

- Weeds: undesirable plants that are damaging the desirable plants



- Invasive species: a non-native plant that multiplies in a new environment and dramatically changes things



- What is a weed?
 - A plant we don't want to grow where it is growing
 - “A plant in the wrong place”
 - There is no objective meaning

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Weeds and Invasive Species

- How might people think of other people as weeds or invasive species?
- Might it happen in the church?
- Pray
 - humility
 - conviction of the Holy Spirit

Church Siblings

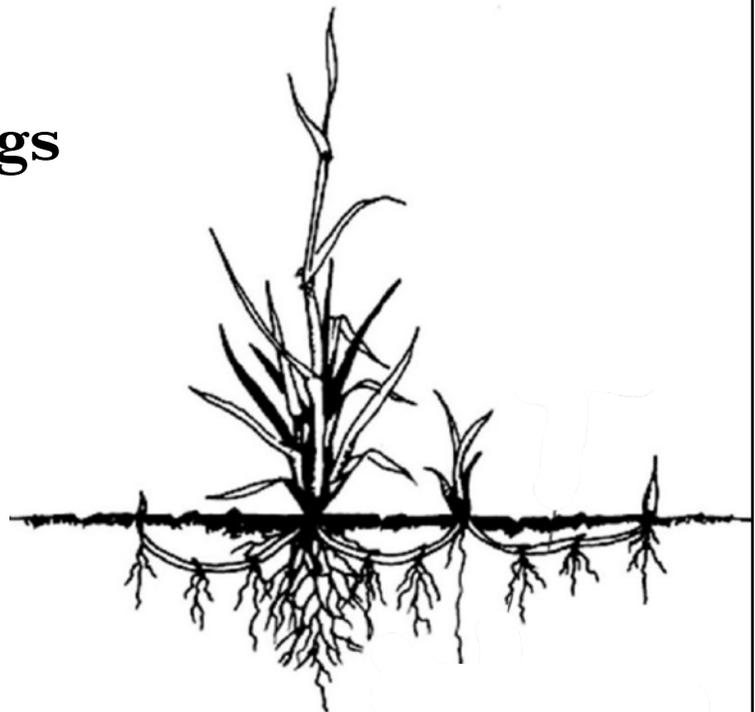
Acts 8:4-17, 25

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Luke and Acts: 1 book in 2 volumes written by Luke

Luke

What Jesus Christ
said and did
during His lifetime

Acts 1:1-7:60

Only Jewish

in **Jerusalem**, and **in all Judea and Samaria**,
and **to the ends of the earth.**"

Acts

What Jesus Christ
said and did

On that day a great persecution broke
out against the church in Jerusalem, and
all except the apostles were scattered
throughout Judea and Samaria. *Acts 8:1*

Acts 1:8

Acts 8:4-17, 25

- 4: People scattered by persecution proclaimed the Gospel
- 5-8: • What was it like? What happened?
- 9-11: • How would the Jewish Christians open up
- 12-13: the Church to others?
- 14-17:
- 25:

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Acts 8:4-17, 25

4: People scattered by persecution proclaimed the Gospel

5-8: Philip to Samaria: proclaimed Jesus & did miracles

9-11: • Samaritans and Jews: deep mutual contempt

12-13: • Temple and Jerusalem were particular challenges

14-17: • Until this story, all Christians were Jewish

25: • Philip: a Greek-speaking Christian, chosen as one who was “full of the Spirit and wisdom.”

- Greek speaking Jews experienced similar contempt
- Christian message (God’s work is not restricted to the Temple and a particular land) helps Samaritans
- Dramatic miracles: God’s choice and power

Acts 8:4-17, 25

4: People scattered by persecution proclaimed the Gospel

5-8: Philip to Samaria: proclaimed Jesus & did miracles

9-11: People had existing beliefs: power of sorcery

12-13: • There is never a vacuum. Everyone has a worldview

14-17: • What is ultimate reality? What really matters?

25: • What is the problem with the world?

• What is the solution to that problem?

- They believed in supernatural powers & sorcery
- Today, people believe in...
 - Knowledge and education. Science and technology.
 - Self fulfillment. Freedom. Economic success, ...
 - Humanism. Other religions...

Acts 8:4-17, 25

4: People scattered by persecution proclaimed the Gospel

5-8: Philip to Samaria: proclaimed Jesus & did miracles

9-11: People had existing beliefs

12-13: People believed the Gospel and were baptized

14-17: • Conversion FROM and TO

25: • Dramatic for Philip to baptize them

- Challenging for both Philip and Samaritans
- The challenge was different:
 - Jews (Philip): openness
 - Samaritans: humility
- Dramatic for Simon to be baptized

Acts 8:4-17, 25

4: People scattered by persecution proclaimed the Gospel

5-8: Philip to Samaria: proclaimed Jesus & did miracles

9-11: People had existing beliefs

12-13: People believed and were baptized

14-17: Peter & John came & prayed; they received Holy Spirit

25: • Most prominent apostles

- Confirmed and blessed the faith of Samaritans
- Why had they not received the Holy Spirit?
 - Unclear
 - Not corrected or rebuked; not rebaptized
 - For some: basis for “second blessing” (many disagree)
- Effect: brought the churches together (unity)

Acts 8:4-17, 25

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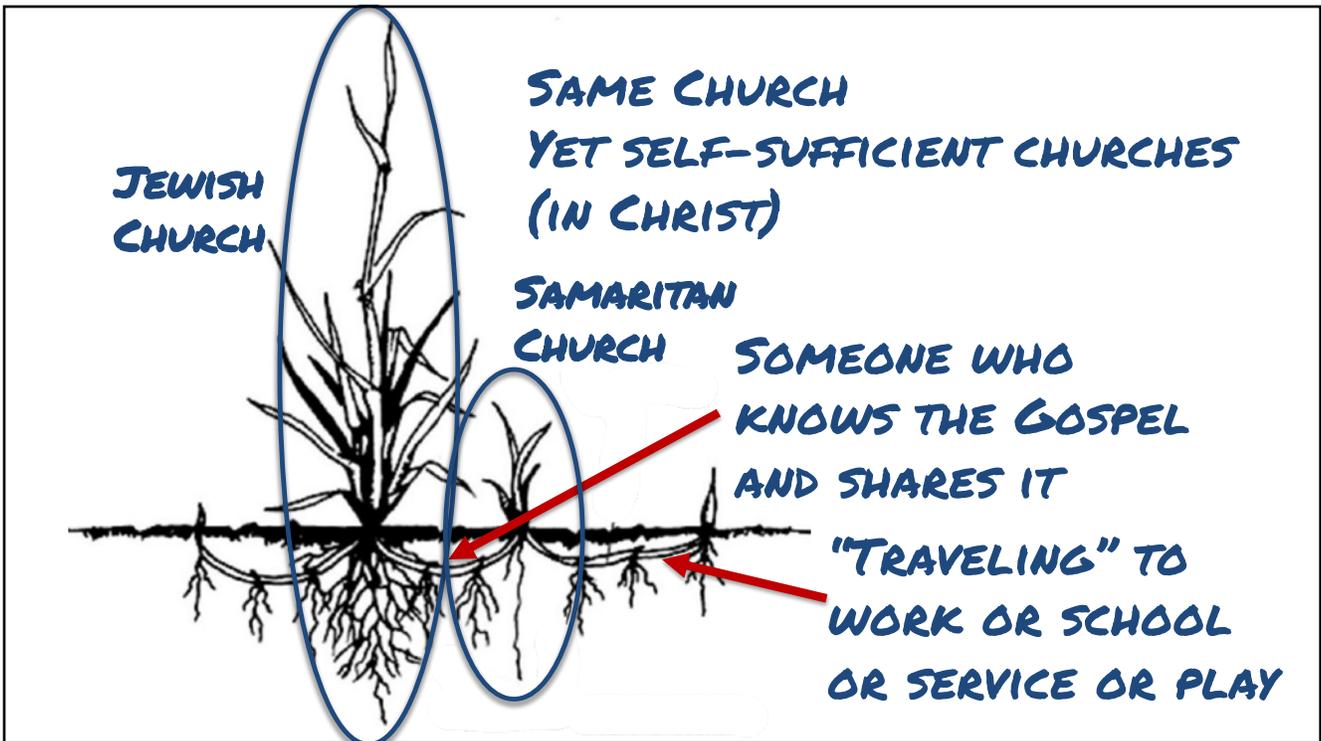
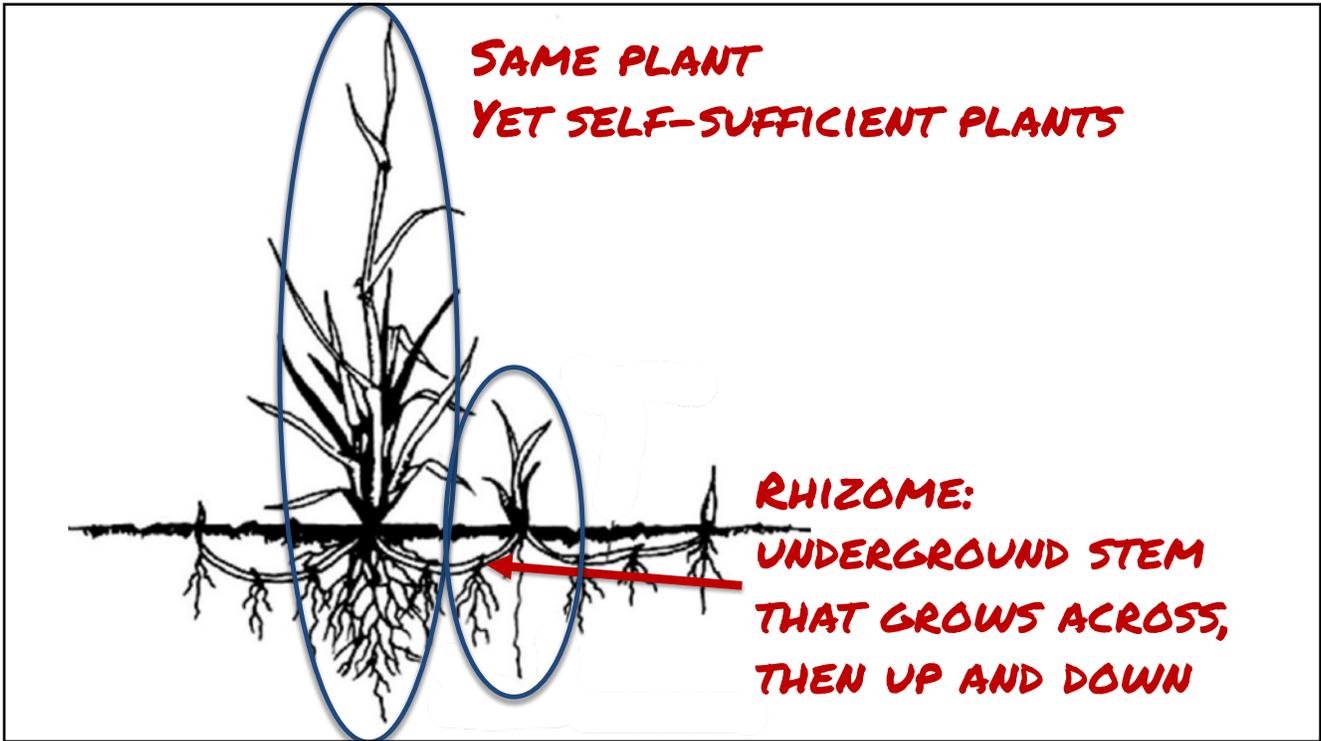
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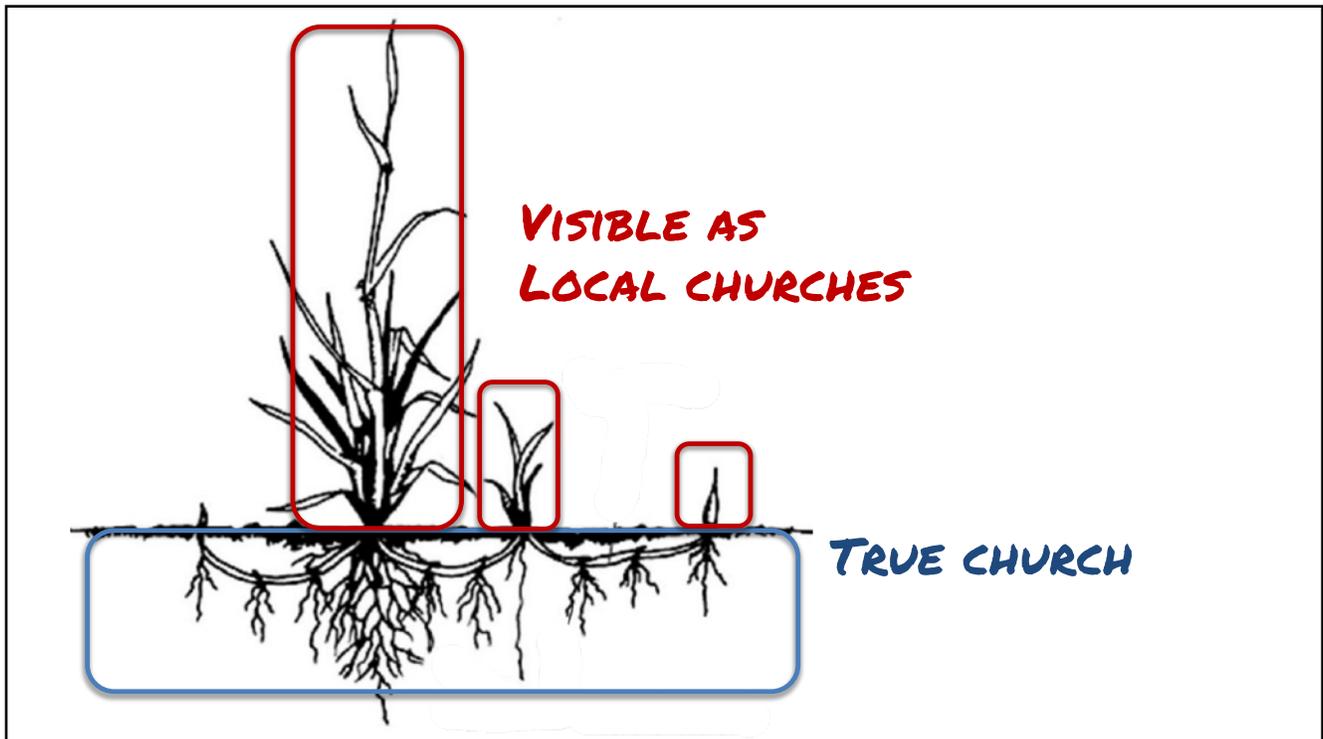
25: Peter & John in Samaria: proclaiming Jesus

- Perhaps Samaritans in villages spoke Aramaic like Peter & John (and not Philip)
- Note: When Samaritans did not welcome Jesus, John earlier had suggested calling down fire from heaven to destroy them! *Luke 9:54*

The Big Idea

**God is building one true church
across cultural divides
with local churches as siblings**

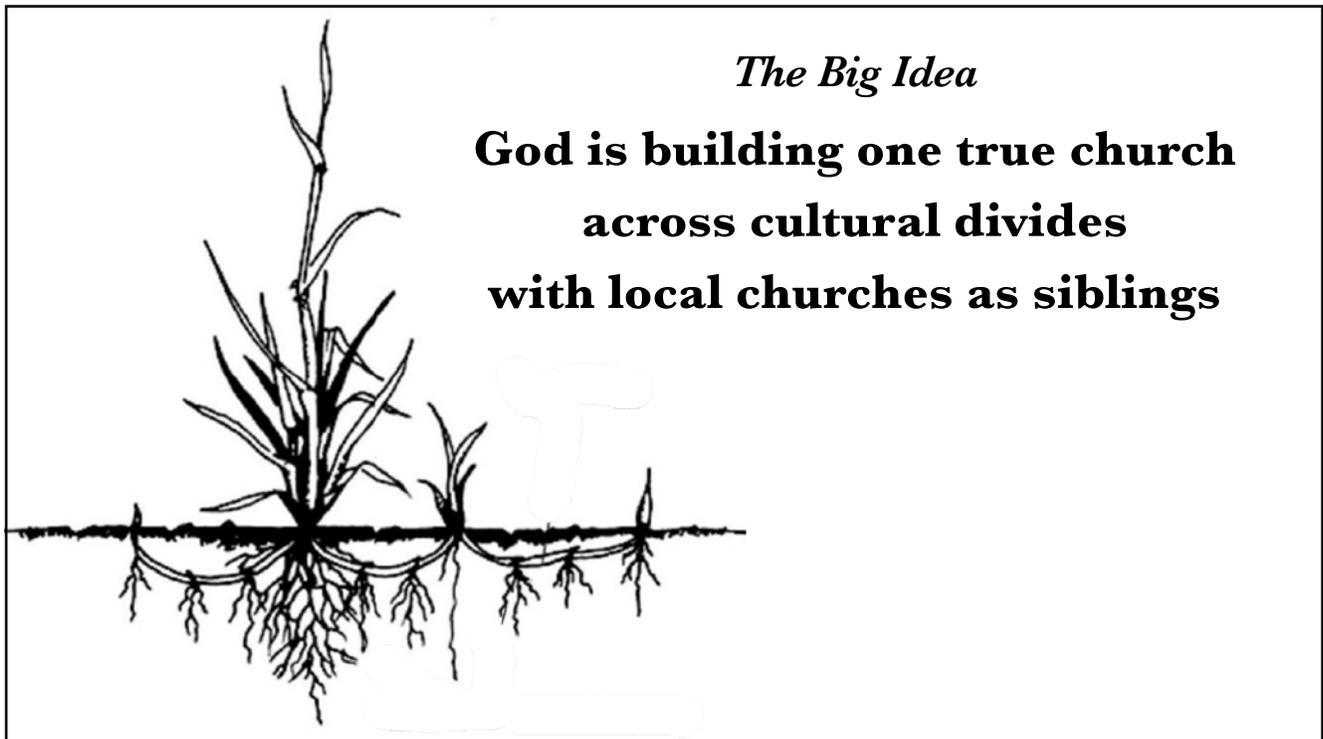




Apostles' Creed

- I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth;
 - And in Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; the third day He rose again from the dead, He ascended into heaven and sits on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.
- THE TRUE CHURCH**
- I believe in the Holy Spirit; the holy catholic Church; the communion of the saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen

catholic = global
 communion = fellowship



Application

- **Proclaim the Gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit**
 - Every Christian is to be a rhizome
 - Encourage new Christian growth around you
 - Share the Gospel across “cultural” boundaries with humility
 - Into new contexts
 - And may appear quite different: takes wisdom & discernment
 - In the power of the Holy Spirit
 - “This kind can come out only by prayer” *Mark 9:29*
 - God decides what form the Spirit’s power takes

HOLY GOD
SIN/SHAME
GRACE
FAITH/WORSHIP

Application

- **Proclaim the Gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit**
- **Watch for God's work that shows us our need for each other**
 - Samaritan Christians needed the blessing of the apostles
 - Jewish Christians needed to learn that the Gospel is not Jewish or Samaritan (will always be a key lesson...)
 - This prepared them for welcoming the Greeks as equals
 - In what ways do we need other churches in this area?
 - In what ways do we need churches of different backgrounds?
 - How we can be a blessing to other churches?

Application

- **Proclaim the Gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit**
- **Watch for God's work that shows us our need for each other**
- **Honor all members, and all local churches, of the true church**
 - No slander, gossip, or sitting in judgment over others
 - “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.” *Ephesians 4:29*
 - Rejoice in their joys, weep in their struggles

Application

- **Proclaim the Gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit**
- **Watch for God's work that shows us our need for each other**
- **Honor all members, and all local churches, of the true church**
 - It takes wisdom & discernment, humility & openness
 - Small core: agreement in the Gospel
 - Which can have different appearances
 - Openness: secondary things

Jesus' Prayer

“My prayer is not for [my current disciples] alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, **that all of them may be one**, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us **so that the world may believe** that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, **that they may be one as we are one**—I in them and you in me—so that they may **be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know** that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.”

John 17:20-23



The Big Idea

**God is building one true church
across cultural divides
with local churches as siblings**

WHO WELCOME AND HONOR EACH OTHER

WHO LOVE AND SERVE EACH OTHER

WHO LEARN FROM EACH OTHER

WHO GIVE FREEDOM FOR DIFFERENCES IN CHRIST