

## **Devotion, Week of July 27, 2025**

### **Rev. Jeanne Simpson**

We are looking at some interesting stories in Acts about how the early church spread. We've looked at Peter's testimony to the crowd on Pentecost who thought the believers were drunk when they began speaking in tongues; the imprisonment and flogging of Peter and the other apostles because they healed on the Sabbath and preached the resurrection of the dead; the death of Ananias and Sapphira because they lied about holding back some of the money they had received instead of turning it all over to the church; the election of deacons from the group of Hellenist Jews; Philip converting Samaritans in northern Judea; and Philip giving testimony to an Ethiopian eunuch out in the middle of the Gaza wilderness and baptizing him. This coming week we will look at Cornelius, an Italian centurion, the first conversion of a gentile.

I am reminded of how quickly the gospel spread among different cultures at that time. And I think of all the different nations and ethnic groups who believe in Christ today. From Siberia south to Africa and Australia. From Great Britain all the way East and across the ocean to the South Pacific Islands and the Americas. All these different languages in which Christ is worshipped. We sang "Amazing Grace" Sunday and I wonder in how many languages that hymn is sung. The words are so universal – I was blind and now I see; I was lost and now am found. Christ calls everyone, regardless of language or nation or ethnicity. We are all blind and want to see; we are all lost at times and want to be found. Christ is waiting for us to reach out so He can embrace us. Such a profound thought that He does that all over the world, all the time. We may feel like we're small and insignificant in God's world, but Christ doesn't think that. To Christ, we are all beloved brothers and sisters who need to feel the gift of grace. I hope you experience that embrace this week.

*Jeanne*