

## Acts 7:51-8:4

<sup>51</sup>“You stiff-necked people! Your hearts and ears are still uncircumcised. You are just like your ancestors: You always resist the Holy Spirit! <sup>52</sup>Was there ever a prophet your ancestors did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him— <sup>53</sup>you who have received the law that was given through angels but have not obeyed it.”

<sup>54</sup>When the members of the Sanhedrin heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. <sup>55</sup>But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. <sup>56</sup>“Look,” he said, “I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.”

<sup>57</sup>At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, <sup>58</sup>dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul.

<sup>59</sup>While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” <sup>60</sup>Then he fell on his knees and cried out, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he had said this, he fell asleep.

<sup>1</sup>And Saul approved of their killing him.

On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. <sup>2</sup>Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him. <sup>3</sup>But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off both men and women and put them in prison.

<sup>4</sup>Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.

## Series: God's Story: Finding our Place in His Unfolding Plan

### Nov 26, 2017: Scattered Church

#### Is this the End?

*What's a major transition that happened in your life?*

*What came to an end? Did a new beginning come from it?*

*Have you found it helpful to learn other people's life stories?*

*Anyone in particular? How was it helpful?*

*Think of the story we've covered in the Bible, from Genesis to Acts.*

*What were some of the ups and downs along the way?*

#### The Call: Remember God's Purpose (1-4)

*So far in Acts 1-8, how has the early church developed?*

*Do the events of our Scripture today seem like a failure?*

*But, from Genesis to Acts, what has been God's consistent purpose? (See Genesis 12:1-3, Exodus 19:6, Isaiah 49:6, Luke 2:32, Acts 1:8)*

*How was God's purpose not yet fulfilled in the early church?*

*How does it begin to happen in Acts 8:4?*

#### God's Mission: Making Disciples (4)

*The church didn't reach out in mission until it was persecuted.*

*Could this be an example of God using evil for good? (Romans 8:28)*

*Can you relate? Do you prefer comfort and control?*

*Remember Jesus's Great Commission – Matthew 28:18-20.*

*Regarding our mission – Where is the location? What is the task?*

#### Mission: Dying and Multiplying

*In Acts 6, the church looked like a fruitful tree.*

*In Acts 8, it looks dead, with its fruit fallen to the ground.*

*Why might this be a good thing?*

*Pray – invite God let you know if anything is holding you back from following Him fully (Hebrews 12:1, Psalm 139:23-24)*