

Acts 8:26-40

Philip: Obedient and Flexible

In our previous Study – Pete did a great Job in showing how – **Persecution to the church resulted in the spreading of the gospel.**

V.1 Context - Now Saul was consenting to his death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they **were all scattered** throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.

Those who were scattered went throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria.

A)The Lord's original mandate Chapter 1:8 they would be empowered by the HS uttermost...

B)Here is the first step – as V.4 tells us that **those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word.**

C)The word scattered comes from a particular Greek word which means to disperse. Diaspora –

D)Used in conjunction with the nation of Israel- they were dispersed among the nations.

1)The word literally means to sow – as in sowing seed or scattering seed.

But The word also means to Broadcast –

A)We get our idea of radio and TV broadcast from that same idea of the farmer scattering seed.

B)Throwing it abroad!

1)70% of the new people who come to our church come via the radio program.

C)**Because of the Persecution** – the Christians were being sown or broadcast into the world.

1)God was planting them in new places!

One of those who went was a young guy named Philip – we first met him in Chapter 6

A)He was one of the 7 guys chosen by the Church to serve as Deacons

B)This was the criteria for choosing these men – according to what we read back in Chapter 5:3 men of *good* reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom,

C)Philip fit that criteria – God was using him and he was going to use him further.

Tonight here in Acts 8 – We are going to see Philip become an Evangelist –

A)I want to note 4 reasons why God used Him in this way.

1st He had a willingness to go anywhere? V.5-8

⁵ Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. ⁶ And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. ⁷ For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. ⁸ And there was great joy in that city.

Samaria – place that the Jews avoided like the plague. Half breeds – prejudice!

A)But Philip didn't see the Samaritans as a place to be avoided – but as people who need Jesus

B)So he went against the tide of the cultural differences that existed – between the groups
1)To bring Jesus to these people.

C)They responded to the gospel – Joyfully

D)Greg Laurie declares – **Evangelism begins with a Burden**

1)A burden for lost souls – a burden for people going to hell

Charles Spurgeon declared – “Winners of Souls must first be weepers of Souls.”

"The Holy Spirit will move them [the lost] by first moving you. If you can rest without their being saved, they will rest too. Charles Spurgeon

Billy Graham once shared something that I think can help us in having a burden.

A)Graham declared that - Universally People are struggling with four basic needs:

#1 People are Spiritually empty!

Barbara Walters asked Richard Dreyfuss if you could have one wish what would you wish for?

“Everytime I have a birthday, every time I blow out the candles, every time I see a shooting star, I wish for the same thing – I wish for inner security.”

Accomplished Actor talented successful who still feels there is something missing inside.

#2 People are Lonely

The Surgeon General of the USA From 2014 to 2017 Vice Admiral Vivek H. Murthy served as the

From this vantage point he identified loneliness as one of the most lethal health crisis in America today—Murthy wrote:

“We live in the most technologically connected age in the history of civilization, yet rates of loneliness have doubled since the 1980s.

Today, over 40% of adults in America report feeling lonely.” Vice Admiral Vivek H. Murthy Surgeon General 104-2017

Dr. Richard S. Schwartz, a Cambridge psychiatrist who has studied the problem of loneliness in America, notes that over four decades of studies have shown the devastating consequences of loneliness.

“Loneliness has been linked to an increased risk of cardiovascular disease and stroke and the progression of Alzheimer's.. In 2015, a huge study using data from 3.5 million people collected over 35 years, found that those who fall into the categories of loneliness, isolation, or even simply living on their own see their risk of premature death rise 26 to 32 percent.” Cambridge psychiatrist Dr. Richard S. Schwartz

#3 People feel guilty

A)We feel guilty because we are guilty – Sinner – Sin does – brings shame

B)Adam and Eve were naked and ashamed after they sinned.

C)Director of a Psych ward – release 75% of my patients if I can find a way to rid them of their guilt

C)Religion is the problem – get rid of religion – get rid of moral absolutes

columnist David Brooks In a recent New York Times "Religion my be in retreat, but guilt seems as powerfully present as ever."

D)All of us live with regrets

#4 People are afraid to die: Actor Dennis Hopper was asked about his greatest fear – He gave a one word answer. “DEATH!”

According to the 2017 "Survey of American Fears" conducted by Chapman University, 20.3 percent of Americans are "afraid" or "very afraid" of dying.

When A Christian realizes that most people they come in contact with a struggling with those things – creates a burden

A)Makes it a lot easier to look for opportunities to share Jesus with them

B)So the first thing we note about Philip that made him affective – he was willing to go anywhere.

1)No restraints – anywhere but there God

C)I will talk to anyone but them – He was open to being led by the Lord

1)And the Lord led him to the place that most people would not want to go.

D)So God was doing this great thing in Samaria and the Lord is going to send Philip in a new direction

26 Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, "Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is desert. 27 So he arose and went.

2nd Thing we learn from Philip: He was quickly obedient to the promptings of the Lord!

A)The Lord says – change of plans – go down to Gaza – THIS IS DESERT!

B)Go out to the desert – V. 27 So he arose and went

C)Phillip doesn't argue – but God you are doing a great thing here in Samaria

D) Doesn't say - Jerusalem is 30 miles closer send one of the Apostles!

E) There is nothing in the Desert – at least here in Samaria there are people.

1) He doesn't do any of that – He just obeys!

Notice He obeys quickly – He arose and went!

A) When we don't obey quickly we miss out on opportunity – opportunity passes us by

B) Learn to respond quickly

C) Philip has no idea why the Lord wants him to go to the desert –

1) but he realized find out when he got there

D) God has a Divine appointment waiting for him in Gaza

We want God to give us the whole picture – but usually he just gives us the first step.

A) Sometimes we think we know why he is sending us some where – or asking us to do something

B) Usually different that we envisioned

C) I know when we moved to Oregon – I thought God was going to do certain things.

D) Discovered that Oregon was more about what God was wanting to do IN ME – than THRU ME.

E) It was the catalyst for what God was going to do in sending us back here – 5 yrs later

Philip could never had imagined what God had in store for him.

And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship, 28 was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet.

Now this Ethiopian Eunuch was a man of Power – And Position. He was a high ranking official.

A) Ethiopia at the time was a powerful kingdom located south of Egypt.

B) He was in charge of the treasury – which would be similar to our secretary of Finance.

C) He would have been a cabinet member traveling with a large entourage – including guards.

D) Picture a stretch Chariot with tinted windows

This Ethiopian diplomat had everything this world has to offer. Yet he was on a search for God.

A) We know this because he went to Jerusalem to worship.

B) Somewhere in Ethiopia he must of encountered some Jewish people

1) The Jewish religion intrigued him

C) Decided to take a journey to 1,000 miles to Israel to investigate

But instead of finding the vibrant faith of the glory days of Solomon and King David.

A) he found a cold, dead religion that was laden with rules and regulations.

B) He had everything this world says to go after – power, position, prosperity

1) But inside he still had a void – something was missing. Hole – only filled by God.

C) There are pp all around us everyday who are in the exact same place

1) Outwardly look like all together / inside - empty

D) In Jerusalem he picked up a scroll of the prophet Isaiah and as he traveled he read.

1) He is a man of means because he was able to acquire the scroll of Isaiah – RARE

I love this story because it shows the Sovereignty of God working in Conjunction with the free will of man

A) This man is searching but at the same time God is drawing

B) God is going to orchestrate his servant

V.29 Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go near and overtake this chariot."

A) Now how did the spirit speak to Phillip – audible

I don't think so –

B) Christian 35 years – never heard an audible voice

1) I don't know anyone who has

C) So how does **the spirit speak**? – I know in my life especially in instances like this – strong impression.

D) I can be in a crowded room – lots of noise – activity **the HS will impress on my heart** – One person

1) Go talk to them.

Half the time I don't even know how to start the conversation – hi how are you – fun

A) Sure enough – a conversation ensues

B) What if you are wrong! – I have been wrong – nothing happened – not open.

C) But I would rather be wrong in something like that than **to miss an opportunity** impact for eternity

1) So the person – ignores me or walks away.

D) More often than not the opposite happens!

3rd He Looked for some common ground.

Notice also Phillip's tact – **V.30 So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?"**

A) He doesn't run up and say – Hey you –do you know that you are going to hell – unless you repent?

B) Hey God sent me to this barren desert – to tell you, you are in trouble pal!

C) No he approaches tactfully and looks for some common ground. - **"Do you understand what you are reading?"**

D) Look for common ground conversation starters Like: Sports – Music – Movies – politics

1) I use all of the above to start a conversation

C) Sports teams – Ask - Favorite player – mine is this guy – **great story..... lost – mess – fame –**

1) Jesus Changed his life

D) I can relate to that – he changed mine

1) In fact - I don't follow teams as much as I follow players- I root for Christians

E) Any spiritual belief's be willing to listen

So Philip looked for common ground – opening what are you reading?

³¹ And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him. ³² 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.*

³³ *In His humiliation His justice was taken away,
And who will declare His generation?
For His life is taken from the earth."*

³⁴ So the eunuch answered Philip and said, "I ask you, of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?" ³⁵ Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him.

Notice that last phrase – He preached Jesus to him 4th point – He preached Jesus to him!

A) Listen it doesn't matter what common ground you start with – Sports – Music – Movies – politics

B) You can start talking about anything but you need to get around to talking about Jesus!

Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel [a]of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

A) There is power in the gospel to save!

B) Sometimes we put too much emphasis on ourselves

1) Our ability to relate – connect - etc

C) I have led drug addicts to Christ – never did a drug in my life.

1) Gang bangers – never been in a gang.

D) **High School kids** – I have been out of high School a long time.

E) Can having a certain background help? Yes but it is not a requirement.

1) Peter had a little in common with this Ethiopians except for being in the same place at the same time!

The power is in the Word

Isaiah 55:10-11

10 "For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, But water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud,

That it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater. So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

Hebrews 4:12-13 ¹² For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. ¹³ And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things *are* naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we *must give* account.

What if they don't believe in the Bible? That Doesn't matter because it is still a sharp sword.

Think of it this way: If I am in battle, hand to hand combat - I have a sharp sword.

A) The person I am fighting against says I don't believe in swords – not sharp

B) Not going to try and convince him – made of the strongest and sharpest steel!

1) No I am going to just run him through – and he will get the point – **LITERALLY – RIGHT?**

C) Don't worry if a person believes in the Bible – share the word { Do it's thing!

D) So Philip preached Jesus to him.

1) He explained Isaiah and no doubt told him a lot more.

Result: Acts 8:36-40 **36 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?"**

37 Then 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."

Note this – Phillip makes it very clear – Believe with all your heart that Jesus is the son of God.

A) This gives us insight into what he preached about Jesus

B) God's son – God in the flesh – came to redeem Only one who could die – sinless –

1) He rose

C) Believe in Jesus with all your heart!

D) Heart thing – whole heart! Not partial

E) **Problem with a lot of people** – Never really give their whole heart to JESUS

1) Conditions – I will become a Christian if....!

V.38

38 So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. 39 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. 40 But Philip was found at Azotus. And passing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea.

Ethiopian "went on his way rejoicing" (v. 39).

A) The touch of God produces genuine joy!

B) Philip disappeared, but he was not missed, for the Ethiopian now had Christ!

C) Irenaeus says this man became the first missionary to the Ethiopians, and it may well be true.

1) He certainly would not have been able to keep his JOY to himself!

Close with this thought – what would you do if you discovered the cure for cancer?

A) Make a lot of money! – besides that?

B) Run to everyone you could that had cancer and give them the antidote- right?

C) People are diseased with something worse than cancer – SIN ?

1) Cancer kills the body – Sin kills the soul – eternity in hell – separated from God

Yea but the person with Cancer knows they are sick – the sinner doesn't always know.

A) True – hard to convince – but suggest to you most of them know – something is wrong.

B) Dealing with Lonely, guilty, empty, fear of dying

1) Remember that – Share Jesus – Amen