

I Will Go
The Appointment
Acts 8:25-39

February 11, 2024

HDBC

We were blessed to have Dr. Sam Roberts preach for us last week. I had not told him the series that I was preaching but it was as if I had assigned him that text and topic as part of my series. In fact, the story of Ananias going to help Paul was actually on my list of possible texts to preaching in this series. So, it fit in perfectly. There were a couple of things from his message that have resonated with me throughout this week.

Someone else' miracle is on the other side of your obedience. I love this. I've thought about it this week and wondered how many times I've refused to hear the voice of God and therefore delayed someone else' miracle. I know God is sovereign and can do His thing without me. But He often chooses to use us as His vessels. I want to be much more sensitive to His call, knowing someone else needs a miracle that my going just may trigger.

When God calls you to go it is always to go to or for someone.

We often speak of taking the gospel to the nations or to people-groups. This is good. But Dr. Sam helped me to remember that going is not just about groups or nations, it is most often about individuals. As I think back to the dozens of mission trips that I have participated in, I can easily think of names and faces that I was able to share with, more than just nameless or faceless groups. If God calls you to join one of our mission teams, it probably means God has one or more individuals in mind for you to encounter.

There are many examples in the New Testament of this very principle. Of God calling believers to go specifically for one person. I think of Peter who went to Cornelius. Ananias going to Paul. Andrew going to his brother, Peter. Philip going to Nathanael. Then in Acts 8 we find another Philip answering the call to go, because God had set up a divine appointment for one who needed to be saved.

Let me walk you through the story and then I'll share a few takeaways.

There are three main characters in this story. **There is God**, the one who coordinated the entire thing. He knew the other two characters, who did not know each other. He brought them together in a divine appointment that not only changed a life but likely changed a nation. **There is an Ethiopian eunuch**. We'll get to him in a moment. Then **there is Philip**. Everything we know about Philip we learn from three chapters in Acts. This is not Philip, the apostle.

He was one of the seven chose to handle ministry to the widows in the church. Father of 4 daughters who were prophetesses. He was called an evangelist. He said yes to an unusual call of God, resulting in a man being saved.

Let's walk through the story by considering four stages in his call.

1. **Go to a place (25-26)**

There is a general call of God to all believers to make disciples. But there are also more specific calls for us to go and share. It's interesting in Acts 8 how we find various ways the call of God was answered. In verse 4 it says the believers **went about preaching the word**. That refers to a general spreading of the gospel everywhere they went. Then in verse 5 . . .

Philip went down to the city of Samaria. He answered the call to go to a city filled with people who needed Jesus. Philip preached to the masses in that city and people responded in great numbers. In fact, so many were being saved that the apostles got wind of it and sent some reps to check it out and make sure it was legit. It was! They sent the big guns, Peter and John, to check it out. They did and gave it their stamp of approval.

The city was experiencing a mighty movement of God. I can only imagine how exciting it must have been for Philip. He had walked into what modern missionaries call a **harvest field**. There was little need for cultivation. He simply preached and a bunch of people got saved. It doesn't always happen like that, but when it does, it's sweet. Watch what happened next.

Philip was suddenly called to another place. (26). ***Get up and go south to the road the descends from Jerusalem to Gaza. (This is a desert road.)***

He was called to go to a place, a desert place, a strange place. This was an unusual call. Don't ever question the place God calls you to go. He knows where He intends to do, even if He does not reveal it to you.

Philip went to the place God called. I love how quickly he obeyed. Note that there is no gap between the call of God and the response of Philip vs. 26-27. He was called to go to a place. Once there he was called to . . .

2. **Go to a person (27-34)**

He saw a man traveling on that road. We are told quite a bit about this man.

He was an Ethiopian. He was from another country. He was different from Philip. This would involve cross-cultural evangelism. But Philip had already crossed the normal cultural barriers when he witnessed in Samaria.

He was important. He was in the official in the administration of Candace, Queen of Ethiopia. He was important, trusted and respected. He was in charge of her treasure. He was the guardian and overseer of her wealth.

He was a eunuch.

Because he was a eunuch, he would have been unable to participate fully in the Jewish worship services and would not have been allowed to become a full proselyte to Judaism. If he had come to Jerusalem looking for peace and hope in Judaism, he certainly had left disappointed and empty.

A eunuch was a person whose **genitals had been cut, crushed or pierced to remove their masculinity**. It was an ancient form of sexual alteration surgery. We don't know when, why or how he had become a eunuch. But there must have come a point in his life where he realized he was missing something. He traveled 1000 miles to come to Jerusalem to worship God. He was seeking to satisfy the deep longing that is in every person's heart.

Historians tell us that he would have been rejected at the Temple. In fact, when he got to the temple, he would have seen a sign that said **No lame, no diseased, no blind, and no eunuchs may enter this temple**. He was not allowed to enter the temple and from his perspective that meant he was barred from coming into the presence of God.

So, he was returning home, still searching. He was reading Isaiah 53. It is the part where Isaiah prophetically wrote about the crucifixion of Jesus. **Even though this man had been rejected by the religion of Israel, He had not been forgotten by the God of Israel.** God was continuing to work in this man's heart, to draw him toward salvation. This is seen not only in the passage he was reading, but in the person who had joined his chariot.

The Lord sent Philip to approach his chariot and initiate a conversation. Philip started where the man was. Do you understand what you are reading? Great question. Not condescending. Just testing to see if the door was open.

3. Go to the gospel (35)

Philip wasted no time. He explained the gospel. Philip understood that the power to save was not in his persuasive words, but in the truth of the good news of Jesus. At some point, when the time seems right, you and I need to simply share the gospel with the other person. Give them a chance to hear, believe and be saved. You don't have to talk them into it. You don't have to persuade them. Just share the truth and let the Holy Spirit do His thing.

This man responded in faith to the gospel. We don't have details of his conversion, but we have confirmation by what happened next. But first, I want to point out something important that we might miss. **Remember that he was reading Isaiah 53 in a scroll.** In that same section of the scroll, (Isaiah 56) there is something that might not mean much to us, but it would have meant the world to that eunuch. God said:

Let not the eunuch say "behold I am a dry tree. For thus says the Lord, To the eunuchs who keep My sabbaths, and choose what pleases Me, and hold fast My covenant, to them I will give in My house and within My walls a memorial, and a name better than that of sons and daughters; and I will give them an everlasting name which will not be cut off.

This man had been turned away from the temple, but he was not turned away from God. As he was traveling home, he must have been thinking about the scars on his own body where he had been cut, pierced and crushed, preventing him from coming into the temple. And as he was thinking about that he was reading Isaiah 53.

But he was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. The punishment that brought us peace was upon Him. By His wounds we are healed.

Regardless of your past actions or your present condition. God is ready to save. Whatever it is that would keep you far from God and out of Heaven, Jesus took it onto His body when He died for you. Trust Him, like this man.

4. Go the distance (36-39)

Note the end of the story. As they approached a body of water along the road, he asked Philip to baptize him. Seems quick, but it was certainly appropriate. I think there are at least two reasons for his quick action.

First, he understood the importance of baptism. This man gets it. He was all in, and he didn't want to leave anything undone. He knew that baptism was an important outward sign of his inward conversion. So, he asked for baptism. **Second**, he may have been thinking that there would have been no one to baptize him when he arrived at home. Were there already believers in Ethiopia at this time? Not likely. He may have been the first.

Philip was willing to go the distance. Sure, I'll baptize you. Let's follow through and get this done. If you have trusted Christ as your Savior but have not been baptized, it's time you took care of that. We can have a body of water for you as early as next Sunday. Why don't you get it done.

This all happened because God arranged **a divine appointment**.

This all happened because Philip was willing to say ***I will go***.

Look at the faces on the bulletin. These are the faces of people in villages, cities and towns who needed the Lord. Now take a look at this video and you will see the faces of people at HDBC like Philip. They said ***I will go***.

Show Video – IWG Trips

God may have a divine appointment for a person who needs Jesus. This person may be close by or 1000s of miles away. Will you say ***I Will Go?***