

**A reading from Acts chapter 8 verses 1 through 8. You can find the reading on page 916 in your pew Bible.**

And Saul approved of his execution.

And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. Devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him. But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison.

Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word. Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ. And the crowds with one accord paid attention to what was being said by Philip when they heard him and saw the signs that he did. For unclean spirits, crying out with a loud voice, came out of many who had them, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. So there was much joy in that city.

**The Word of the Lord.**

***Thanks be to God.***

Please join me in praying Psalm 28.

Leader: To you, O LORD, I cry,  
and to the Lord I plead for mercy:

**People: “What profit is there in my death,  
if I go down to the pit?”**

Leader: Will the dust praise you?  
Will it tell of your faithfulness?

**People: Hear, O LORD, and be merciful to me!  
O LORD, be my helper!”**

Leader: You have turned for me my mourning into dancing;  
you have loosed my sackcloth  
and clothed me with gladness,

**People: that my glory may sing your praise and not be silent.  
O LORD my God, I will give thanks to you forever!**

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it  
was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. *Amen.***

**Leader: Please stand for the reading of the Gospel.**

*(allow them time to stand)*

**The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ  
according to John.**

***People: Glory to you, Lord Christ.***

At that time the Feast of Dedication took place at Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the colonnade of Solomon. So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly." Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me, but you do not believe because you are not among my sheep. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one."

**Leader: The Gospel of the Lord**

***People: Praise to you, Lord Christ.***