

**Enjoy Acts: Faith in Action**  
**Session 3 - Samaria: Stephen & Philip (Chapters 6-8)**

**Challenges of an Ethnically Diverse Church (Acts 6:1-7)**

- Rapid growth revealed inequity in ministry to different ethnic groups within the church – every church is a work in progress!
- Substantial friction threatened the church
- They held a business meeting and appointed 7 from that ethnic group to lead that ministry
- Getting this right unlocked multiplicative church growth and prepared the church to fulfill Acts 1:8

**Stephen's Day in Court (Acts 6:8-7:60)**

- The tensions in Jerusalem continue to rise dramatically as a third hearing now takes place before the Jewish Council
- The first resulted in a warning, the second a beating, this one ends in death
- Stephen is accused of blasphemy because Greek-speaking Jews became angry with his wise and Spirit-filled arguments for Jesus and the miracles he was doing
- He gives an incredible speech tracing the history of Israel's repeated rejection of the Holy Spirit's ordained messengers and comparing that with their killing of Jesus
- The Council proves his point by killing Stephen after he describes a vision of Jesus fulfilling Daniel's prophecy of the Son of Man
- He is the first to die for the faith and dies praying for his killers

### **Samaria at Last (Acts 8:1-25)**

- Persecution breaks out and God uses it to move the church outward to Judea and Samaria
- Philip preaches the gospel in Samaria and they receive it eagerly
- The Jerusalem church sends Peter and John to confirm the report
- Confirming it, they pray for the Samaritans to receive the Holy Spirit – the ultimate proof that they were truly Christians and included in God’s plan of salvation

### **First Taste of the Ends of the Earth (Acts 8:26-40)**

- Philip is sent from his thriving ministry in Samaria to the middle of nowhere
- Obeying, he encounters a senior official of the Ethiopian government
- This man loves God, but can’t become a baptized Jew
- Philip explains how the man’s reading in Isaiah points to Jesus
- The man receives Jesus gladly, asks if he can be baptized, and is

**Next Week: Ends of the Earth: The Conversion of Paul – Acts 9**