

Unstoppable Kingdom

With Diversity: Because Jesus Lives

Acts 8:26-40

We are continuing the series Unstoppable Kingdom from the New Testament book of Acts. This incredible book tells the story of the disciples of Jesus as they bore witness to the resurrection of Jesus all over the known world while facing incredible persecution from all sides. But, despite intense opposition by powerful forces, the movement rapidly spread!

Candle vs. Wildfire: A candle is easily blown out, but wind to a wildfire has the opposite effect. It spreads the fire farther and more rapidly than ever.

"Instead of smothering the gospel, persecution succeeded only in spreading it."
John Stott

In so many other cases, killing the leaders and threatening everyone else in a movement essentially destroys it. But this was not so with the followers of Jesus. Why were they willing to endure, to risk and give their lives to testify to the resurrection of Jesus? Because it's true...

*"For I delivered to you as of **first importance** what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures."* **1 Cor 15:3-4**

Truth: Nobody is willing to die for that which they know to be false. Nobody dies for that which they are not sure is true. The resurrection is the fact on which the entire Unstoppable Kingdom is built. It's everything! Phillip is not a pastor or apostle, he's an average guy who believes the Gospel & shares it.

Primary Text: **"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**

Main Idea: The Kingdom is Unstoppable because Jesus Lives

Three Blessings of the Unstoppable Kingdom from Acts 8:26-40

I. **Because Jesus Lives, we have Divine Appointments** (8:26-29)

Phillip was enjoying an amazing experience in Samaria. People were getting saved, the church was growing, he was seeing incredible fruit. So, he had to be a little frustrated with the instruction to leave this amazing harvest to go out to a desert region. He didn't know why, but thankfully...

"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 and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah." **Acts 8:27-28**

"The Lord of all creation has ordained that he would do his work through us. Our seeking the Spirit's guidance and obeying what he wants us to do and say is the way he works to bless the world." **Lloyd Ogilvie**

"I'm gonna live so God can use me, anywhere Lord, anytime." **African Proverb**

We have divine appointments every day. If Jesus is alive and is working through people like us who know that he is alive, then he is arranging the world for connections and conversations. Count on it!

II. **Because Jesus Lives, we Look to the Scriptures** (8:30-35)

The Ethiopian eunuch was most likely a proselyte (convert to Judaism), but because of his 'condition' he was unable to worship in the temple. Yet, he had access to the scripture, including the Prophet Isaiah. As he was reading the scroll out loud in his chariot, Phillip approached him with a question.

"Do you understand what you are reading?" And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him."
Acts 8:30b-31

"But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed." **Isaiah 53:5**

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

The Bible is God's revelation of Himself through his inspired, infallible, and inerrant Word. Don't read the Bible to know the Bible, but to know God! Through the Scripture, we are better able to understand...

III. **Because Jesus Lives, we Joyfully Join His Mission** (8:36-40)

The Ethiopian represents so many people today. He was spiritually inclined, seeking truth, but without a clear understanding of the gospel or having been saved. Sincere, but lost without Christ.

“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?” And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. 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.” **Acts 8:36-39**

C.S. Lewis wrote *Surprised by Joy* as a description of his journey from atheism to faith in Christ. In it, he said that if our life with Christ is cake...joy is the frosting. If the Bible gives us the words of life...joy supplies the music. If the way of Christ is a hard steep climb...joy is the chairlift!

“Joy is the flag that flies over the castle of our hearts announcing that the king is in residence today.” **Walter B. Knight**

We can live in joyful fulfillment of Jesus’ mission. Phillip went north sharing the gospel of Jesus, and the Ethiopian returned to his queen in Africa sharing the gospel of Jesus. Both, with incessant joy! Why???

We really believe with all our hearts that Jesus rose from the dead. We acknowledge the historical facts surrounding it, and we believe it by faith. Everything we have preached today shows some of the wonderful blessings of his resurrection.

There once was a king who pardoned two criminals on their way to be executed, but they responded in two different ways. The first was overcome by joy, celebration, and exuberance. He would shout, *“I’m free!”* The second criminal simply couldn’t believe it. Maybe it was a joke, or a mistake that would quickly be remedied putting him back on death row. He obsessed about his guilt and doubted that anyone would ever do something so kind as pardon him. He was terrified, and even discouraged the joyful one from getting too excited because it was all too good to be true. What was the difference between the joyful man and the joyless man...BELIEF.

“May the God of all hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.” **Romans 15:13**

Since Jesus has died for your sins and risen from the dead, everything you need to be saved has already been accomplished. Through simple faith in Jesus, you can have your sins forgiven and be adopted into the family of God! When you believe...you can have incessant joy and relentless hope because Jesus is alive!

Sources and Further Reading Opportunities:

- *CSB Study Bible* – Trevin Wax, General Editor (2021)
- *The Bible Exposition Commentary* – Warren Wiersbe (1996)
- *Word Pictures in the New Testament* – A.T. Robertson (1933)
- *The New American Commentary: Acts* – John B. Polhill (1992)
- *Acts: Bible Study Commentary* – F.F. Bruce (2017)
- *Acts for Everyone* – N.T. Wright (2008)
- *Acts: The Church Afire* – Kent Hughes (1996)
- *Acts* – K.O. Gangle (1998)
- *The Kingdom of God* – Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1992)

- *Kingdom First* – Jeff Christopherson (2015)
- *The Kingdom Agenda* – Tony Evans (1999)
- *How God Uses Divine Appointments* – Dorena Williamson (2023)