

# VOYAGER

*Experiences That Shape Our Faith*

**About the Series:** Experiences are powerful and can shape our Christian faith. But experiences should not be what defines our faith. Rather, it should serve to strengthen our faith and affirm what we already know to be the facts of our faith as recorded in the Scriptures. In this sermon series, we explore the journeys of Apostle Paul and how encountering life-changing experiences can teach valuable life lessons to voyagers like us who are on a journey called life.

## Part 15

### Power and Influence

Acts 8:5-25 | Dr. Stephen G. Tan

#### DISCUSS

The striving for power and influence, sadly, is not only happening in big companies and technology superpowers, but has worked its way into churches as well. In the early church, Christians were scattered and persecuted, but they continued to preach the Word of God. But as more churches grew and flourished, there came people who were looking for power and position, just like in today. People were vying for influence and to be influencers. Read Acts 8:5-25 and discuss what the Bible says about power and influence.

#### **There is true power and authority in the person of Jesus Christ (v. 5-8)**

- How was Deacon Philip's ministry described in this passage? To whom did Philip focus his ministry toward and derive his authority from that made him really effective?
- How is John 15:5 true in your life?

- Share how you are relying on the enabling work of Jesus Christ in your personal life.
- What would happen if you relied only on yourself and lived your life as if you were in charge and in control?
- Why would it be foolish of you not to acknowledge the power and authority that is found in the person of Jesus Christ?

#### **There is true power and authority in God's Word (v. 9-13)**

- How do we know that it was not the miraculous works of Philip through the power of Jesus that won over the people to Christ but through the preaching of God's Word?
- How does the Word of God change lives? Who uses it to transform and change lives?
- Your experiences and emotions are important parts of your spiritual life, but why can't you depend on them, and why should you instead depend on the Word of God in your spiritual walk?
- How does the Word of God remind you of Truths seen and unseen?
- What do you do so that you know the Scripture well?

#### **Money plays no part in spiritual power and influence (v. 14-17)**

- What did Simon do in verse 13 that was likely due to his background dabbling in the occult before he had been fully disciplined?
- Why do some people think that they can pay God off to gain His blessings and favor? Why can't God's enabling power, authority, and influence be bought?
- Do you know that in the New Testament, you are taught that for a Christian, the giving of your time and resources is a privilege on your part? Why should you give to God? Does money determine your worth in God's eyes or speak of His approval in your life? Why or why not?

#### **A right heart is what God is looking for to bestow power and influence (v. 21-25)**

- How did Peter rebuke Simon? What was the response of Simon?
- Why is having a heart right before God the most important thing to God compared to whatever we could offer to Him?
- How is it that no one is given special status or access to God over another?

- How can a person actually have a right heart before God (2 Chronicles 16:9, Psalm 51:10-11)?
- What was the result that the early church was not playing the power and influence game, but simply focused on sharing the life-transforming message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

## REFLECT

Do you as a part of this generation of Christ followers have a proper understanding of power and influence? Examine yourself:

- Do your actions show that you acknowledge that there is true power and authority in the person of Jesus Christ and not in you?
- Do you believe that there is true power and authority in God's Word?
- Do you demonstrate that money plays no part in spiritual power and influence?
- Do you have a right heart with God?

## PRAY

Heavenly Father, I humbly recognize that these biblical principles on power and influence are very much needed in my walk with You. Lord, please help me to always remember and acknowledge that I need to cultivate a right heart before You. May You help me to be a good influence to the people around me by having a humble heart before You, focusing on Your Word and living out my faith and living for where all authority and power comes from—the Lord Jesus in whose precious name I pray. Amen.