CHRIST CHURCH
CHORLEYWOOD

HOME GROUP STUDY
15th November 2026

Series: Developing our Vision – Sharing Christ… In the power of the Spirit

Acts 8: 9-25

9 But there was a man named Simon, who had previously practised magic in the city and amazed the people of Samaria, saying that he himself was somebody great. 10 They all paid attention to him, from the least to the greatest, saying, "This man is the power of God that is called Great." 11 And they paid attention to him because for a long time he had amazed them with his magic. 12 But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. 13 Even Simon himself believed, and after being baptized he continued with Philip. And seeing signs and great miracles performed, he was amazed.

14 Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, 15 who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, 16 for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 17 Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit. 18 Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, 19 saying, "Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." 20 But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! 21 You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. 22 Repent, therefore, of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you. 23 For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity." 24 And Simon answered, "Pray for me to the Lord, that nothing of what you have said may come upon me." 25 Now when they had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans.

<u>QUESTIONS</u>

1. Two kinds of greatness (vv. 9-13). Simon was "somebody great" and people paid attention to him. Philip pointed people to Christ. Who or what draws crowds and attention today, including in church life? How can we tell when attention is going to the messenger and not to the message?

2. Gossiping the gospel (v. 4). *"Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word."* These were ordinary believers on the run, not apostles. Look at Acts 11:19-21 and John 4:28-30, 39. What pattern do you see in how the good news spread (who spoke, where, to whom, how)? Compare Luke 8:39: *"Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you."* Where do you naturally talk about what matters to you, and how could Christ come up there this week?

3. Christ himself (vv. 5, 12). Philip "proclaimed to them the Christ" and preached "the name of Jesus Christ". In about 30 seconds, how would you describe who Jesus is and what he has done, without making it about yourself? Maybe try it in pairs…

4. Who or where is our Samaria? (Acts 1:8; John 4:1-42). Samaritans were people the Jews avoided. Which people or places do we find it hardest to reach with the gospel? What would crossing that boundary cost, and who will pray for you to do it?

5. When the Spirit seems late (vv. 14-17; Acts 2:38; Romans 8:9). The Samaritans believed and were baptised before they received the Spirit. This was a unique moment, not the usual pattern. What comfort does it give to a new believer who doesn't "feel" anything? What other grounds do we have for being sure we belong to Christ (Romans 8:14-16; 1 John 5:13)?

6. The Spirit our Helper (John 14:16-17, 26; 15:26). Jesus calls the Spirit another Helper, with us and in us, who teaches us and bears witness to Christ. When has the Spirit been your helper in speaking, deciding or praying? What changes if we try to share Christ without him?

7. Gifts and motives (1 Corinthians 12:7, 27-31; 13:2). Spiritual Gifts are given "for the common good". Which gifts have you seen at work in this group, and in Philip and Peter? How could someone use a gift to gain status without noticing? What does 13:2 say about gifts used without love?

8. Wanting the power, but not the Giver (vv. 18-24). Simon offered money for authority to give the Spirit. Peter said the gift of God can't be bought. Where do we slip into treating God as a deal ("if I serve or give, then…")? What is the difference between wanting Jesus and wanting what Jesus can give?

9. Which soil? (Luke 8:4-15; Acts 8:13, 21). Compare Simon's story with the soils in the parable. What is missing in Simon, and what does an "honest and good heart" look like? Why does Luke leave Simon's story open? *(See also John 2:23-25.)*

10. Repentance, not just fear of consequences (vv. 22-24). Peter tells Simon to repent and pray to the Lord. Simon asks Peter to pray that nothing happens to him. What's the difference between being sorry for sin and being afraid of its results? Take quiet time to ask God to show you any way you are closer to Simon than you'd like, then pray for one another.

Prayer: O Lord, we want our hearts to be honest and good, so search our hearts today. Help us see any points of self-seeking in our lives - any way we are seeking your preferment or power for wrong reasons. Through your Spirit, help us to seek you only. Where you grant us gifts to use, may we use them in love and humility and only for your service. Purge us and strengthen us. Use us to touch our community, our culture, our nation with the name of Jesus - to point others to fullness of life and joy through the Saviour. In Jesus' name, Amen.