

Introduction

A few weeks ago we went to Houston for my daughter Laura's wedding. It was a really fun wedding. It was a cowboy wedding, and I have never been part of a cowboy wedding. Everyone had jeans, boots, and hats on. There were no tuxes to be found. The ceremony was nice, and the line dancing and other dancing they did was great fun. Everyone had fun. Since coming back several people have asked if I have pictures of the wedding. Even though they were not able to be at the wedding, they want to see some snapshots of the wedding. These pictures or snapshots tell part of the story of what went on. For the rest of their life, Laura and James will have those snapshots contained in their wedding album to help retell the story of their wedding.

Our account today is a snapshot in the life and ministry of Philip. The snapshot we have in Acts 8:25-40 is a permanent remembrance of how God sent Philip to share the gospel with an Ethiopian eunuch on the road from Jerusalem to Gaza. Before we get started, let me back up for just a minute.

Chapter eight begins with a great persecution against the church. The stoning of Stephen set off a huge persecution against the church, and consequently, the church, with the exception of the apostles, was scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria. God is sovereign, and He uses all things to accomplish His plans and purposes. His plans were for the church to preach the gospel message in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and in the uttermost places of the earth. The persecution scattered the gospel messengers and launched the preaching of the gospel message outside of Jerusalem.

(Acts 8:1) "Saul was in hearty agreement with putting him to death. And on that day a great persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles."

The Greek word for scattered is diaspeiro (Strong's G1289), which is an agricultural word. It means to sow throughout, or to scatter abroad. If you picture a farmer taking seed in his hands and casting the seed, you have a picture of what God did. He used the persecution to cast the seed of the gospel throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria.

Notice that God did not scatter the apostles. There were not pastors or elders established yet in the church at Jerusalem. The apostles were busy leading and establishing a very large church. God uses the persecution to scatter the church. **The spreading of the gospel message is not just up to the apostles and leaders of the church. It is up to every member of the body of Christ.** All of us are called to preach the gospel. In Acts 8:4-5, they, that is the rest of the church except the apostles, went about preaching the word. The word used for preaching is euaggelizo. The root word is euaggelos, which means good news. We get the word angel from the Greek word aggelos, which means messenger. The prefix, eu, means good or well. Euaggelizo is to share the good news. They went about sharing the good news or the gospel. That is the call of every Christian.

Philip went down to the city of Samaria and began proclaiming Christ to them. The word for proclaiming is kerusso, which means to herald, proclaim, or preach. It is generally translated as preach, and sometimes translated as proclaim. Not everyone is called to publicly preach, or preach from a pulpit. Philip was not someone who just shared the gospel with others; he was someone called to preach the gospel. In Mark 3:14, Jesus appointed the twelve so that He could send them out to kerusso or preach. In Matthew 11:1, Jesus also taught and preached (kerusso) in the cities. There are

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some that are anointed and sent out to publicly preach. **While not everyone is called to preach (kerusso), all of us are called to preach (euangelizo) the gospel.**

(Acts 8:4-5) “Therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching the word. {5} Philip went down to the city of Samaria and began proclaiming (kerusso) Christ to them.”

(Mark 3:14) “And He appointed twelve, so that they would be with Him and that He could send them out to **preach**, (kerusso)”

(Matt 11:1) “When Jesus had finished giving instructions to His twelve disciples, He departed from there to teach and **preach** (kerusso) in their cities.”

In Ephesians 4, Paul says that the Lord gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers. So far, we have seen Matthias added to the remaining eleven apostles of the Lamb. We have also seen Barnabas introduced to us. Barnabas was a prophet. Now, we are being introduced to another one of the gift ministries, the evangelist. Philip was an evangelist. His passion was to preach the gospel and to equip the body of Christ to preach the gospel. Luke, the author of Acts, is also generally regarded as an evangelist. He is the one that Paul mentions in 2 Corinthians 8:18, where he says, “We have sent along with him the brother whose fame in the things of the gospel has spread through all the churches.”

(Eph 4:11) “And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers,”

So, Philip was scattered with the rest of the church, and he went to Samaria to preach the gospel. While he was preaching, the Lord confirmed his message with signs and wonders. Many who had unclean spirits were being delivered. Paralytics and those who were lame were being healed. My experience has been that evangelists frequently flow in prophetic ministry, and also in other signs and wonders. I also believe that if more of us will preach the gospel and use the opportunities that God gives us, more of us would also see signs and wonders.

As a result of Philip’s ministry at Samaria, many people turned to the Lord. The apostles in Jerusalem heard about it and sent Peter and John. They came and laid hands on people and they were receiving the Holy Spirit. That brings us up to our passage today, where Peter, John, and Philip head back to Jerusalem. At some point the Holy Spirit tells Philip to keep on going, and to go on the desert road that descends from Jerusalem to Gaza. Then, on the road to Gaza, the Holy Spirit tells him to join an Ethiopian Eunuch. Philip joins the eunuch in his chariot, shares the gospel, and then baptizes him. Finally, the Holy Spirit supernaturally transports Philip to Azotus. Philip lived and breathed preaching the gospel. This account is just a snapshot in the life and ministry of Philip, and we have labeled it “The Ethiopian Eunuch.” That is what we will be looking at this morning.

A Snapshot in Philip’s Evangelistic Ministry: The Ethiopian Eunuch

1. Philip is sent to the eunuch
2. Philip preaches the gospel
3. Philip baptizes the eunuch
4. Philip is transported to Azotus

Let’s read our text this morning.

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(Acts 8:25-40) "So, when they had solemnly testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they started back to Jerusalem, and were preaching the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans. {26} But an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip saying, "Get up and go south to the road that descends from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a desert road.) {27} So he got up and went; and there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure; and he had come to Jerusalem to worship, {28} and he was returning and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet Isaiah. {29} Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go up and join this chariot." {30} Philip ran up and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?" {31} And he said, "Well, how could I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. {32} Now the passage of Scripture which he was reading was this: "HE WAS LED AS A SHEEP TO SLAUGHTER; AND AS A LAMB BEFORE ITS SHEARER IS SILENT, SO HE DOES NOT OPEN HIS MOUTH. {33} "IN HUMILIATION HIS JUDGMENT WAS TAKEN AWAY; WHO WILL RELATE HIS GENERATION? FOR HIS LIFE IS REMOVED FROM THE EARTH." {34} The eunuch answered Philip and said, "Please tell me, of whom does the prophet say this? Of himself or of someone else?" {35} Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him. {36} As they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch *said, "Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?" {37} [And Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."] {38} And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch, and he baptized him. {39} When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; and the eunuch no longer saw him, but went on his way rejoicing. {40} But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he kept preaching the gospel to all the cities until he came to Caesarea."

1. Philip is sent to the eunuch

After Peter, John, and Philip had solemnly testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they started back to Jerusalem. The Lord spoke to Philip to continue on past Jerusalem and go south to the desert road that goes to Gaza. At this point, Philip does not know about the eunuch. He only knows that the Lord has told him to go south on the road that goes to Gaza. We must be like our soldiers. They are taught to obey orders first. A soldier's first response must be obedience. A soldier needs to ask questions later, either in a briefing prior to the mission, or in the briefing after the mission. While it is good to know why we are doing something, it is not always necessary. **Philip's first response was obedience.** He will find out why very soon.

(Acts 8:25-26) "So, when they had solemnly testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they started back to Jerusalem, and were preaching the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans. {26} But an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip saying, "Get up and go south to the road that descends from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a desert road.)"

Philip is obedient to the Lord and travels on the road that descends to Gaza. As he goes, he comes across an Ethiopian eunuch. He was a court official of Candace, the queen of Ethiopia, and he was in charge of all her treasure. (It was common in those days for men serving in the King's palace to be made a eunuch.) For the Ethiopian eunuch to be in charge of the queen's treasure, he must have been trustworthy, faithful, and wise. We also know that he believed in the God of Abraham, Isaac and

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Jacob. He had gone to Jerusalem to worship. There were three main feasts in Jerusalem that the Jews would journey every year to attend. We do not know from the text which feast it was, but there is a good chance it was the Feast of Passover, as that was the most widely attended. The eunuch was spiritually hungry. He was also educated, as Philip finds him reading from the book of Isaiah. Now, the Holy Spirit gives Philip his second order. It is to “go up and join this chariot.” Sometimes, we obey the first instruction and trust God to keep leading us for the next step. As much as I like to plan, Philip did not plan this encounter.

(Acts 8:27-29) “So he got up and went; and there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure; and he had come to Jerusalem to worship, {28} and he was returning and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet Isaiah. {29} Then the Spirit said to Philip, “Go up and join this chariot.”

Earlier I mentioned that kerusso is generally translated as preach. Another example of that is found in Romans 10:14-15. Paul writes, “How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? How will they **preach** (kerusso) unless they are sent?...” The word preach in this verse is kerusso. The Ethiopian eunuch cannot believe in Him whom he has not heard. He cannot hear without a preacher. God has just sent Philip, the preacher, to tell the Ethiopian eunuch about Jesus so that he can call on Jesus and be saved.

(Rom 10:14-15) “How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? {15} How will they **preach** (kerusso) unless they are sent? Just as it is written, ‘HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!’”

God is calling all of us to preach the gospel to those in our paths. It may be the path to Estancia. It may be the road that goes to Sandia Park. It may be the desert road to Stanley. It may be the road to Chilili. God is bringing people in our paths for us to tell them about Jesus so that they can put their trust in Christ. I believe that God will use any of us who are willing to be used. I also believe that He likes to use those who are faithful. Philip had been preaching in the city of Samaria, and in the villages of the Samaritans. Philip knew the gospel message, and had been faithfully preaching the gospel. It has been said that it is easier to steer a moving car than one that is standing still. Is your car moving or standing still? Are you faithfully preaching the gospel right now. Are you sharing with your co-workers? Are you sharing with your family members? Are you sharing with your neighbors? If we want to see more encounters like the one that Philip has with the Ethiopian eunuch, we need to already be faithfully sharing the gospel.

Before we go on to the rest of this account, I want to make a point about the significance of one. In Luke 15, we have the account of the lost sheep. The good shepherd left the ninety-nine to find the one lost sheep. (See Luke 15:3-7.) Next, we have the account of the lost coin. The woman searched the whole house until she found that lost coin. Then, we have the prodigal son. When the father, who has been watching for his return, sees him in the distance, he runs to meet him. In all three accounts there is great rejoicing over the ONE sinner who is found. **God cares about the ONES.** He cares about the multitudes coming to Christ, but heaven rejoices over each ONE that is found.

Did you know that most people do not come to Christ in multitudes. There are special outpourings

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and times when multitudes come to Christ, but most people are saved one at a time. Statistically, only 1% come to Christ in crusades. Only 2% come to Christ at church meetings. Another 3% come to Christ in Sunday School and other church programs. Pastors lead about 3% of people to the Lord, generally during counseling sessions. The remaining 87%, the vast majority of people that come to Christ, come into a relationship with Christ in relational evangelism. They come in ONE by ONE through friends, neighbors, family members, and co-workers. God cares about the ONES that come to Christ. He cared enough about the Ethiopian eunuch that He sent Philip to him on a desert road.

2. Philip preaches the gospel

Next Philip preaches the gospel to the eunuch. The Spirit told Philip to go up and join the chariot. So Philip ran up. How many of us run to do the things that the Lord tells us to do? Are we in a hurry to do the things God calls us to do? I love Philip's heart. He was all about the kingdom. He was all in. He was not holding anything back. You can tell by his obedience. **Philip was fully obedient.** He was willing to set aside any plans that he had and go on to the desert road descending to Gaza. **Philip was instantly obedient.** He ran up and joined the chariot. We also see that **Philip was inwardly obedient.** He is fully on board with why the Spirit has told him to join the chariot. Sometimes, a parent will tell a child to do something, and they do it outwardly, but inwardly you can tell that their heart is not with you. It is not an inward obedience; it is merely external. They are rebelling on the inside. You can see it when they roll their eyes and look away, and are slow to obey. That is not what Philip does. He is fully obedient, immediately obedient, and inwardly obedient.

(Acts 8:30) "Philip ran up and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?"

Another person comes to mind. It was Abraham. In Genesis 22, the Lord tests Abraham and tells him to offer his son as a burnt offering. We see Abraham's response in verse three. He "rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey...and went to the place of which God had told him." He was fully obedient. He was instantly obedient. He went early in the morning. And, he was obedient from the heart. Philip had the same kind of spirit that Abraham had. May we be a church with that kind of spirit. May we be a church that is fully obedient to do what God calls us to do. May we have joyful attitudes that reflect an obedient of the heart.

(Gen 22:3) "So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him and Isaac his son; and he split wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him."

Next, Philip asks the eunuch if he understood what he was reading. The eunuch humbly replies, "well, how could I, unless someone guides me?" He then invited Philip to come up and join him in his chariot. This is an open door to share the gospel. Paul asked the church to pray for him to have an open door. These are the kinds of opportunities that Paul desired. I say he was humble for two reasons. First, he did not pretend to know it all. He acknowledge that he did not understand what he was reading. It takes humility to admit that you do not know something. Second, he was humble because he was teachable. He asked Philip to teach and explain the Scriptures to him. Jesus said that the kingdom of God belongs to those who are like children. Children are humble and teachable. **The Ethiopian eunuch was humble like a child and the kingdom of God was soon going to be his.**

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(Acts 8:30-31) "Philip ran up and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?" {31} And he said, "Well, how could I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him."

(Luke 18:16-17) "But Jesus called for them, saying, 'Permit the children to come to Me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. {17} Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it at all.'"

The eunuch was reading from Isaiah 53:32-33. "*He was led as a sheep to slaughter; and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so He does not open His mouth. In humiliation His judgment was taken away; who will relate His generation? For His life is removed from the earth.*" Jesus was the Passover Lamb. He was on the one that was led as a sheep to slaughter.

(Acts 8:32-33) "Now the passage of Scripture which he was reading was this: 'HE WAS LED AS A SHEEP TO SLAUGHTER; AND AS A LAMB BEFORE ITS SHEARER IS SILENT, SO HE DOES NOT OPEN HIS MOUTH. {33} "IN HUMILIATION HIS JUDGMENT WAS TAKEN AWAY; WHO WILL RELATE HIS GENERATION? FOR HIS LIFE IS REMOVED FROM THE EARTH.'"

The eunuch asks Philip, "please tell me, of whom does the prophet say this? Of himself or someone else?" Again, this is a wide-open door to share the gospel. **Philip preaches Jesus to the eunuch.** Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him. Luke quotes Isaiah 53:7, but I believe that Philip explained the whole chapter to him.

(Acts 8:34-35) "The eunuch answered Philip and said, "Please tell me, of whom does the prophet say this? Of himself or of someone else?" {35} Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him."

We do not have the full transcript. Luke was not with Philip and he did not have his recorder on. Luke has gathered the facts afterwards and this is just a snapshot, not a video of the who account. We do not know what other verses Philip used. I imagine that went back to Isaiah 7:14 and showed him the prophecy about the virgin birth, and that the child would be named Immanuel, which means God with us.

(Is 7:14) "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel."

I imagine that Philip turned over a couple of pages in the book of Isaiah, and went to Isaiah 9, where a second prophecy is given about the Messiah being born. His name will be Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, and Prince of Peace. This Messiah would truly be God in the flesh. There would be no end to the increase of His government or of peace. He would be of the line of David and fulfill the promise given to David about his descendants reigning forever.

(Is 9:6-7) "For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. {7} There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and

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righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.”

Philip probably worked his way back to Isaiah 53. He would have explained how Jesus bore our griefs and sorrows, and how He was pierced for our transgressions.

(Is 53:4-5) “Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. {5} But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed.”

He probably shared that all of us like sheep have gone astray and have a need for our sins to be forgiven. He probably shared that we have to confess Jesus Christ as our Messiah and Savior so that our sins could be forgiven.

(Is 53:6) “All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him.”

At this point Philip was back to where he began in Isaiah 53:7. He probably went on to share how Jesus was without sin, but crucified with sinners, and that He was buried in a rich man’s grave. Joseph of Arimathea had gone to Pilate and asked for the body, and he buried Jesus in a tomb where no one had ever lain.

(Is 53:9) “His grave was assigned with wicked men, Yet He was with a rich man in His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was there any deceit in His mouth.”

(Luke 23:50-53) “And a man named Joseph, who was a member of the Council, a good and righteous man {51} (he had not consented to their plan and action), a man from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who was waiting for the kingdom of God; {52} this man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. {53} And he took it down and wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid Him in a tomb cut into the rock, where no one had ever lain.”

He probably spoke of Jesus’ resurrection in verse ten. Jesus, after becoming the guilt offering, would see His offspring and would prolong His days. After His death, He would see it and be satisfied that He had justified the many and bore their iniquities.”

(Is 53:10-11) “But the LORD was pleased To crush Him, putting Him to grief; If He would render Himself as a guilt offering, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, And the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand. {11} As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, As He will bear their iniquities.”

Philip probably used the text in Isaiah to fully preach the gospel. **Philip was prepared to share the gospel.** Here are some questions for us. Are our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel? Are we prepared to share the gospel with those that God gives us the opportunity? Are we familiar enough with the Scriptures to explain the gospel? Can we take someone through a plan of salvation? It does not matter if it is the Romans Road, Bridge Illustration, or the Four Spiritual Laws. We must

be ready for the opportunities that God gives us. Take time to become familiar with a gospel presentation. Memorize some verses that will be helpful in sharing with someone when God opens a door. We must be prepared for the opportunities and then ask God for open doors.

3. Philip baptizes the eunuch

We do not see a question asking the eunuch if he would like to receive Christ. What we do see is a statement and a question by the eunuch. He says, "Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?" The statement and question by the eunuch showed that he was ready, and wanted to get with it. He did not want to wait. He was ready to make Jesus His Messiah and Savior. He was ready to confess Jesus as His Lord.

(Acts 8:36) "As they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, 'Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?'"

Philip baptizes the eunuch after verifying that he was a believer. Philip said, "if you believe with all your heart, you may." The eunuch ordered the chariot to stop and they both went down into the water and the eunuch was baptized.

(Acts 8:37-38) "And Philip said, 'If you believe with all your heart, you may.' And he answered and said, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.'" {38} And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch, and he baptized him."

This is a very important passage about baptism. I have preached sermons on these two verses. I do not want to preach a whole message on this today, but I do want to make a few comments. First, the word baptism is a transliterated word. The Greek word is baptizo, and the root word is bapto, which means to immerse. **Baptize means to immerse.** It does not mean to sprinkle, but to immerse. If our Bible translators had translated the word rather than making up a new English word from the Greek word, some of the confusion and misunderstanding about baptism would have been cleared up. It takes water to immerse. Philip and the eunuch went down into the water.

Second, **baptism is an act of obedience.** Philip verified that the eunuch believed; then he baptized him. If the churches that perform infant baptisms would read this passage, they would not be doing infant baptisms. A new born baby could not have answered Philip's question. A new born baby does not believe. A new born baby does not have the ability to speak and confess Jesus as Lord. A person should only be baptized if he can honestly answer that he believes in Christ with all his heart. We are saved by faith, not works. The Scriptures are clear that it is by believing in our heart that Jesus rose from the dead, and confessing Him as Lord that we are saved.

(Rom 10:9-10) "that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; {10} for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation."

Baptism is not what saves you. It is a picture of what has happened at salvation. We are buried with Him in baptism. Our sins are buried. Our old way of life is put to death. Then, we are raised up out of the water to new life. Just as Jesus was raised from the dead, we are raised up to live a new life. It is a picture of salvation. Paul does a great job in Romans 6 explaining this. Let's read verses 3-7.

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(Rom 6:3-7) “Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? {4} Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. {5} For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, {6} knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; {7} for he who has died is freed from sin.”

I thought about lumping points number two and three together. That would have given me a three-point outline. However, to make it clear that baptism is an act of obedience rather than a necessary part of the gospel, I divided these into two parts. I had a caddy by the name of Blaine on the tour for a few years. He and his twin brother were both ordained ministers in the Church of Christ. He refused to give out my gospel tracts and my testimony. Why? Because my tracts did not say that baptism is required to get saved. That is what the Church of Christ believes. I believe every believer should be baptized. I believe they should do it as soon as possible. The Ethiopian eunuch did not wait. He did it immediately. He did it as soon as there was water available to get baptized with. Even though my tracts encouraged people to get immediately baptized, that was not good enough for Blaine. The Scriptures are pretty clear about this point. **You must believe and confess Jesus as Lord to be saved.** Baptism is an act of obedience and should be done as soon as possible after believing.

4. Philip is transported to Azotus

As soon as Philip baptizes the eunuch, the Spirit snatched Philip away; and the eunuch no longer saw him. That is a pretty fascinating verse. In fact, that is a pretty neat way to travel. I would love to be able to be in Albuquerque one minute and then be in Houston the next minute. I would save lots of time. I would save lots of money on airfares. What a great way to travel. The eunuch no longer saw Philip, but that did not bother him in the least bit. He went on his way rejoicing. I have a feeling that Luke came across the eunuch at some point and got his account of what happened. How else would he know that the eunuch went on his way rejoicing. The eunuch probably kept making annual trips to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, and Luke probably got to meet him on one of those trips.

(Acts 8:39) “When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; and the eunuch no longer saw him, but went on his way rejoicing.”

Philip finds himself in Azotus and continues preaching the gospel in all cities until he came to Caesarea. Azotus is better known in the Old Testament as Ashdod. Its name was changed to Azotus when the Greeks took over. It reverted back to Ashdod later on, and is still known as Ashdod on the current maps of Israel. It is now the 6th largest city in Israel, and is located twenty miles south of Tel Aviv.

(Acts 8:40) “But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he kept preaching the gospel to all the cities until he came to Caesarea.”

Ashdod was given to the tribe of Judah as part of their inheritance (Joshua 15:45-46). It was also where the ark of the covenant was taken to the temple of Dagon in 1 Samuel 5. In the presence of the Lord, the statue of Dagon fell down on his face before the ark. They set Dagon up again, and the next day Dagon was on his face again, but this time he was decapitated and his hands had been cut

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off. Then, the Lord smote the people of Ashdod with tumors. After seven months, the Philistines determined that they needed to return the ark to Israel. They returned it on a new cart with five golden tumors and five golden mice, according to the five Philistine Lords. This was a very pagan culture. God wanted the gospel to be taken to all men, and the people of Ashdod desperately needed the Lord.

There are lots of people today that desperately need the gospel. Are we willing for God to take us to places where people desperately need the gospel. Jesus hung out with the tax collectors, and other sinners. In fact, the Pharisees got upset about the company He kept. But, God is interested in these people who desperately need Him. Are we willing to run to those that the Lord sends us to? Are we willing to stop where we are going and what we are doing to go where the Lord directs?

Philip does not just stay in Azotus; he continues to work his way up the coast to Caesarea. He kept preaching the gospel to all the cities until he came to Caesarea, which is a little north of Tel Aviv. The town was founded by Straton (Lebanon). It was originally an agricultural town, but when the Romans conquered it in 92 BC, the town was renamed to Caesarea in honor of Caesar Augustus. It became more diversified economically. They began building ships, developing commercial trade, built government complexes, starting having theatrical performances, and began hosting sporting events in their coliseum. Except for being a sea port and building ships, it reminds me of Santa Fe because of the government complexes and interest in the arts.

Philip's life was about preaching the gospel. He was preaching the gospel in Samaria before being sent to the Ethiopian eunuch. After the encounter with the eunuch, he is preaching the gospel in cities from Azotus up to Caesarea. We see the passion and heart of a true evangelist.

Before we close today, I would like to encourage us in evangelism. In the church, we love the presence of the Holy Spirit. We love to hear prophetic words. We welcome the Holy Spirit. But, let us not forget one of the main reasons that He gave us His Spirit. He said that we shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon us, and we shall be His witnesses. God wants to empower us to be His witnesses.

(Acts 1:8) "but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

Here are some prayer points. First, pray for opportunities. Paul asked the churches to pray that God would give him open doors for sharing the gospel. Second, be prepared to share the gospel. Shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel. Become familiar with a gospel plan. It may be from Isaiah. It may be from Romans. It may be a bridge illustration. It may be the Four Spiritual Laws. It does not matter which plan; shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel. Third, make the most of the opportunities that God gives you. As we faithfully share Christ with others, God will give us more opportunities to share. Church, this is the favorable year of the Lord. Let's be a church that preaches and proclaims the good news of Jesus Christ.

Let's pray.

Introduction (Acts 8:1, Eph 4:11, Acts 8:25-40)

- The spreading of the gospel message is not just up to the apostles and leaders of the church. It is up to every _____ of the body of Christ.
- While not everyone is called to _____ (kerusso), all of us are called to _____ (euaggelizo) the gospel. (Acts 8:4-5, Mark 3:14, Matt 11:1)

1. Philip is sent to the eunuch. (Rom 10:14-15)

- Philip's first response was _____ . (Acts 8:25-29)
- God cares about the _____ .

2. Philip preaches the gospel. (Acts 8:30-35, Gen 22:3)

- Philip was _____ obedient.
- Philip was _____ obedient.
- Philip was _____ obedient.
- The Ethiopian eunuch was _____ like a child and the kingdom of God was soon going to be his. (Acts 8:30-31, Luke 18:16-17)
- Philip preaches _____ to the eunuch. (Is 7:14, 9:6-7, Is 53:1-12, Luke 23:50-53)
- Philip was _____ to share the gospel.

3. Philip baptizes the eunuch (Acts 8:36-38)

- Baptize means to _____ .
- Baptism is an act of _____ . (Rom 10:9-10, 6:3-7)

4. Philip is transported to Azotus (Acts 8:39-40)

- Philip's life was about _____ the gospel.

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