**Reaching the Unreached**

**The Word**

Read together Acts 1:4-8

**The Big Picture**

Just as he was in the days of the early church, God is at work throughout the world today, growing his despite and even through persecution. As those who have been blessed by God, we are all called to be salt in light in our world and to be a blessing to others for the sake of God’s kingdom.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. What idea or story from Sunday’s sermon was most impactful for you?

2. In the early church, the Apostles were content to enjoy the ministry God was doing in Jerusalem, but God had bigger plans so he used persecution to help the church spread out beyond Jerusalem. Consider your own life: how might God be pushing you out into something beyond your comfort zone that would be good for his kingdom.

3. On Sunday the following statement was made: “God has called every Christian to be part of the spread of the gospel to the ends of the earth.” Do you believe this? Do you believe that every single Christian has a responsibility for the global spread of the gospel, or do you think that certain Christians are uniquely called and gifted for that work, and that that burden/responsibility should not be laid on every Christian?

**Digging Deeper: Sermon Outline**

I. The growth of the church in Acts

A. Jesus’ command was for the disciples to move out from Jerusalem and share the gospel to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:4-8)

B. They enjoyed God’s blessing in Jerusalem for a time (Acts 1-7)

C. They would have been content to stay in Jerusalem, but God had bigger plans, so He sovereignly brought persecution (Acts 8)

D. Notice the pattern of 1) persecution 2) scattering 3) sharing the gospel with signs and wonders from Acts 8:4-8

E. Persecution actually purified the church and helped to spread the gospel.

II. The growth of the church today

A. One of the greatest revivals in the history of the church is taking place in the Middle East right now.

 1. “As fire exists by burning the church exists by missions”

2. God is using the Isis crisis to purify and spread his church

3. Christian refugees are being scattered all over the world and are bringing new life to places (such as Europe) where the church has, for the most part, died.

4. We often put God in a box and expect him to move according to our expectations but his work in the world is much bigger than the boxes we put him in.

5. God is often speaking to us, but we are so busy with our full schedules and technology that we are not listening.

6. The Church wrongly presents blessing and prosperity as the only inevitable outcome of our faith, but we are not blessed by God simply to receive more and more blessing but to be sent out and bless others.

7. We have not equipped our churches for the spiritual battle before us.

B. We see that same pattern of persecution, scattering, and sharing the gospel with signs and wonders going on today in the Middle East and Asia

1. The Centre for the Study of Global Christianity in the United States estimates that 100,000 Christians now die every year, targeted because of their faith – that is 11 every hour.

2. Pope Francis recently made this comment, the 21st century has seen more Christians under siege for their faith than during the time of the early church.
3. One million Sudanese have turned to Christ since the year 2000—not in spite of persecution, war, and genocide, but because of them the estimated total number of believers in the country is more than 5.5 million.

4. Senior Pakistani Christian leaders tell us there is a ‘conversion explosion’ going on in their country. There are now an estimated 2.5 million to 3 million born-again Pakistani believers worshiping Jesus Christ. Whole towns and villages along the Afghan-Pakistani border are…converting to Christianity.