WHAT MONEY CANNOT BUY

Acts 7:54-8:25 · Kaká Monteiro · August 23, 2026

The death that plants, the gospel that tears down walls, the heart that can't be bought

THE CENTRAL IDEA

"What God gives freely can't be bought, not with money, not with a facade."

Stephen dies without bargaining and, through the pain of persecution, God spreads the church all the way to Samaria. There Simon tries to buy in an instant what can only be received as a gift. The story exposes the temptation to perform instead of to be, and shows that the gospel is stricter than any court and infinitely more generous.

THE MESSAGE IN 3 MOVEMENTS

01 God plants through pain.

The persecution that looked like the end spread the church to places it would never have gone on its own. "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church." Pain doesn't make sense right a way, but God knows how to plant through what people use to d estroy.

02 The gospel tears down walls and brings joy.

Philip crosses a border of centuries of hatred without carrying the prejudice. Different in everything, we can be family because we have the same Lord. And the joy that fills the city doesn't depend o n circumstances: it is peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

03 A facade faith doesn't survive the test.

Simon believed, was baptized and followed Philip, but the test came in what he did, not in what he said. What he lacked was a real desire for God, which can't be bought. Peter didn't soften it, but he didn't clo se the door either: repent and pray.

READING THE TEXT · ACTS 7:54-8:25

Acts 7:54-8:3 · The death that plants

Stephen sees heaven open and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. As he is stoned, he prays: "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." Saul approves of the killing, and a great persecution scatters the church throughout Judea and Samaria.

Acts 8:4-8 · The gospel that tears down walls

Those who were scattered preach wherever they go. Philip proclaims Christ in Samaria, land of a people despised by the Jews. Crowds listen, spirits come out, the paralyzed are healed, and there is great joy in that city.

Acts 8:9-25 · The heart that can't be bought

Simon, the magician everyone called "the Great Power", believes and is baptized. When Peter and John lay hands on people and the Spirit is given, he offers money for that power. Peter answers: "Your heart is not right before God. Repent and pray to the Lord."

QUESTIONS FOR THE GROUP

To open: tell about a loss or a closed door that, looking back today, ended up opening the way to something good in your life.

1. The persecution that looked like the end spread the gospel. Is there a pain in your life that still looks like pure loss? What would it mean to hand it to God and wait to see what he plants?
2. Philip crossed a centuries-old wall between Jews and Samaritans. What kind of person would you find hardest to treat as a brother or sister? What does the gospel ask of you toward them?
3. "There was great joy in that city." What is the difference between happiness and joy for you? What has been stealing your joy lately?
4. Simon had the right vocabulary but tried to buy what can only be received. In what situations is it tempting to look spiritual instead of being spiritual? What helps you keep your faith real, not a facade?

KEY PASSAGES

Genesis 50:20, "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good." The same pattern as the persecution in Acts 8: what was meant for evil becomes seed.

Romans 14:17, "The kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." Samaria's joy comes from the Spirit, not from circumstances.

Isaiah 55:1, "Come, buy... without money and without cost." The answer to Simon's mistake: God's grace is a gift, never merchandise.

TO CLOSE

A step for this week. Hand to God a specific pain that still looks like pure loss and ask him to show you, in time, what he is planting through it. And examine your heart: is there anything in your faith that is more facade than reality?

Prayer. Thank God that the door of grace is still open, for free. Ask for a real desire for God, joy in the Spirit even on hard days, and courage to cross the walls that still separate us from someone.

Watch the message again: point your phone camera here.