

Acts 8:26-40
CBBC
11/2/2025

Introduction—We all know that discipling, evangelism can be intimidating. It can be frightening. We know its necessity but we push it to the back of our mind. We focus almost exclusively on our part. We forget that God is working.

I. God makes appointments. 26-29

Setting—the church is being scattered. It has gone up into Judea and Samaria. Paul used the persecution to scatter the church, as they had been staying in Jerusalem. God had been using Phillip the evangelist to proclaim the Gospel in Samaria. Last week, we saw how even Simon the Sorcerer had come to faith, although we later see Simon wanting to buy the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Now, an angel of the Lord comes to Philip and tells him that he was to go south. I don't know what that must have looked like. Philip has this active, full ministry. There are people coming to Christ all over Samaria. It was amazing. Suddenly, this angel appears, reflecting God's glory. We don't know what form it took, but we know it was an angel. It appeared in front of Phillip and told him to head south on the road from Jerusalem toward Gaza. We aren't sure which Gaza it was. There were two, but both were in the very south of Israel in desert country that would head into Egypt. So God is directing this evangelist from this incredibly active out into the middle of nowhere. He doesn't even send him to a town or country. He just tells him to head down a desert road.

Who else is on this road heading in the same direction? We are told that there is an Ethiopian, a court official of the current queen of the Ethiopians, Candace. He is black. He is a gentile. We are told that this man is a eunuch. He has been mutilated so that he is unable to have children and thus be a threat to the throne. We are also told

that he is heading home from Jerusalem because he has been worshipping the Lord. He is one of those God-fearers, one of those who are not Jewish, but who worship the God of Israel. Think of Namaan. If one considers Deuteronomy 23:1, one would not have been allowed into the assembly of worship. The closest he could have come would have been to the court of the Gentiles, or possibly a synagogue.

He is somewhat wealthy due to his position, we know, as he owns a copy of the book of Isaiah. He is reading it. The Holy Spirit tells Philip directly, "Go talk to him." Philip does so.

This is a pattern we see in the book of Acts over and over again. God puts certain people in certain places and at certain times. Sometimes, he is very overt in His intentions. Paul is struck blind in Damascus, and God directly goes to Ananias. An angel tells Cornelius to go look for Peter. Sometimes, it is simply God working providentially. Paul runs into Lydia when he goes to a place of prayer, and she is converted. After that, Paul and Silas end up in prison, and the Philippian jailer and his household come to Christ. God puts Paul in front of Agrippa and Festus, and is sent to Rome. We see God continuing to push the borders of the church outward.

There are two parts to this. God puts people in the position to listen. God puts people in a position to speak the truth. None of this happens accidentally. **Ezekiel 33:1-9**. The Watchman principle. Yes, God spoke of this to Ezekiel, but it pertains to New Testament believers also. We are sent as ambassadors according to 2 Corinthians 5. God works in us and through us to continue to grow the church.

God prepares hearts. **30-34** Phillip asks him if he understands what he is reading. We don't understand how inappropriate it would be for someone who was as

common as Philip to approach someone with such authority, especially since he was on foot and the Ethiopian was in a chariot. We know that Philip had to run to him. So Philip shows this Spirit-motivated boldness and goes up to the Ethiopian, asking if he understands what he is reading. The Ethiopian shows great humility and says, “I can’t know unless someone explains it to me.” Let me read the larger context. He then asks, “Who is being described? The prophet or someone else?” It does not occur to the Ethiopian that this is the Messiah. Philip starts with the Scripture and tells him the good news about Jesus. That Greek term for good news is where we get the word “evangelism.” It is proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ. Btw, Philip uses the Scripture, which is the Old Testament. He takes this prophecy and others, combines them with Jesus’ teachings and his life, showing that Jesus is the Messiah that is spoken of in **Isaiah 53**.

This is the process of making disciples. It is the privilege and responsibility of every believer to see where God has placed them, look around, and proclaim good news. The best news ever. There is no other news as good as we will give to anyone, ever, period. This is what we were redeemed to do: to enter into these conversations and proclaim Christ.

God saves the outsiders. (vs. **35-40**) They come to some water, and the eunuch asks, “Is there anything that prevents me from being baptized?” He is asking if there is anything lacking in his knowledge of Christ that would keep him from being baptized as a follower of Jesus. Philip must give him the thumbs up, and the chariot stops. They get out, and he is baptized. He is immersed. He goes down into the water

and comes out again. He demonstrates what has already taken place in his heart. Christ has changed him.

God doesn't keep Philip around but carries him away. God takes him to Azotus, and he preaches the Word until he comes to Caesarea. Azotus is about 35 miles west of Jerusalem. The eunuch doesn't see him again but goes on his way rejoicing because he knows what has happened to him.

Through the working of the Holy Spirit, Luke puts these salvation stories in very particular places. The Jews become believers, then the Samaritans, and then the Gentiles, over in Acts 11. He sets the story of the Ethiopian and Philip right in the middle. The Ethiopian is a Gentile, but it doesn't become a big deal like we will see in chapter 11. But I think we see a very important element here. Take a look over at Isaiah 56. Look at what God promises.

First of all, I believe the eunuch had to be aware of Isaiah 56. If he had known enough about God to go into Jerusalem, and he was as educated as he was, then he had read through Isaiah. In reading that part, he read the other parts. He knew that God had promised to make him part of his family. He didn't know how God would do that until Philip explained it to him. Once he understood what God had done for him through Jesus, he accepted.

Brothers and sisters, we live in God's universe. He moves us all around. God directs our steps. He has moved people into our vicinity, and He prepares their hearts. We are watchmen. We are ambassadors. What are we doing with that?