Scattered but Still Sent:
Evangelism in the Age of Algorithms

Acts 8:1-4

Midweek Message | Acts 8 | Post-Pandemic Evangelism

When we open the Book of Acts, one thing becomes clear: the church never grew because life was easy. It grew because God's people responded to the challenge with faith. The early believers did not experience comfort; they experienced persecution. In Acts 8, after Stephen's death, a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem. Believers were scattered everywhere. At first glance, it looked like a disaster. But Luke tells us, *"Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went."*

That scattering became the seed of the gospel's expansion. What appeared to be the enemy's attempt to silence the church turned into God's strategy to spread the church. Evangelism in Acts was not simply a program. It was the heartbeat of the church.

Evangelism at the Heart of Acts

From the beginning, evangelism was central. On Pentecost, Peter preached, and three thousand were added. In Acts 3, healing at the temple gate became a sermon that brought more believers. In Acts 5,

the apostles filled Jerusalem with their teaching. In Acts 8, Philip preached in Samaria, and the whole city was filled with joy. The pattern repeats again and again: the Word of God spreads because the people of God speak.

The apostles did not wait for the world to come to them. They went where the people were—synagogues, marketplaces, riversides, and city squares. They adapted. They carried the message wherever people gathered.

Our Scattering Today

We have lived through our own scattering. The pandemic disrupted everything. For many churches, growth stalled. Attendance patterns shifted. What used to work stopped working.

But what if the pandemic is our Acts 8 moment? What if God is not finished, but is calling us to adapt in the same way the early church had to adapt? The believers in Acts were forced out of Jerusalem, and everywhere they went, they carried the gospel. We, too, have been forced out of familiar patterns, but everywhere we go—even into digital spaces—we are still called to carry the gospel.

The Shift in Evangelism

For decades, evangelism in America was built on door-to-door contact, invitations, and face-to-face conversations. Those methods are not gone, but they are no longer the main way people can be reached.

Why? Because people no longer live on the front porch. They live on their phones. They live in networks, feeds, scrolls, and searches. If Paul walked the Roman roads to spread the gospel, and if the Reformers used the printing press, then in our time, the roads are digital. The press is algorithmic.

This is not about preference. It is about presence. If people are gathered on social media platforms, the church must show up there with Christ's message. Evangelism is no longer about knocking on doors—it is about knocking on feeds. It is no longer about tracts in the hand—it is about content in the stream.

Understanding Algorithmic Evangelism

An algorithm is simply a pattern, a system that decides what people see online. Every time someone scrolls, the algorithm determines what shows up next. Businesses, influencers, and politicians know this and use it to capture attention.

But what about the church? If we believe the gospel is good news, should we not be just as intentional about placing it where people are?

Algorithmic evangelism means learning to engage these patterns, not to manipulate, but to minister. It means producing content—messages, Scriptures, testimonies, prayers—that are visible in the streams where millions spend their time.

In Acts, Luke says, *"The word of the Lord spread."* That is what evangelism does. In our time, that spreading can happen through networks that reach farther than Paul ever dreamed.

Why This Matters

In Acts, the scattering carried the word across the Roman Empire.

Today, the scattering of the pandemic has carried people into digital spaces.

If the church does not speak in those spaces, they will be filled with every other voice but God's.

We cannot afford to remain silent on the very platforms where people are searching for meaning, connection, and hope. Social media is not just entertainment. It has become the public square, the conversation table, the gathering place. If the gospel is absent there, people will keep scrolling without encountering the hope we know in Christ.

Practical Steps for Digital Evangelism

This does not mean every believer must be a technology expert. It does mean every believer can think differently about their witness. A few simple steps:

Share the Word intentionally. Post a Scripture, a prayer, or a thought of encouragement. Do it consistently.

Engage with people. Do not just broadcast. Respond. Just as Paul dialogued in the marketplace, we can converse in the comments.

Use the tools wisely. Learn hashtags, shares, and posting rhythms. These are modern roads that carry the message farther.

Stay authentic. People are not looking for perfection. They are looking for genuine hope.

Returning to Acts

When those early believers were scattered, they did not hold back. They preached wherever they went. They did not see scattering as an obstacle; they saw it as an opportunity. That same spirit is what we need now.

Our evangelism must meet the moment. It must be present where people are present. It must flow into the streams of daily life. Evangelism has always been about going where people are, and right now, people are gathered online in ways we cannot ignore.

Conclusion: Evangelism in a Post-Pandemic Age

Acts 8 reminds us that the church grows in response to challenge, not in the absence of it. The pandemic scattered us, but it has also opened a new mission field. Evangelism has shifted: from doors to feeds; from streets to screens; from Roman roads to digital networks.

The good news is the same. The calling is the same. The opportunity is greater. The gospel cannot be quarantined. The Word of God cannot be silenced.

So let us be the church that steps into this moment. Let us preach wherever we are scattered—even into the algorithm.

Blessings,
Pastor Gool