



Sermon Notes

Wi-Fi password for westwoodguestsecured: westwoodguest

God Is Sovereign to Save Through Suffering

Acts 8:1-8 (pew Bible pg. 916)

The book of Acts opens with Jesus' final earthly words to his disciples "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (1:8) This simple, yet profound blueprint for world evangelization was about to unfold. Yet the outreach of the church never reached beyond the walls of Jerusalem until Stephen's death and the intense persecution it precipitated. After Stephen's stoning, "Following the church through Acts is like following a wounded deer through a forest. Drops of blood mark the trail." (Kent Hughes)

Today we encounter a truth that is found throughout Scripture. What God's enemies mean for evil, God means for good. (Gen. 50:20). God's sovereign plans and purposes are not thwarted by opposition and the persecution of His people. In fact, just the opposite is true, as we see in today's passage. God is sovereign to bring joy and salvation through sorrow and persecution.

Sovereign over the realities of our broken world: (Acts 8:1-3)

- Enemies of the gospel
- Persecution of the church
- Pain of death

Sovereign over the salvation of the unreached world (Acts 8:4-8)

- Running for their lives with the Word of Life
- Breaking down barriers with the gospel of Christ
- Validating the gospel with the power of Christ
- Transformed lives with the joy of Christ

Applications:

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## Weekly Discipleship Guide

Use this guide to help you reflect upon and internalize today's passage and message! Using a journal or a notebook, follow the daily prompts below. We also use these guides to guide our discussions in our Life Groups each week as we seek to grow together in the Word!

### Sunday

*In your journal, reflect on today's sermon by answering the following:*

I never knew:

I was challenged:

I was reminded:

I was convicted:

A question I still have:

A truth I could share:

**Know**

### Monday

*Spend some time today doing the following:*

Read the sermon passage again.

Select a portion of this week's sermon passage to memorize this week.

Write your selected portion and read it to yourself at least 10 times throughout the day and meditate on that portion this week.

**Know > Be**

### Tuesday

*In your journal, spend some time writing about the following:*

Read the sermon passage again.

Write a prayer of response, specifically guided by the passage.

(May include adoration, confession/repentance, thanksgiving, petition, etc...)

Continue to meditate on a memorize the selection you chose from yesterday.

**Be**

### Wednesday

*Think about this week's questions for group discussion:*

How does this week's passage and message help us to better understand the sovereignty of God in all things? How does this new perspective shape how we understand life under the sun?

Read Romans 5:1-5 together. How do these verses help us understanding and respond to suffering? What is the basis of our rejoicing in suffering?

In these verses we begin to see the promise of Acts 1:8 unfold. What promises from Scripture do you hold fast to when you face hardship and suffering in your life or in the world? How do these promises refocus your eyes on God's goodness and ultimate purposes?

**Be > Do**

### Thursday

*In your journal, spend some time considering the following:*

What insights have you gained while internalizing this week's passage?

How specifically will you seek to apply its truths in your home/workplace/life in general?

**Do**

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#### Westwood Staff

**Gerald Hodges:** Lead Pastor  
**Jonathan Taylor:** Associate Pastor  
**Jim Fulp:** Counseling Pastor  
**Jason Engle:** Pastor of Students & Discipleship  
**Katie Austin:** Children's Ministry Coordinator

#### Contact Us

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westwoodroxboro@gmail.com  
www.westwoodfamily.org

#### Upcoming Events

February 17,24 - Directory Pictures  
February 24 - Tamales & Tacos  
March 3 - TLU Cake Auction  
March 7 - Ladies Bible Study begins  
March 10,24,31 - Directory Pictures  
March 20 - Church Conference  
April 6 - One Day with God

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