

# But God

Week 8 – The Scattering of the Church

## But God:

Review:

God loves to show off His love.

We are in a series called “But God.” History is full of moments where it looked like all was lost and the love of God stepped in.

I believe this is still true today. I believe it is true for you and true for me.

Over the last few weeks we have covered:

1. How do we wait well? Week one.
2. The power and importance of your private life. Week two.
3. What if God doesn't work? Week three.
4. What if you have already lost? Week four.
5. What if you caused the pain? We looked at the story of Joseph. Week five.
6. Andy brought an awesome message out of Mary's song. Week six.
7. The story of loss is flipped upside down. We look at the coming of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2. Week seven.

I would encourage you to go look them up at

<https://www.encountertrinity.com/messages/#but-god>

## Opening:

In high school I made a pact with my friends to camp at least once a month. I have camped in the cold of February. I have camped in the heat of Oklahoma July. I have so many great memories with my friends under the stars and those stars are amazing under a sky far from city lights. One night we got a little out of control. We were writing our names with lighter fluid in huge letters and lighting it up on the ground. Dumb, I know. One guy lit a name before the other was done writing it on the ground with the lighter fluid. The flame rushed up the squirting fluid and lit the bottle on fire. In the chaos we tossed the bottle and it landed into dry brush and a grass fire started. We were in full on panic trying to put it out. Here is the thing, when you stomp on a dry grass fire it just gets bigger. You put out a larger flame and start a dozen smaller ones. I think God anointed the church with this same type of multiplication power.

History is full of people trying to stomp out the church. What happens? It just grows. The power of the church isn't in the number gathered in one room but the Holy Spirit infused fire in each of their hearts.

Let me ask you today. How hungry are you for the powerful presence of God? How hungry are you for the world to taste the hope of Jesus?

## To the Text:

Today we will look at one of the strongest attempts to put out Christianity. Ironically it came from one of main writers of the New Testament. A man by the name of Saul was on mission to take down Christianity. He violently pursued and persecuted Christians. There was a young man by the name of Stephen who made a powerful speech defending Jesus before his execution. When they stomped out his life the Holy Spirit infused power of the gospel burst out.

Acts 8:1b–4 (ESV)

1b And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. 2 Devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him. 3 But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison.

Philip Proclaims Christ in Samaria

4 Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word.

- God allowed the church to go through two important events, the gathering and the scattering. Acts 1-2 has Christians gathering in massive mega services. Thousands worshiped together and it was awesome. Yet, after a season of gathering God allowed a season of scattering, a time when Holy Spirit infused followers were pushed out of the nest to create ministry where they usually do life.
- The gathering is just as important as the scattering. The scattering is not a time to run and hide but go and tell. If God was to send you “home” with the gospel where would he send you?
  - Who lives in your neighborhood?
  - Who works with you?
  - Who do you have social connection with?

## What does this mean for us?

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## Where is Jesus in this?

- He is sending you out. It's always been about sending. Jesus wrote no books, delegated the baptism and quickly handed off teaching. Christ was modeling multiplication. I can't do for you what God wants from you. You must take the gospel into your sphere of influence.
- In Christ's sending he goes with you.

Matthew 28:18–20 (ESV): And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

### Questions:

1. Who has God placed you with that needs Jesus?
2. Name two action steps to help take the gospel to people God has placed into your life?