

"Philip and the man from Ethiopia"

Part 2

Acts 8

Introduction: Last week in our study of Acts we walked with Philip as he was called by the angel of the Lord to go to Gaza where he would meet a man from Ethiopia who was returning from Jerusalem.

Notice Acts 8:26-30a

This man had been to Jerusalem to worship and he was on his way back home and he was empty. As we considered last week, Jerusalem was in sad spiritual condition. They had crucified their Messiah and were deep into self-righteousness. Therefore, this man came away with nothing. He was a seeking man and therefore God sent Philip to him to share the Gospel.

The Ethiopian was a very wealthy man, and we know this because he owned his own chariot. This man is unique in his desire to know the Scriptures.

Matthew 19:23-26

²³ Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.

²⁴ And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

²⁵ When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved?

²⁶ But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.

Heaven will be occupied by more people who struggled to make it financially in this life than it will by people who had great financial wealth. The reason is because many wealthy people have a false sense of security. Wealth can be very dangerous because it has drawn many people away from the Lord.

1 Timothy 6:9-11

⁹ But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

¹⁰ For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

¹¹ But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

I need to just pause here for a moment and remind you that the Words of Jesus in Matthew 19 destroy the teaching of Calvinism. Why would it be more difficult for a rich man to enter into heaven if God choses those who will go? The Bible tells us that God is no respecter of persons, so if man has no free will (as the Calvinists teach) then why could God not chose the rich just as easily as the wealthy? God is truly not willing that any should perish and therefore salvation is available for all, and Jesus Christ died for all therefore, whosoever will may come. But the wealthy have a difficult time seeing their need of a Savior because they have many of the comforts of this life.

Now let us get back to Philip.

When the Spirit directed Philip to the man, Philip ran to his chariot. He wanted to seize the moment which was before him. Last week I reminded us that when God opens a door of opportunity to reach the lost as in this situation, that door will not always stay open. Often God will allow a person to experience something in their life and that event will have a dramatic event on their emotions which will cause them to be more tender or more concerned. But this does not last and that is exactly why we must be ready to step through the door when the Holy Spirit moves us to go.

Notice Acts 8:30 again.

When Philip came near, he heard the man reading from Isaiah. It was the practice back then for people to read out loud.

Notice Acts 8:31

This verse contains a great exhortation for you and me. It is not for the angels to teach the lost and point them to the Truth, but this responsibility has been placed upon us who are believers.

Matthew 28:18-20

¹⁸ And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

¹⁹ Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

²⁰ *Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

The Great Commission was given to believers and not to angels. It is our responsibility to see that the unsaved are taught the Truth of the Gospel.

Acts 5:18-20

¹⁸ *And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison.*

¹⁹ *But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said,*

²⁰ **Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.**

²¹ **And when they heard that, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught.** *But the high priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought.*

Here is a situation where the apostles were cast into prison for preaching in Acts 4, then here in Acts 5 they are released, and they are commanded to go and teach again in the temple. It is given to us to proclaim the Truth and to endure the persecution that goes with this responsibility. There is always sufficient grace to sustain us as we face the persecution whether it be verbal or physical. As we have often considered, we are not here to indulge in the comforts of this life, but we are here to serve and to glorify the Lord.

Revelation 2:10-11

¹⁰ *Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: **be thou faithful unto death**, and I will give thee a crown of life.*

¹¹ *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto **the churches**; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.*

Notice Acts 8:32-33

Here we see that the man was reading from Isaiah 53 which speaks of the suffering of the Savior.

Isaiah 53:7-8

⁷ He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

⁸ He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

This was truly God's sovereignty in this situation. He could have been reading from many different Old Testament books, but he just happened (by God's guiding) to be reading Isaiah 53.

Notice Acts 8:34

The eunuch did not know who these verses spoke of. If this is the question he had when he went to Jerusalem it is no wonder he came away with no answers. The Jews did not see their Messiah as the suffering Servant. They were looking for a King to deliver them from the Romans. Isaiah 53 is misunderstood by the Jews today also. Many of the Jews today see Isaiah 53 as speaking of the Nation of Israel not a person individually.

Notice Acts 8:35

Philip had the correct answer. This passage pointed to Jesus and Philip was more than happy to preach Jesus Christ to this man.

Application:

People who share the Gospel faithfully have specific passages which they use to present the Gospel, like the "Roman Road". But I believe we need to be flexible because God can use many different passages to open the eyes of a sinner. A conversion certainly requires sharing the Word of God, but the Spirit can use many different verses to bring about salvation.

Romans 10:17

¹⁷ So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

In my life God used John 3:16 and I have seen Him save others through Ephesians 2:8-9 and others through Romans. Still others have been saved with many other passages. I point all of this out because we need to be flexible when speaking with people about their salvation. Every situation is different, and God will use verses that expose the need within the heart. Every person is different and each person we speak to is facing something different in the lives.

Notice Acts 8:36-38

As the chariot continued on and Philip preached the conversation must have turned to baptism. When the eunuch understood the importance of baptism he wanted to be baptized immediately. This baptism was not a requirement for salvation but as in today it is the first step of obedience after salvation, and it is an outward demonstration of what happens inside when a person gets saved. I think it is important to notice this man was excited to be baptized. As soon as they came to water, he was ready.

This is the way all believers are to respond to baptism, but the truth is that with some they have to almost be dragged into the water. We talked about this before but it is important to note again that the Bible does not know of any believers who refused to be baptized. There is never the mention of anyone who made the choice not to be baptized. They were saved and then they were baptized.

Notice Acts 8:38 again.

This verse tells us they went both down into the water. This tells me that the eunuch was not sprinkled but this was baptism by immersion.

Notice Acts 8:39

This verse confirms that the baptism was by immersion because we are told that they came up out of the water. Try as someone may they cannot find sprinkling in this text.

After the baptism Philip was caught away by the Spirit and the eunuch went on his way rejoicing.

Notice Acts 8:40

Philip ended up in Caesarea. Now let me show you where he was 20 years later.

Acts 21:8

⁸ *And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto **Caesarea**; and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him.*

Philip continued serving the Lord in Caesarea as an evangelist 20 years later. The point I want you to see is that he never stopped serving with his gift. As far as we know Philip was faithful until the day he died. Might this be true of everyone of us.

Conclusion:

As we finish out this chapter there is a question that I want to consider.

Why is this chapter here?

1. **This chapter teaches us the need to be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit.**

The Spirit of God can set up a meeting for us and a lost sinner at anytime and in any place. We must be ready at all times to share the Gospel with the lost. Sometimes spiritual meetings happen at unexpected times and in unexpected places.

1 Peter 3:15-16

¹⁵ But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

¹⁶ Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.

2. **Each soul is precious to the Lord.**

Before this we were seeing groups of people come to the Lord and here, we see one soul saved. This is a reminder to all of us that the church is built one soul at a time. Not everyone is saved in large evangelistic services but sometimes and many times it is when we are one on one with people we meet in our everyday lives. I would say that this is where the greatest impact is made for the Lord. Not in large gatherings but in personal meetings at work, at school, at home, in our communities, or even by the trout stream. If it can happen in the desert, it can happen anywhere. Sometimes people feel insignificant because they do not have a grand platform, but I want you to know that if you belong to God, you are very important, and God can use you just as He did Philip.