

Daily Devotional, July 31, 2020 Shaken, Stirred and Poured Out in Mission

“On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.” Acts 8:1b (NIV)

In a flash, for the infant church, everything changed. Life as usual came to a screeching halt, and for them the world plunged into a time of fear and insecurity.

Funny how this seems to apply to our current situation of enduring a global pandemic. It almost has the same feel as the time of “*great persecution*” that the early Church faced. The expanding new church, nurturing a spirited new “*Way*” within Jerusalem’s structure, was forced to scatter. They were on lockdown. New believers, released from their doctrinal weight, sought their freedom and fled through the Judean countryside and clandestinely assimilated themselves into the surrounding nations to celebrate their new found freedom in Christ.

What did they feel as they fled? Fear? Confusion? Worried that this new, enlightening, yet seemingly fragile faith was threatened with extermination?

Most likely they felt a mixed bag of many things. (Sound familiar?) But after a short time, the scattered believers gathered their senses and “*went about preaching the word*” (**Acts 8:4**). This crisis at hand, turned out to be an instrument that God, in His authority, used to advance the missional purposes that God had planned. The Gospel penetrated new nations and began its unstoppable trek to the ends of the earth.

God has repeated this process throughout history. Plagues, persecution, and disasters all have come and gone, appearing as threats but proving to be firewood that has stoked the fires of mission.

Today, with the Church scattered in a significantly different way, what might God do? Instead of gathering together physically on Sunday mornings and various weeknights for meetings and such, we travel on digital highways, streaming church services and Gospel messages in whatever way we can.

Might this moment be another defining moment in Church missional history? How can we move past our own fear and uncertainty to proclaim Christ when we are physically and digitally scattered? Maybe it could be through inviting friends and neighbors to watch our stream. Why should this be a secret that we keep amongst our church family to be experienced and nurtured by in isolation? What a golden opportunity for us to bring others who might be seeking, into the light of God’s Kingdom.

This is that opportunity to overturn those bushel baskets and to allow the light of God’s Word to illuminate the Way for those who have been lost on *their way*. Can we be so bold when we have been so timid these past months, unsure of which way to turn, and which guidelines to follow? Open your hearts to be in mission for the Church and for God’s Kingdom.

Ponder this while hunkering down under our current restrictions, our so-called “lockdown” and seek God’s help in prayer to find the inspiration to invite and to virtually embrace those who you know need to feel the embrace of God’s love and grace. Who can tell, God’s Word could be contagious.

Lord, thank you for your sovereign control of all things, even in the chaos of today’s uncertainty. I give my anxieties to you and pray that you’d give me the peace, wisdom, and creativity to proclaim your greatness to those around me, both digitally and physically. Revive my heart in this time and use me to help bring the Gospel to the very ends of the earth. Amen .