Jesus?

6. Pastor Kevin summarized Philip's obedience this way: "Go where you're sent. Stay where you're put. Give what you've got. Watch God work." Which part of that statement challenges you most right now?

Maybe God is asking you to go somewhere new. Maybe faithfulness means staying somewhere you would rather leave. Maybe He is asking you to stop focusing on what you do not have and surrender what He has already placed in your hands.

What would obedience look like for you this week?

7. At the end of the message, Pastor Kevin asked us to "recalibrate to what matters most." What has been getting more of your attention than it deserves?

It is possible to lose our sense of meaning, purpose and mission. Pastor Kevin reminded us that people matter to God, and people who are far from God may first understand that they matter to Him when they experience that they matter to us.

Who has God placed around you who needs to know that they matter?

LIFE APPLICATION

This week, take time to pray a simple prayer from the message: **"God, help me see people as You see people. Help me love people as You love people."**

Then identify one person God has already placed in your life. It could be a neighbor, co-worker, family member, friend or someone you regularly encounter.

Take one intentional step toward that person this week. Listen to them. Encourage them. Serve them. Invite them into your life. Share what Jesus has done in yours when the opportunity comes. You do not have to manufacture a movement of God. Your responsibility is simply to be available and obedient.

Go where you're sent. Stay where you're put. Give what you've got. Watch God work.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Life is hard, and Scripture is honest about it. Following Jesus does not mean avoiding hardship.
- God can use uncomfortable circumstances to move us where He wants us.
- Grief is not the absence of faith, it is the presence of love.
- Comparison can keep us from faithfully living the life and calling God has given us.
- God uses ordinary people who are willing to serve and obey.
- Following Jesus may require crossing cultural, relational or personal barriers.
- People matter to God. We are called to see them, love them and move toward them.
- Go where you're sent. Stay where you're put. Give what you've got. Watch God work.

ENDING PRAYER

God, thank You that You are working even when our circumstances are difficult and we cannot see what You are doing. Help us trust You in hardship, make room for honest grief and resist the temptation to compare our lives to someone else's.

Give us the courage to follow You like Philip did. Help us go where You send us, stay where You put us and give You what we have. Open our eyes to the people around us who need to know that they matter to You. Help us love them well and faithfully share the hope we have found in Jesus.

Use our ordinary obedience for Your purposes, and let us experience the joy of watching You work. Amen.