

He Told Him the Good News - Acts 8:26-40
Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading

Notes from the Sermon

Philip must have been a real pistol, a man comfortable with just about anyone. He is willing to talk to anyone and when he speaks somehow he is going to turn the conversation to a question about Jesus. He must have been a real pistol of a man, and seemingly left a mark on the apostles and on Luke who tells us his story here in Acts 8. We first meet him as one of the seven men set apart as leaders by the Apostles to oversee the care of widows. These Spirit filled men were more than just waiters, though, as we have seen in the ministry and death of Stephen and in the evangelistic ministry of Philip. When the church scatters from Jerusalem, it is Philip who heads straight to Samaria to proclaim Jesus to these people. This is much more than a geographical journey, Philip crossed cultural and racial boundaries no one else (other than of course Jesus) would cross at that time. It is interesting that it is Philip, and not the Apostles that are shown to take the Gospel to Samaria. As the story in Acts 8 advancing we see Philip continuing to go anywhere and proclaim Jesus to anyone.

An angel speaks to him about taking a trip on the road from Jerusalem to Gaza, so Philip up and goes southwest to Gaza. Again, Gaza is primarily Gentile area inhabited by descendants of Israel's oldest enemy, the Philistines. While on this road Philip has a divine appointment with a man described as an Ethiopian eunuch. While the description is brief the story gives us several hints about this man. First, he is from Ethiopia, which is an area of Africa just south of Egypt, also known as Cush. As an ancient civilization, Cush was fertile and wealthy, and was the rival to Egypt for power on the African continent. This black African man is also identified as a eunuch, a word that can just infer that he is single, but most often refers to men who have been castrated and dedicated to the service of a queen or royal woman, and therefore not a threat to have an affair. In this case the man has become a significant leader under Candace the Queen of Ethiopia, serving as her treasurer, meaning that the man was faithful and trustworthy. But we also learn that the man made a significant journey to come to Jerusalem to worship Jehovah God, indicating the man had heard about the Hebrew God and had been drawn to come learn of Him and worship the One True God, possibly during one of the Festivals. Yet, because he was double whammied from being able to go beyond the outer wall of the Temple court as a Gentile and a eunuch. As the man returns home he has obtained a scroll with the Old Testament prophetic book of Isaiah and is reading (probably out loud). At this moment the Holy Spirit speaks to Philip telling him to go over to the chariot and interact with the man. The outcome is that Philip, "Opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus." Philip declares Christ from Isaiah 53 leading the man to repent from sin, trust in Jesus, and get baptized. Then the story takes another bizarre twist as Philip up and does a Star Trek "beam me up" disappearing from the man's presence. The Ethiopian continues on his way, yet now rejoicing. He may have been excluded at the Temple, but Christ has welcomed the man into the Kingdom of God. Philip, though, shows up in another city and just keeps on sharing Jesus as he moves toward Caesarea to the north.

The beauty of this story is that it shows us what every person in our world needs and how every believer of Jesus can share Jesus. Later in Acts Philip is identified as "Philip the evangelist." When Luke and the early church thinks of ole Phil, they give him the nickname, the good news teller (that is what an evangelist is). In Ephesians Paul tells us that the evangelist is one of the key leadership gifts God gives to the church. These are people who share their faith with everyone and are continually leading people to

Jesus. But here is the application, so hang with me. My guess is that you are reading this and saying, “Yeah Mike, that’s great. But I am not Philip. Speaking to someone else scares the snot out of me.” Maybe you don’t have the gift of evangelism, but the existence of people like Philip are important in the church for this very reason. They model and challenge all of us to seek ways to share Jesus and develop a culture of evangelism in the church. God is at work all around us and the Spirit is still beckoning the church to lift their chin off of themselves and look out into the world. Evangelists remind us to pray for the lost, engage people in authentic relationships, share Jesus with them, and challenge them to repent, believe in Jesus, and be baptized. So, in one way, we as a church need to pray that God raises up Philips among us, and in another way we all need to be challenged to follow the model of Philip as we seek to tell people the good news about Jesus.

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Jeremiah 37	Jeremiah 38	Jeremiah 39	Jeremiah 40	Jeremiah 41	Jeremiah 42	Jeremiah 43

Reading from this past week: Acts 8:26-40

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Acts 9:1-30

Family Worship

Song - *Lord, I need You*

<https://youtu.be/LuvfMDhTyMA>

Gospel Project

Unit: King Saul

Story: Saul Sinned and was Rejected

Big Picture Question: Why does sin separate us from God?

Answer: Because God is holy, sin has broken our relationship with God

Scripture: 1 Samuel 13-15

New City Catechism

Question #25: Does Christ’s death mean all our sins can be forgiven?

Answer: Yes, because Christ’s death on the cross fully paid the penalty for our sin, God will remember our sins no more.

Verse: 2 Corinthians 5:21

Scripture

Acts 8:26-40

- How can we see in the story that the Holy Spirit was already at work in the Ethiopian man’s life?
- What are some ways Philip models a heart for evangelism that should shape all of us?
- Why is baptism so important in this story? How does baptism paint a picture of the Gospel that is visible for the world?

Prayer

*Lift up Bob & Terry Lancaster and the Cotinga Team in Ecuador as they seek to return home

*Pray for the Hilltop Neighborhood

*Pray that we can develop a culture of evangelism here at Genesis