

Acts 8:26-40 (Advance Part 3)
Responding to the Promptings of the Holy Spirit

How God moves and Leads his people.

A) Though not exclusive - We do see three insights here in Acts 8 - How God moves.... His people

B) #1 He allows our comfort zones to get shaken

V.1.

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.

V.4 tells us that **those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word.**"

B) God used the Shaking to get them on Mission

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) Philip went to Samaria - Tension/prejudice

1) Willing to go anywhere to be USED.

C) God moved mightily through Philip - people were getting saved - hearts were changing

1) Exciting time

Then we saw the 2nd way that God often moves and leads his people -

A) He Shows you a NEED that He wants you to respond to.

B) V.14 The Apostles hear about what is going on in Samaria -

1) and realize that these new believers in Samaria needed to be Baptized with the Holy Spirit

C) They needed that empowering in their lives and so they sent Peter and John down there to lay hands...

D) Noted last week - sometimes the way that we can discover our calling is by simply responding to needs

1) God uses that to show us where we fit

Today we are going to see a final way noted here in Acts 8 that God moves and leads his people

A) That is through The promptings of the Holy Spirit

B) And through Philip's example we will see three principles about how to respond

1) And how to be effective in ministering to other people

C) 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.

Now I want you to imagine how hard this must have been for Philip.

A) He is in the midst of a revival - he is experiencing what anyone in ministry longs for..

B) God is moving - People are getting saved - the spirit of God is being poured out

C) Things are going way better than Philip could have ever imagined.

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

A) I Like the HS is giving us this keen insight - God was calling Philip to a desolate place

B) Deserts are known for being places where there is not a lot of life.

C) Things die in the desert - **think Death Valley**

D) God is calling Philip to leave this place where there that is overflowing with life

1) One there are people in Samaria - but God is also there - GOD IS WORKING

E) Go to this place where there is no life - no people 1) But Philip is going to discover that God is also in the desert -

I think that is a word for someone here today: You are in a desert place - desert season

A) God is there - He is working - He loves you/ plan - if you preserve.

B) Philip is going to discover there is a guy out in the desert that NEEDS JESUS

C) God wants to use Philip to introduce this man to the Lord

1) But RIGHT NOW Philip doesn't know that

The Lord is simply calling Philip to leave Samaria and go out into the desert of Gaza

A) Get this: - The Distance from Samaria to Gaza was about 80 miles - not a small trek.

B) God says - Arise and Go to the desert of Gaza and notice v.27 **So he arose and went.**

1) **NO HESITATION**

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

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

E) He doesn't say: 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!

HE JUST GOES!!!

Principle #1 When the Holy Spirit is prompting you, learn to respond quickly

A) If you delay in responding - here is what can happen -

B) You can talk yourself out of the will of God - you can talk yourself out of taking a step of faith

C) Because your questions are NOT being answered or your concerns are not being met.

1) But until you obey God - you are really not going to discover what he has for you.

If you procrastinate - you might miss the opportunity to be a blessing

A) God will find someone else

B) Greg Laurie has said: **Fruitful ministry happens when you have the right person, at the right place, at the right time."**

C) It was the right place and the right time - and Philip was the first choice for the right person.

1) But God could have sent anyone - sent Philip to bless Philip.

D) Philip has no idea what God has for him in the desert of why he was calling him there

1) But he went and as he went he was going to find out!

Listen & Understand this: When God is leading you he will rarely if ever - give you the whole plan

A) That is what we want right? - lay it out for me Lord

B) But he doesn't do that - **He gives you the first step**

C) That is why it is called walking by faith - right?

1) If he laid the whole thing out for us - no faith in that

D) Walking by faith can be scary - but it is also very exciting - you see God show up in expected ways!

Sometimes we think that God is calling us to someplace or something - a new ministry

A) We think he is calling us to this new thing - because he wants to do something **through us**

B) But here is what I have discovered, often times the bigger reason God is calling us to that place/thing

C) He is wanting to do something **NEW IN US**

1) That new place is going to be the training ground

Back in 1991 - my wife and our 2 little kids - 1-2 years old packed up our lives - move 1,000 miles to OR

A) We were going there to plant a church -

B) We were going there expecting God to do something great THRU our lives

C) He was faithful to work - a church was planted that remains to this day

D) But the greater work that God did was in my life - in my heart

1) Oregon was God's training ground to call me back to Vista 5 years later

Sometimes we think we know why he is sending us somewhere - or asking us to do something

A) I had an idea of what I thought God was going to do and He did some of what I envisioned

B) But God did so much more in my heart -

C) One of the hardest seasons of my life - but I wouldn't trade it for anything

1) My walk with God has never been the same

Philip had no idea what God had in store for him.

A) But it was revealed when he arose and went

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.

B) Who was this Ethiopian Eunuch?

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

A) They believed they were the incarnation of the Sun god.

B) Interesting how what you believe affects how you behave

C) So because they thought they were these little gods 1) they believed that regular govt work was beneath the men

D) So women were entrusted to serve in most of the positions of GOVT.

And because of that if a man wanted to serve in a position of GOVT - like this Eunuch - emasculated

A) The reason for this was twofold - 1ST it was so the man would not be tempted surrounded by women

B) 2ND So he wouldn't be a threat to the leadership

C) Now we are told this guy has an important position he was in charge of the treasury to the queen

1) Queen Candace

D) He is a man of Influence and wealth - **Scroll of Isaiah**

1) He has what most men are looking for - Power - possessions and influence

E) Despite having all that He was empty. - VOID

Many Scholars believe this Ethiopian Eunuch had converted to Judaism

A) Note V.27 - he had come to Jerusalem to worship

B) He had found the gods of Egypt to be empty and he was seeking the ONE TRUE GOD

C) Going to go to Jerusalem **THE HOLY CITY** - to worship at the temple of the ONE TRUE GOD

Have you ever gone somewhere only to discover it wasn't what you imagined?

A) The real thing was nothing like the pictures.

B) In my relationship with my wife - our marriage - she would be the first to tell you - **I am the planner**

1) **More romantic** - Plan our trips and getaways

C) But there was this one time - My wife decided to surprise me - Birthday or something

1) Romantic getaway

D) This was before Airbnb - Back when online booking was a new thing.

She went online and found this place in Julian she was going to take me.

A) After church on a Sunday - she arranged for someone to take my car home -

B) She had our bags packed - get in the car - East

C) We get into Julian - looking for this little Romantic cottage -

D) Pictures: Beautiful Garden - Quaint -

We finally find the street - address - Big house

A) Discovered the quaint cottage was in the back yard

SHED - METAL SHED - insulated

B) The rose garden is weeds - the backyard is a mess

1) Denise starts to cry

C) And being the sensitive romantic guy that I am my first response is HOW MUCHCOST.

1) We made the most of it - and Denise has let me book most of our trips since then

Well in a similar way this Ethiopian Eunuch was in for a rude awakening when he got to Jerusalem

A) He would discover that in Judaism - a Eunuch was not allowed to worship in the temple - Strike 1

B) Also find that being a gentile he was only allowed into the outer court - Strike 2

C) And he would find that - the Jewish religion was full of rules regulations and rituals -

1) All of it marked by - Gross - Hypocrisy

D) Imagine the disappointment and disillusionment that he must have felt

Maybe that is your story with Church and Christianity - Bad church experience

A) Left you disappointed and disillusioned

B) Note this: Not an excuse - just a fact - the church will always be flawed - full of flawed people

C) You go to a church long enough - you will experience hurt and disappointment -

D) But you will never experience disappointment with Jesus - He is....

E) This guy was excluded from Worship in the temple because of Judaism but not because of God

1) **Cross - Veil ripped - WELCOME - ENTER**

But while he was in Jerusalem he picked up a scroll of the prophet Isaiah and as he traveled he read.

A) He is a man of WEALTH - because he was able to acquire the scroll of Isaiah - RARE

B) One thing I love about this story is it illustrates the Sovereignty of God - working in conjunction with

1) THE FREE WILL OF MAN

C) This man is searching but at the same time God is drawing HIM.

D) God places his servant Philip right in his path!

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 47 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.

Now Half the time I don't even know how to start the conversation - Hi how are you - fun?

A) Sure enough - a conversation ensues - **ministry happens.**

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!

E) So the Lord says - run up to that guys Chariot -

V.30 So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?"

A) Philip runs up and sees the Ethiopian sitting there reading

B) You want to be effective in sharing Christ with others? - notice what Philip does here:

C) He Looked for some common ground.

1) He asked, do you understand what you are reading?

Principle #2 You want to be used by the Lord in Someone's life - Look for Common ground

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

B)He doesn't say: 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

1)Sports – Music – Movies – politics

2)On 2nd thought - maybe skip that last one

Next time you are in a coffee shop or on an airplane and you see someone reading a book

A)Ask them - hey what are you reading - is it good?

B)Show interest in the person - and what interest them - that is a great open door.

C)Sometimes I will start a conversation with a guy where we are talking about sports

D)Get around to discussing a player that I know is a Christian -

1)I will share a quote I read about - how Jesus changed his life

For example: I was talking to someone at the gym recently during football season.

A)49er fan - Their rookie QB - Mr. Irrelevant - great story

B)I was able to share how I read an article where Brock was discussing is Christian faith

1)How he didn't find his identity in being a football player - but in JESUS

C)I shared about my sports background - and how I came to that same place - **made all the difference**

D)Sharing the gospel with this guy right in the Gym from a conversation that started about football

Look for common ground

A)Or look for a way that you can be a help or assistance to someone - **Christ love / compassion**

B)In this case - Philip seeks to help this man understand the Bible

C)So Philip looked for common ground –and seeks to help by asking the question

1)Do you understand what you are 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: Isaiah 53:7

*“He was led as a sheep to the slaughter;
And as a lamb before its shearer is silent,
So He opened not His mouth.*

C)This guy is reading this passage from the scroll of Isaiah where Isaiah was prophesying about the Cross

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

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!

C)**Principle #3 The goal is to point them to Jesus**

D)Only Jesus can save a person - which is why Paul the apostle declared in Romans 1:16

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.

E)There is power in the gospel to save!

Sometimes we put too much emphasis on ourselves

A)Our ability to relate – connect - etc

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

1)Gang bangers – never been in a gang.

C)**CHigh School kids** – I have been out of high School a long time.

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

E)Philip 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 POKE HIM - and he will get the point – **LITERALLY – RIGHT?**

C)Don't worry if a person believes in the Bible – **JUST share the word {Do its 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?"

E)**Your Not saved -** 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."

F)**Note this is not baptized to be saved - Believe and then be baptized- That is the ORDER**

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....!**

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!

As we close today: - Perhaps you are here today watching online - Identify with this Eunuch

A)You have everything that this world says you need - still a VOID

B)Maybe like this guy - tried religion - left you disappointed and disillusioned -

C)You need a Relationship - that is what God offers

D)Yours today - If you believe with all of your heart Jesus is the Christ - the son of God - ONLY WAY

For those of you who are believers - Has God been prompting you to take a step of faith?

A)God been prompting you to make a change ?

B)You have been hesitating - that needs to end today

C)Your Kingdom come - your will be done -

D)Yield your will to KING JESUS -

E)You will not be disappointed