

**Church - All Nations and All Generations:
Crossing Barriers with the Gospel
Acts 8-10**

Why is the church pushed away from the comfort of familiar environments and relationships into the uncomfortable territories of God's mission to reach the seemingly unreachable?

In order for God to reach the seemingly unreachable through his people's witness, God pushes his people away from the comfort of their environments and relationships to overcome the seemingly impenetrable barrier of...

- I. Self-righteous (normative) hatred - Paul's story (Acts 7:54-8:3, 9:1-22, 26:16-18).
 - a. Self-deception of sin: hubris – I am the judge. Excessive pride, arrogance, or self-confidence that leads a person to overestimate their abilities, ignore limits, and disregard God, moral law, or the well-being of others.
 - b. Crossing the barrier: Forgiveness – the triumph of mercy over judgment (James 2:13).

- II. Bigoted (ideological) hatred: the Samaritan's story (Acts 6:1-7).
 - a. Self-deception of sin: prejudice – judging people before truly knowing them.
 - b. Crossing the barrier: Deliverance – God sees below the surface of appearances to the very core of who we are (the heart) and is able to deliver us from the bondage of sin.

- III. Retributive (vengeance) hatred: Cornelius' story (Acts 10).
 - a. Self-deception of sin: vengeance by our hand that places some people beyond the hope of God's reach.
 - b. Crossing the barrier: Reconciliation – what God has cleansed.

Loving our enemies is impossible unless we first receive the love of the One for whom all things are possible, and share with them the good news that he loves them too.

Choose to love this way.

1. Read Eph. 4:31-32. Is there any anger, bitterness, unforgiveness or hatred keeping you from loving others? Where is Satan trying to keep you in the bondage of hatred toward those whom God loves?
2. What prejudices at DFBC keep us from loving others the way Christ loves them?
3. Do you hold a grudge, bitterness, unforgiveness or desires for revenge against someone who has hurt you? Are you ready to give your burden to Christ?