

Restore Small Group Questions - Acts (Week 13) — “Divine Appointments” - 4/27/2025

SCRIPTURE:

Acts 8:26-40 - Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” 27 So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian[a] eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of the Kandake (which means “queen of the Ethiopians”). This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, 28 and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the Book of Isaiah the prophet. 29 The Spirit told Philip, “Go to that chariot and stay near it.” 30 Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. “Do you understand what you are reading?” Philip asked. 31 “How can I,” he said, “unless someone explains it to me?” So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. 32 This is the passage of Scripture the eunuch was reading: “He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth. 33 In his humiliation he was deprived of justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth.” 34 The eunuch asked Philip, “Tell me, please, who is the prophet **talking** about, himself or someone else?” 35 Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. 36 As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptized?” [37] 38 And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. 39 When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing. 40 Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and traveled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea.

1 Corinthians 3:6-8 I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. 7 So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. 8 The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labor.

KEY POINTS:

Introduction: What does the mysterious 3rd person of the trinity look like? Various images of the Holy Spirit in scripture depict Him as “ruach - the breath of God”; or as One who overshadowed Mary and filled her with God’s life; or as a dove when Jesus was baptized; or as a ‘rush of wind’ and flames resting on the disciples heads on Pentecost. Another symbol in Celtic Christianity represented the Holy Spirit as a ‘wild goose’ which embodies the untamed nature of the Spirit’s work - wild, free, and even rambunctious.

- The wild goose’s flight path mirrors the Holy Spirit’s unpredictable guidance and leading believers on unanticipated journeys.
- The wild goose is not easily tamed or controlled; symbolizing the Spirit’s power to break free from limitations and to stir up change.
- The wild goose represents a call to action where the Holy Spirit can bring about transformative experiences in persons and communities.

- The 'Wild Goose Chase' represents a metaphorical journey and following the Holy Spirit's leading

- I. **Faith Filled Following** - In our scripture today we see Philip being told to take a journey to Gaza by an angel of the Lord. No reason was given, no goal communicated, no distance specified, no argument started as to Why, What, How Long...Philip had no idea what he should do - he just did what he was told to do. Sometimes obedience to God can look like this when the Spirit leads the way to DIVINE APPOINTMENTS!
 - A. Philip was a deacon - a servant leader led by the Spirit of God
 - B. Philip happened to find a person (Ethiopian Eunuch) who was a man of wealth, a man of status/influence and a man studying the Word of God which exactly described Jesus. This man had a heart for the truth...ripe unto the harvest.
 - C. Luke describes this scene as if the supernatural was just an everyday natural occurrence....no fanfare...where an angel spoke, the Spirit spoke, and Philip obeyed which led to a divine appointment.
 - D. For us:
 1. The more we pray, the more we will see things that can only be explained by God's intervention.
 2. The more we look, the more divine appointments we will find.
 3. The more we step out of our comfort zone, the more we will see God move.
 4. The more you trust with your money, the more supernatural provision you will receive [you can't out give God].
 5. In so doing, there will come a point we need to open our mouths and engage in Faith Filled Sharing.

II. **Faith Filled Sharing** - Next, we see Philip running up to the chariot of the wealthy man and heard him reading Isaiah the Prophet. Philip's 'faith filled following led to a moment of 'faith filled sharing' by opening his mouth. Unprepared in the natural, Philip followed the supernatural lead of the Holy Spirit and shared the gospel by first asking a question. He asked the man "Do you understand what you are reading?"

Important points to be made here

- Seek before you speak
- Seek to understand before seeking to be understood
- Speak UP- share what you know, not what you don't know.

Like Philip we may, through the Holy Spirit, leverage influence and create impact on a person. Like Paul said to the Corinthians - *"I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow."* We may not know the ultimate results of our divine appointments, but God is ultimately responsible for the results.

III. **Faith Filled Results** - The result of Philip's divine appointment was the man believed and was baptized. Then Philip's appointment was over and the Lord took him away...the job there was done! We don't know what Philip said to him but whatever he said was enough. The man learned enough to be baptized....an important supernatural goal that led to the Gospel increasing in Ethiopia. Important points to be made here:

- The results are up to the Holy Spirit.
- Fear can keep us from sharing Jesus but understand God is still working in that person's life.
- Look forwards, not backwards.

- Sharing is not just for the spiritual elite

CONCLUSION:

1. Are you willing to seek out divine appointments? Be more open!
2. Are you willing to ask God to grant you opportunity to speak for Him in a God ordained meeting. Ask and Look for divine appointments! Be Available!
3. Have you been on the receiving end of a divine appointment? If so, remember the appointment was for your benefit. Was your life changed?
4. What would prevent you from being baptized if you have not already done so?
5. Following the Holy Spirit is about living a full and vibrant life, even if it means stepping outside of one's comfort zone and embracing the unpredictable nature of God's will...and you will experience divine appointments. BE THE LIGHT AND SALT!!!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What elements in this scripture narrative of Philip and the Eunuch jump out at you shouting "this was a divine appointment arranged by the Holy Spirit"? What is a 'Divine Appointment'?
2. How can we become more sensitive to what God is doing and be quicker to jump on board? How can this story inspire us to be attentive to 'divine appointments' in our daily lives and to share our faith with others?
3. Philip doesn't start off by lecturing. He first asks the Ethiopian a question...."Do you understand what you are reading?" What are some reasons why asking questions is so powerful?
4. In the time of the very early church, Ethiopia was not a Christian nation. By early 300 AD, Christianity was designated the nation's official religion. Discuss how the first encounter with an Ethiopian by Philip led to the evangelization and growth in believing in Jesus Gospel in greater Ethiopia. Discuss the significance of Divine appointments as 'fire starters' in people and communities.
5. Who is ultimately responsible for the results of divine encounters/appointments? Have you ever been part of a divine encounter? What did that teach you about God?
6. The Holy Spirit had such an important role in the spiritual life and well-being of the early church. What is your perception of what the Holy Spirit is doing in our world today?
7. Faith-filled following and sharing leads to faith-filled results as we are led by the Holy Spirit. How can we recognize the divine appointments that occur in our spiritual walk? Have you been on a wild-goose chase recently?
8. Discuss how these 3 things can set ourselves up to capture divine appointments - (1) Pray daily that the Holy Spirit would give you a divine appointment, (2) Prepare for any appointment by being ready and (3) Being available and acting on them.
9. Philip's divine appointment was as a provider, the Eunuch the receiver. At times we can either be the provider or the receiver of a divine appointment. What kind of limitations do we place on ourselves that limit the occurrence of God directed divine appointments as provider or receiver?