

GOING DEEPER STUDY NOTES (September 17, 2023)

FOR PERSONAL OR GROUP STUDY

As we have been doing each Fall, we take a short four-week break from our year-long study and tackle a pressing need facing the Church (here at Grace but also across the Larger American Church). In 2021 we focused on prayer (the why, how, when, and ease of prayer), Last Fall we turned our attention to the question, “Why Church?” (Why did God establish the Church? How important is church?) This Sunday, and for the three Sundays following, we will be challenged (that’s our prayer) to “Walk Across the Room.” I hear the response, “I walk across rooms every day ... how can that take more than two minutes to talk about?” The central question throughout these weeks will be, “Are we walking across rooms intentionally, with a Holy Spirit directed, Kingdom of God purpose?” I have never been at ease approaching someone I don’t know, or don’t know well, and initiating a conversation about faith. I stumble. I’m afraid of messing it up, ruining rather than building a relationship. This Walk Across the Room series has freed me from all of that. I first heard this approach years ago, from a pastor in the Midwest. I make no excuses for stealing his insights and stories. This is one the few times in my 30+ years of ministry that I’ve copied another’s ideas and talks so directly. But his approach was so simple, helpful, freeing. I hope you commit to attending all four Sundays in this series ... and then let me know whether they lived up to what I’m promising.

Walk Across the Room: In Tune with the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:26-40)

²⁶ 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.

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.’

³⁴ And the eunuch said to Philip, ‘About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?’ ³⁵ Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. ³⁶ 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. ⁴⁰ But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he preached the gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.” Acts 8:26-40 (ESV)

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

1. What do we know about Philip? About the Ethiopian?
2. What does this passage tell us about how God directs us?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

3. How did God speak to Philip? How much information did God give Philip? How was God working in the life of the Ethiopian?
4. How did Philip “fill-in” he gaps of what God told him to do? v30

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO YOU?

5. Describe an awkward encounter you have had personally, or you have observed, of a Christian sharing their faith in Jesus.
6. If you are a Christian, how do you understand your responsibility to share your faith with others? See 2 Cor 5:20
7. How would you describe your evangelistic gifts & abilities? When was the last time you shared your faith with someone? What prompted you to talk about your faith? What happened?
8. What is your first thought when you hear the word “evangelism”? Why do you feel that way about that word?
9. How did you first hear about Jesus? Who do you know who is natural at sharing their faith in Jesus with others? Discuss.
10. Who is God placing on your mind and heart right now, encouraging you to share your faith with them as He leads?

As you spend time praying remember that prayer is meant to be the most natural part of your day. Prayer is a conversation: talking to God and listening to God. Ask God to help you listen to Him. Ask God to place on your mind, and in your heart, someone to share Jesus with. God loves you. He will direct you, speak to you, and through you.