

Jesus For All

Week 7: The Truth and Baptism

Series:

- Week 1: Living for Something Bigger (Acts 1:1-11)
- Week 2: The Arrival of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-21)
- Week 3: Sermons and Gathering of the Church (Acts 2:22-47)
- Week 4: Persecution, Preaching, and Prayer (Acts 3-4:31)
- Week 5: Sharing and Purging (Acts 4:32-5:11)
- Week 6: Serving and Suffering (Acts 6-7)
- Week 7: The Truth and Baptism (Acts 8:26-40)
- Week 8: Encounter with God (Acts 9:1-31)
- Week 9: Good News for Gentiles (Acts 10-12)

Scripture:

Acts 8:26-40

Motivation (Why You Need to Know It):

As the church was growing, they experienced growing pains and persecution.

Information (What You Need to Know):

Acts 1:8 (ESV) But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Philip - Acts 6:1-7

Chosen as one of the 7 to support the Apostles and work with the widows in providing for them.

Philip would be the guy to take the gospel outward to the Samaritans.

Because of persecution. . .

Acts 8:4-5 (ESV) Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word. **5 Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ.**

Following in the foot steps of Jesus. Jesus using the Samaritans in his parable and interacting with them was unheard of. To the Jews the Samaritans were considered less than human. Dogs. Ones that live in Junkyards and eat filth (not your comfy cozy puppy at home). These 1/2 Jews had intermarried with the Assyrians after they had finished their captivity way back in 721BC. These 1/2 Jews had their own Temple, their own copy of the Torah and their own religious system. The hatred went both ways.

Good Samaritan - Luke 10:25-37 (priest, levite, Samaritan)

Samaritan Leper - Luke 17:11-19 (One of ten gave thanks)

Woman at the Well - John 4:1-42 -

-Woman hid herself because of shame and sin. She identified herself as a filthy woman. Shunned by society. She was mistreated and scorned. Jesus a Jew actually talked with her. Listened to her. And because he is God he truly knew her (She had not just been divorced - She had 5 husbands) and Jesus loved her. Jesus wanted to take that brokenness and shame away. To give her a new identity. She became a missionary to her people pointing them to Jesus. And Jesus changed her life and the lives of many samaritans that day.

Luke 19:10 (ESV) For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

Philip was a Jew who now followed Jesus. Like Jesus, Philip knew that none of the worlds identifiers mattered. Male/Female, Jew, Rich/Poor,

Greek, Samaritan and as we will see shortly Ethiopian. . . no political, socioeconomic, vocational, religious, sexual or racial differences matter.

What mattered was people and the Truth of the Gospel.

This morning we are going to carefully look at what some would call one of Philip's chance meetings. What many look at in their lives as incidents, accidents or coincidences I would call simply God's Plan.

There is no such thing as chance meetings. There is only the God's plan.

God's Spirit is always working in and around us. God wastes no meetings and interactions. This certainly is a great example of an obedient Christian following where God would lead them. This is not something mystical or spooky. It is realizing and acknowledging that God is constantly working and we are welcome to join him or ignore him.

Acts 8:26-40 (ESV) Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is a desert place. 27 And he rose and went. And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. He had come to Jerusalem to worship 28 and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah. 29 And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and join this chariot." 30 So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" 31 And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

3 important people in this story. Holy Spirit, Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch.

We know that Philip was a godly man who obeyed, was a strong leader, and had wisdom. God sent him to Samaria with the Gospel and he went no questions asked. Here God is using Philip to take the Gospel even further. But he had to Go when he was told.

This Ethiopian official was very very wealthy. He was committed to the Queen of Ethiopia (and had been marked for such) and was highly trusted since he took care of her vast wealth.

But we also know that he was what is known as a God-Fearer. He had traveled to Jerusalem to worship at Herod's temple (he was unable to enter since he was a Eunuch (Deut. 23:1). But some amazing news is coming. Because of his wealth he was able to purchase a copy of the Isaiah scroll. This is not a small cheap thing to buy. This is a scroll that had been copied letter by letter by a scribe. It was very expensive and valuable. The average Jew did not even have a copy of the Isaiah Scroll. Let alone for them to sell one to a Gentile! Why Isaiah? **Perhaps he heard there was a special message in Isaiah for Eunuchs.** We don't know. We know he was wealthy and was seeking.

Another sign of wealth was the fact that his Chariot had seats. He likely had a driver as well as an entourage. A man of this high status and means was watched over and protected. None of this mattered to Philip.

Go down some dusty road to a desert place. Look for a dude. You'll know him when you see him. This man's presence had to be impressive. The Holy Spirit said to up to him and Philip ran to him. It was common for people at that time to read aloud. And he was reading from Isaiah 53:7-8.

Philip just asks him, "do you understand what you are reading?" The Ethiopian Officials response was simple and honest. "How can I, unless someone guides me."

It reminds me of ...

Romans 10:14 (NLT) 14 But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them?

God brought his servant to the right place at the right time. Listen to this equation by R. Kent Hughes.

God's sovereign plan plus man's obedience brings the touch of God to needy lives. -R. Kent Hughes

I don't know why God choose us to fulfill his purposes and plans. Not the angels. Flawed man. We get to join with God in His work. We get this mixed up and think that we get God to join us. No, we join God in the work he is doing. That assures true success (spiritual success).

As icing on the cake this man is reading at probably the most perfect place. Isaiah 53. The chapter in the Bible that speaks of Jesus the suffering servant written 750 years before Jesus would come. None of this by accident but by God's Sovereign Plan.

Listen. . .

Acts 8:32-33 (ESV) 32 Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this: "Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter and like a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he opens not his mouth. 33 In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation. For his life is taken away from the earth."

Isaiah 53 is the Bio of the Messiah who would come in 750. Isaiah 53 speaks of his arrival, his rejection, his death, his resurrection, and his

ascension. This description of Jesus coming written 750 years before he breathed his first breath is more descriptive of the Gospel than almost any place in the New Testament.

Acts 8:35 (ESV) Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus.

Gal. 4:4 (NLT) 4 But when the right time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, subject to the law.

God's Plan + and Obedient Heart = A needy life touched by God

The average person looking at this Ethiopian official would not think that he was needy of anything. He seems to have it all. Status, wealth, people to care for him and watch over him.

Paul in Philippians 3:4-10 understands that looks are deceiving. It can look like you have it all together. But your life is still completely lacking. Before Paul was knocked off his donkey he would have said he had it all. Those who traveled with him certainly thought so.

God changes lives. We come to Jesus with our broken, messed up, disaster of a life. We acknowledge our sin, turn from it and for the rest of our days we pursue Christ. There is nothing to bring to him but ourselves. Nothing to hide from him. He knows it all. He says Come to me you who are overburdened. I will give you rest.

There at the side of the road in the back of that tricked out chariot. That Ethiopian Official surrendered his life to Jesus.

I think that Philip closed his message exactly how Peter closed his message.

Acts 2:38 (ESV) And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

That man turned from his sin and he became the man who would take the gospel to Africa! He did not want his faith to be secret. He wanted to obey.

The the story does not end with salvation. This story begins with obedience and ends with obedience.

Acts 8: 36-39 (ESV) And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?” **38** And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. **39** And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing.

When someone surrenders to Christ. There is a next step of obedience.

Baptism. It adds nothing to your faith in Jesus. It boldly demonstrates to the world you have given your life to follow Jesus. It puts that simple decision of surrender on display for the world.

So there at the side of the road in some water in front of his entourage he was taken under water demonstrating the death of Jesus for his sins. And he was lifted out of the water symbolizing Jesus’ victory over death in his resurrection. That is the beauty of baptism. We do it to show our friends, family and church family that we have decided to not only follow Jesus but to obey and be baptized.

Do you need to obey and be baptized?

Application (What You Need To Do):