

Putting Feet to Your Faith

Acts 8-26-40

- The church is under intense persecution stemming from the death of Stephen in Jerusalem causing the saints to scatter out into the regions around Judea and beyond. This is a fulfillment of what Jesus said would happen in Acts 1:8 how the disciples would receive power from on high and become bold witnesses of Jesus in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the rest of the world. In Samaria the people have responded to the gospel that was preached by a man named Philip, and word gets back to Jerusalem so the Apostles send Peter-John to go and help with the discipleship of the new believers, meanwhile God is going to Have Philip change course abruptly.

V26-40

- **V26** Philip is in the midst of a remarkable spiritual phenomenon, the Samaritans who the Jews despised for being of mixed heritage and for not fully following Jewish customs but also pagan practices, are now coming to faith in Jesus and joining a movement that includes both Jew and Samaritan which before this would seem impossible. Philip is now being challenged with the notion of are you willing to leave the crowds and deal with one lost soul, and by the way it happens to be in the South which from here is not some other city but barren desert!
- **V27-28** Philip yields to the Angel's instructions, this shouldn't surprise us because since we've been introduced to him he's shown that he's willing to work in the kitchen, wait on tables, or preach in the streets, whatever the situation calls for Philip is prepared to answer. Leaving a fruitful ministry he heads to the desert which would seem foolish in man's perspective but its wise if directed by God, and there he is shown exactly why he's been asked to come here.
- A man returning from Jerusalem searching for answers in the scriptures happens to be traveling that same road at the same time Philip is there, and he happens to be reading the book of Isaiah. Were told that this man is a eunuch who is of great importance to the queen of Ethiopia, for he watches over her vast fortune, and we read that he's also a proselyte to Judaism. **V29-31** Philip after seeing this Eunuch could have said Oh I see why you've brought me to the desert I'll take it from here and took off toward the chariot but notice he waits for the go ahead from God.
- Once the Spirit speak he takes off running to the chariot, this took real boldness for Philip to go right up the Ethiopian's chariot and speak to him, because being an officer of the Queen he no doubt was traveling with a caravan that would include trained soldiers sworn to protect him. So coming suddenly to the chariot without permission could cost him his life, but he's trusting that God is leading him so he goes up to him and hearing him read Isaiah asks "**do you understand what you are reading**". He responds "**how can I unless someone guides me**". Then he asks Philip to come into the chariot and join him, you talk about Divine providence, its perfect timing.

- This shows that as good as it is for people to read the bible unless there's someone to help bring understanding then there is little benefit from their reading > **Prov 4:7**- says that as important as wisdom is just as crucial is that we have understanding, otherwise knowing what to do and actually doing it will be as distant as the east is from the west. Another point to take from this is as wonderful as it is to come to understand the great truths of the bible on our own, God has left a place and a purpose for teachers among the body of Christ > **Eph 4:11**- teachers- Pastors.
- **V32-34** in God's wonderful planning the Ethiopian is reading the passage of **Is 53** that specifically is speaking of the sacrificial sin bearing work of Jesus Christ. So he asks who does the passage speak of himself or someone else? **V35** Philip started at the passage but used other verses to explain the entirety of what was happening, how Jesus sacrifice was more than dying for the Jewish nation and their salvation, but that it was for the redemption of all mankind > **Is 28:10**- scripture is best learned one line at a time, chapter by chapter, verse by verse.
- **V36-38** after hearing and reading this the Eunuch had heard enough, he was ready to fully devote himself to follow Jesus, and he asks "**what hinders him from being baptized**" and I love Philip's response, "**if you believe with all your heart you may**". Philip had seen some emotional responses by people and so he wanted the Eunuch to understand exactly what he was doing and the commitment he was making, this shows he didn't just want some spiritual notch on his belt, but a real true follower of Christ, and so he waits for a true confession of faith in Jesus before he tells him he'll baptize him, if more people did this we wouldn't have so much confusion today.
- **V39-40** once the baptism occurs Philip's job is done and the Spirit supernaturally lifts him up and away to a Philistine city called Azotus also known as Ashdod. What's interesting is the Ethiopian's response for instead of fear, or disappointment, he rejoices, realizing that God had sent him someone specifically for him to instruct him in the true ways of biblical truth, so he rejoices. He doesn't think who's going to help me further, wait I have so many more questions that need to be answered, he understands that this man's job is done and God will send someone else to help with anything else that he needs, as this was proof that God is faithful.