

Acts 8:26-40: Are You Willing to Go Where God's Spirit Leads You?

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I. Introduction

What's the main mission of a Christian? Be a disciple and make disciples of Christ, i.e., to follow Christ in everything you think/say/do and to show others how to do likewise. So, when was the last time the Lord convicted you of a behavior that was not Christ-like? Or when was the last time you showed someone how to walk with Christ?

II. Acts 8:26-40: Will You Go Where Christ Leads You in Your Personal Life and Ministry?

8:26-40, having brought many Samaritans to Christ, the Lord has another job for Philip. He tells him to "go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." Philip obeys and as he goes he sees a company traveling on this road and in front a chariot. The Spirit of Christ then tells Philip to catch up to the chariot and get right up close to it. So he runs right alongside it, close enough to hear this VIP reading out loud. Who was this man? He was an Ethiopian, "a eunuch of great authority." He was the treasurer of Candace the queen of Ethiopia. Basically, he was the CFO of all Ethiopia. He had been in Jerusalem to worship the God of Israel (perhaps during one of the Jewish feasts) and now he was returning home. As he was being chauffeured back home, he was reading the Hebrew Scriptures, from the scroll of Isaiah.

What does all this tell us about him and why did God single him out for evangelism? He was obviously a very powerful, wealthy and educated man. He was also a proselyte to Judaism, but not a full-proselyte since he couldn't be circumcised. He had left his home to travel for weeks or months to go to Jerusalem and worship the God of Israel. This is amazing because he's a eunuch. Eunuchs were banned from worshipping God in the temple (Deuteronomy 23:1, cf. Leviticus 21:20); they could not enter God's house. How devastating it must have been for this man to spend all that time, money, and energy traveling to Jerusalem only to be turned away at the door. This is all the more incredible because of the spot in Isaiah where he was reading. He was reading Isaiah 53, which is about Messiah, a man who was completely innocent and yet died in order to remove the barrier that stood between God and this eunuch. It meant that this eunuch, who'd been turned away from God's house, could actually stand in God's presence!

And this eunuch wanted to know from Philip who this man was, was it the author or someone else? Who was the man that was going to give him (a eunuch!) full access to God's house and an everlasting name that "shall not be cut off" (Isaiah 56:3-5)!! So Philip, starting with Isaiah 53, began revealing who this Man was; it was Jesus. At some point during Philip's presentation, which included the significance of baptism in Jesus' name, the eunuch believed in Jesus and wanted to be baptized. And as soon as he saw water, he commanded the chariot to stop and Philip baptized him in the name of Christ. After they come up out of the water, the Lord's Spirit performed a miracle and swept Philip away. He disappeared in front of the eunuch and the eunuch went his way rejoicing. The Spirit took Philip to Azotus and the coastal cities, including Caesarea, which is where he ended his evangelism. Why did the eunuch leave rejoicing? He had found the One who could fix everything that was wrong with him. No more would he be a eunuch in God's eyes. No more would he be kept out of God's house. He had found the One who could fix everything that was wrong in his life. He had found his Savior.

Are you willing to let God fix what's wrong with your life so that you can walk with Christ and show others how to walk with Him? God calls us to be disciples and make disciples of Christ, to follow Jesus and show others how to follow Him. Philip was willing to follow the Lord's Spirit wherever it led him. He was a successful evangelist in Samaria, bringing many, perhaps thousands to Christ. But when the Lord said, "Go speak to this one eunuch," Philip obeyed without question. And when he got there, he showed the Ethiopian eunuch who Jesus was and how to walk with Him. The eunuch then went back to Ethiopia rejoicing because he had found the Savior who had come to die for everyone, including the eunuchs of the world.

Will we obey the Spirit's prompting when He's trying to show us what's wrong with our lives, with the way we speak, the way we think about others, the way we respond to pressure? Or will we allow our circumstances to get the best of us? Jesus is constantly trying to get our attention, to show us a better way. Will we let Him?

And as for showing others how to follow Christ, when was the last time you made a disciple? Not just a "convert," but a disciple, someone who followed Christ in their daily life, in their marriage, in their parenting, in their work, etc? If you've never made a disciple or if it's only been a few people, then it's time to follow Christ in this work. And if you don't know how, ask Him to show you and to lead you to someone who can show you how.

III. Conclusion

Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go near and overtake this chariot." So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?" And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him." The place in the Scripture which he read was this: "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; And as a lamb before its shearer is silent, So He opened not His mouth. In His humiliation His justice was taken away, And who will declare His generation? For His life is taken from the earth." So the eunuch answered Philip and said, "I ask you, of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?" Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?" So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing.