



## Greater Life Church North

*"Loving and Leading People to a Greater Life"*

Pastor Nate Stewart, Lead Servant

**The Year of Awakening**

**Awake. Arise. Advance.**

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## Acts 8: When God Turns Pressure Into Purpose

**Text:** Acts 8 (NKJV)

### Introduction

Acts 8 opens in the aftermath of Stephen's death. The church is facing intense persecution. Believers are scattered throughout the region, and it appears as though the enemy is winning.

But Acts 8 teaches us a powerful lesson: what looks like a setback to us is often a setup by God.

The persecution that scattered the church actually spread the Gospel. The road that seemed uncertain became the pathway for ministry. The interruptions became opportunities for God's purpose to be fulfilled.

Greater Life, there are seasons when life does not go according to plan. Doors close. Circumstances change. People leave. Expectations are not met. Yet God has a way of taking what was meant to stop us and using it to move us forward.

Acts 8 reminds us that God is always working, even when life feels disrupted.

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### **MAIN POINT:**

**God can use life's disruptions, detours, and divine appointments to advance His purpose and grow His people.**



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### 1. God Uses Pressure to Spread His Purpose - Acts 8:1-8

- Sometimes God allows us to be moved because He has somewhere greater for us to go.

Following Stephen's death, persecution broke out against the church. Believers were forced to leave Jerusalem and scatter into surrounding regions.

At first glance, this appears tragic. Yet the very thing that pushed them out also pushed the Gospel forward.

Philip arrived in Samaria and preached Christ. Revival broke out. People were saved, healed, and delivered.

#### Points To Reflect:

- Many of us spend our lives praying for comfort while God is focused on purpose.
- Sometimes God allows pressure because comfort has made us stationary.

*James 1:2-4*

- The church had been instructed to take the Gospel beyond Jerusalem, but now persecution became the catalyst that moved them.
- How many blessings have been discovered only because something forced us to move?
- Some of us found new opportunities because we lost an old one.
- Some of us grew spiritually because we walked through a difficult season.

*Psalms 119:71*

- Some of us discovered God's faithfulness because our own resources ran out. Pressure does not always mean God has abandoned you.
- Sometimes pressure means God is repositioning you. *Hebrews 12:1-2*

#### Discussion Question

What difficult situation in your life has God used to move you toward His purpose?



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## 2. God Uses Discernment to Protect His People - Acts 8:9-25

- Not everything that looks spiritual is surrendered to God.

Simon the sorcerer amazed people with his abilities and gained a large following. After hearing Philip preach, he believed and was baptized.

However, when Simon saw the apostles laying hands on believers and witnessing the power of the Holy Spirit, he attempted to buy that power.

Peter immediately recognized that Simon's heart was not right before God.

### Points To Reflect:

- God is not just concerned about our actions. He is concerned about our motives.
- It is possible to participate in spiritual things while still having an unsubmitted heart.
- God wants more than our attendance. He wants our surrender, affection and character. *Matthew 15:8-9, Luke 9:23-24*

In today's culture, people are often impressed by charisma, talent, and influence.

Yet God still examines the heart.

- The question is not simply, "What am I doing?" The deeper question is, "Why am I doing it?"

*Proverbs 21:2*

### Discussion Question

How can we guard our hearts and make sure our motives remain pure before God?