

Acts 8:26-40

- **REVIVAL IN SAMARIA...**

- o Persecution...

- Beginning on the DAY [ἡμέρα] when Stephen was buried...
- A great [μέγας] PERSECUTION [διωγμός] began against the CHURCH [ἐκκλησία]
- The RESULT was ALL [πᾶς] of the believers were SCATTERED...
- And they went EVERYWHERE preaching the GOSPEL [εὐαγγελίζω] of Jesus [ὁν λόγον]!

- o Samaria...

- Philip went down to SAMARIA - a place where NO one else seemed to want to go...
- Because Jesus had prepared the people [woman at the well]- **John 4:7**
- And because of he showed he LOVED the people by helping them [healing]
- There was a great REVIVAL and countless men and women were saved!

- o Peter and John...

- Word of the REVIVAL came to the APOSTLES - so they send Peter and John...
- When they arrived - they prayed for the new believers to receive the Holy Spirit...
- Different people - using different gifts - because we are a BODY - **I Corinthians 12:27**
- When SIMON the sorcerer saw this - he asked to BUY the ability to give the Holy Spirit...
- Peter saw he was BITTER - because he no longer had POWER over the people...
- Although SIMON had been baptized - he was NOT saved - his MOTIVE was wrong [jealousy]

- **1ST - THE DESERT... vs. 26-27**

- o 1st - The command... vs. 26

- Where to go...
 - 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!
 - An ANGEL [ἄγγελος] from the LORD [κύριος] came and spoke to Philip...
 - He gave him a COMMAND [imperative] to get up [maybe he was sleeping]
 - He needed [imperative] to go SOUTH on the road from Jerusalem to GAZA...
 - Now there are TWO roads that lead to GAZA - the coastal route - and the DESERT route...
 - The Angel specified Philip was to take the much less used DESERT route...
 - DESERT [ἔρημος] - meaning an EMPTY place [no people]
 - This must have seemed a VERY strange command - why leave a REVIVAL to go to a DESERT!
- Lacking details...
 - **Psalm 119:105** – “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”
 - If we are holding a flashlight - we shine it way out in front so we can see far away...
 - But the Word of God is a lamp to our feet - it ONLY shows the NEXT step...
 - Only when we take that STEP - we can then see the STEP after that...
 - If we knew exactly where what we were going [and why] - it would NOT take faith!

- o 2nd - Obedience... vs. 27

- No hesitation...
 - So [Philip] arose and went!
 - Philip had EVERY reason to doubt this command from the Lord [bad dream]
 - But instead - there was NO hesitation - NO question - just obedient action...
 - Just as he was told - he GOT up - and he WENT toward GAZA by the DESERT road!
 - It was on our hearts in 2011 to go visit my parents [who as far as we know were both healthy]
 - We were able to travel with them and visit all of our expended family...
 - At the end of the trip - my mom was hospitalized [cancer] - passed away three weeks later!

- When the Lord calls to do something – do we OBEY – or do we hesitate...
 - We can always find a reason NOT to obey – we can find EXCUSES...
 - But it is ONLY when we follow the Lord that great things happen!
- Walk by faith...
 - Phillip did NOT need to know WHY God told him to go to the desert...
 - All he needed to know is God said GO – the Lord would take care of the rest!
 - **II Corinthians 5:7** – “For we walk by faith - not by sight.”
 - If we close your eyes and let someone else guide us with their words [right - left - stop]
 - It takes a LOT of FAITH in that person to TRUST they will NOT mislead us!
 - Yet this is exactly what God asks to do – TRUST His Word [not what we see]
 - We would rather SEE where we are going - before we STEP out...
 - But God tells us to STEP out - then He will SHOW us where we are going...
 - Like Phillip we need to just TRUST what God says – then He will take care of the rest!
- **2ND - SEEKING GOD... vs. 27-35**
 - o **1st - The Ethiopian... vs. 27-28**
 - Rich Eunuch... vs. 27
 - Behold a man of Ethiopia - a eunuch of great authority.
 - Under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians - who had charge of all her treasury!
 - As Philip was going along the mostly EMPTY road...
 - He came upon a man from ETHIOPIA [Αἰθίοψ] - to have a black face...
 - He was a EUNUCH - likely meaning he was unmarried - **Matthew 19:12**
 - Serving [imperfect] as TREASURER over all [πᾶς] the wealth of the QUEEN [Candace is a title]
 - Seeking God ... vs. 28
 - And [he] had come to Jerusalem to worship - was returning.
 - Sitting in his chariot he was reading Isaiah the prophet!
 - The EUNUCH had come [pluperfect] to Jerusalem to WORSHIP God...
 - This was NO small feat - as it mean traveling 2500 kilometers [about a two month journey]
 - Sitting in his chariot [nice car] - he was READING [imperfect] the scroll of Isaiah...
 - This meant he was a man of considerable wealth...
 - There were NO copy machines or printers - the work was done by hand [expensive]
 - So to own a copy of a book of the Bible [years wage] – meant he had MONEY!
 - He traveled thousands of kilometers – and spend a fortune just to get to know God...
 - Because the Eunuch was seeking God – God was seeking the Eunuch!
 - Many people have a halfhearted attitude when it comes to Jesus...
 - They may be willing to go to church - so long as there is NOTHING else to do...
 - Then they wonder why God does NOT speak to them when they arrive!
 - **Jeremiah 29:13** – “You will seek Me and find Me - when you search for Me with all your heart.”
 - One man...
 - It might seem strange that God would send Philip to reach ONE man...
 - We might think it is because this RICH - POWERFUL man had great impact on his country...
 - Upon his return to Ethiopia - maybe God used him to spread the Gospel there!
 - Unfortunately there is no historical evidence to support this idea...
 - Ethiopians date the coming of Christianity to around 300 years after this!
 - We could justify Philip leaving the revival in Samaria to reach a whole nation...
 - But to leave a revival for just ONE man – that does NOT seem to make sense...
 - We look at numbers – and when NOT many people show up – we are DISCOURAGED...
 - But God does NOT care about numbers - He cares about INDIVIDUALS!
 - o **2nd - Getting answers... vs. 29-31**

- Led by the Spirit... vs. 29
 - Then the Spirit said to Philip: Go near and overtake this chariot!
 - When Philip saw the ETHIOPIAN - the SPIRIT commanded him [imperative] to go to him...
 - This is the SECOND time we see the LORD directing Philip...
 - FIRST - was an ANGEL - perhaps in a DREAM at night [get up]
 - SECOND - it was a prompt from the SPIRIT [τὸ πνεῦμα]
 - We can assume it seemed obvious - God had called Philip to go to an empty DESERT...
 - The ONE guy there - was the likely reason why he had been sent!
 - Being led by God - walking by FAITH - should be quite natural...
 - NOT that God is putting BILLBOARDS with directions in front of us...
 - But as we LISTEN to and OBEY His Word - He will direct our steps...
 - So that what we need to do - is RIGHT in front of us!
 - **Proverbs 3:5-6** - "Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct your paths."
- Asking questions... vs. 30
 - So Philip ran to him and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah and said:
 - Do you understand what you are reading?
 - As Philip ran up alongside the CHARIOT - he heard the EUNUCH reading Isaiah...
 - He asked him whether he UNDERSTOOD [γινώσκω] what he was READING!
 - The scene must have been somewhat surreal...
 - A stranger come running up alongside you [one might assume he was a bandit]
 - But then instead of being a ROBBER - it was a PASTOR [in the desert]!
- Hidden truth... vs. 31
 - He said: How can I unless someone guides me?
 - How he could [δύναμαι] understand if there was [subjunctive] NO one to GUIDE him...
 - Therefore he asked Philip to come [παρακαλέω] and sit with him!
 - Have you ever accidentally got a text that was intended for someone else...
 - It made no sense to you - because it was NOT written to you!
 - The Bible is a letter written by God to His children – if a person is NOT saved...
 - Reading the Bible is like reading a text meant for someone else!
 - **I Corinthians 2:14** – "People who are not Christians cannot understand... it all sounds foolish to them because only those who have the Spirit can understand."
- Revealed Truth...
 - And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him!
 - Phillip understood the Word – so he was able to explain it to the Eunuch!
 - We know LOTS of people who do NOT understand the Word...
 - Which is why we need to be the ones to explain the Gospel to them...
 - Tell people about Jesus – give them the message of salvation - **Romans 10:14-15**
- o 3rd - The Gospel... vs. 32-35
 - Not an accident... vs. 32-33
 - 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!
 - The place where the Eunuch was [imperfect] reading [quoting LXX] - **Isaiah 53:7-8**
 - One about one of the key FIGURES in Isaiah - the SERVANT [עֶבֶד] - **Isaiah 52:13**
 - Who would SUFFER - as LAMB to the slaughter - and say NOTHING...
 - He would be HUMILIATED [mocked] - treated UNJUSTLY [six trials] - then KILLED [cross]

- And the question would be asked - WHO would [future] tell the world about him!
- Who is this... vs. 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?
 - The EUNUCH wanted [δέομαι] to know - who was this SUFFERING servant...
 - Was it the PROPHET [Isaiah] - or was he talking about someone ELSE!
 - The Old Testament is all about Jesus - **Luke 24:27**
 - And this passage is one of the more amazing chapters in the Old Testament...
 - It directly predicts the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus for salvation!
 - **Isaiah 53:5-6** – “He was pierced for our rebellion - crushed for our sins. All of us like sheep have strayed away... yet the LORD laid on him the sins of us all.”
 - When we are follow the Lord – He does all the work...
 - There is no striving – we just get to be a part of what God is doing!
- Open up... vs. 35
 - Then Philip opened his mouth - and beginning at this Scripture - preached Jesus to him!
 - Then PHILIP opened his mouth - beginning at Isaiah 53 - he preached Jesus...
 - It is easy to miss the KEY - he was willing to OPEN [ἀνοίγω] his mouth...
 - So often we are nervous about sharing our faith with others...
 - We think we need to have ALL the answers to their questions...
 - But it is God who speaks through us the words that are needed...
 - All we need to do is be willing to OPEN our mouths – share Jesus!
- **3RD - DEFINED BY JESUS... vs. 36-40**
 - o 1st - Baptism... vs. 36-38
 - The water... vs. 36
 - Now as they went down the road they came to some water!
 - As they continued down the road - they found WATER [likely a wadi]
 - No doubt as part of their conversation - Philip mentioned Baptism - **Matthew 28:19**
 - There is also a debate over HOW to baptize – sprinkle or dunk...
 - The poet Nicander [200 B.C.] wrote down a recipe for making pickles...
 - You BAPTIZE [βαπτίζω] the cucumber – and it comes out changed – a PICKLE!
 - I love the picture – when we are BAPTIZED [βαπτίζω] – we go in a SINNER...
 - But we come out something different [pickled] – we come out a SAINT!
 - The choice... vs. 36
 - The eunuch said: See here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?
 - He wanted to KNOW if he could be BAPTIZED [passive]
 - There is some debate within Christianity over WHEN someone is baptized...
 - John was NOT baptizing INFANTS – these were ADULTS!
 - BAPTISM is about CHOOSING to REPENT and letting God make us CLEAN...
 - An INFANT cannot CHOSE – therefore baptism is for those old enough to DECIDE!
 - The requirement... vs. 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!
 - There was ONE qualification to being BAPTIZED...
 - Did the EUNUCH believe [πιστεύω] with ALL of his heart [καρδία]
 - To which he answered he believed [present] Jesus Christ is the Son of God [τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ]
 - There are TWO things required for SALVATION - **Romans 10:9-10**
 - We must CONFESS with our MOUTH - that Jesus is our Lord [κύριος]
 - This is the easy one - all we have to do is SAY we want to follow Jesus...

- And we must BELIEVE [πιστεύω] in our heart God raised Him from the dead
- This is where it gets harder - because we CANNOT see the heart...
- But if someone does BELIEVE - then it will result in a CHANGED life [fruit] - **James 2:18**
- The Picture... vs. 38
 - So he commanded the chariot to stand still.
 - And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water - and he baptized him!
 - We are commanded as believers to be water BAPTIZED – **Acts 2:38**
 - But water BAPTISM does NOT save us [the thief on the cross] – **Luke 23:43**
 - Neither does BAPTISM make us part of a denomination...
 - BAPTISM is a picture of what happens when we BELIEVE in Jesus!
 - **Romans 6:4** – “We were buried with Him through baptism into death - that just as Christ was raised from the dead... even so we also should walk in newness of life.”
 - Water baptism is the OUTWARD statement of what takes place WITHIN us...
 - We are BURIED with Jesus – taken under the water – a picture of our DEATH...
 - We are RAISED up with Jesus – taken out of the water – a picture of new LIFE...
 - We do it publicly so that everyone can see – we BELIEVE in Jesus – **Romans 10:10**
- o 2nd - Raptured... vs. 39
 - Glory to God...
 - 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!
 - But [δέ] as they came up out of the water - the SPIRIT of the Lord [κύριος] CAUGHT Philip...
 - CAUGHT [ἄρπάζω] - the same word translated as RAPTURE - **I Thessalonians 4:17**
 - And the EUNUCH never saw Philip again...
 - No doubt he assumed the stranger - who met him in the DESERT...
 - Just in time to explain the WORD to him - and BAPTIZE him in the name of Jesus...
 - Must have seemed like an ANGEL [ἄγγελος] - a messenger from God!
 - Rejoicing...
 - He went on his way rejoicing!
 - A man who had come SEEKING God - found Jesus...
 - Not in the spender of the SECOND temple in Jerusalem [he left that empty]
 - Not from the educated and pious PRIESTS [they had no answers]
 - But from a random man wandering the DESERT - who explained the WORD to Him...
 - Whom God RAPTURED away - confirming the message was from God!
 - People do NOT need to come to CHURCH to hear about Jesus - they do NOT need PASTOR...
 - God sends us out into the STREETS - to give the message to them...
 - We tell people we may NEVER even see again - at least on this side of heaven...
 - Because it is NOT about the MESSENGER - it is about the GOSPEL that saves - **Romans 1:16**
- o 3rd - Definition... vs. 40
 - Many roles...
 - But Philip was found at Azotus.
 - And passing through he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea!
 - After Philip got RAPTURED - he popped up again in AZOTUS [Ashdod] - 30km away...
 - Preaching the Gospel in all the cities along the coast all the way to Caesarea...
 - Philip was faithful as a SERVANT – faithful in the little things - **Acts 6:5**
 - Philip was faithful to share the Gospel with Samaria – reaching many - **Acts 8:6**
 - Philip was faithful to reach out the Ethiopian – reaching one - **Acts 8:27**
 - Philip ended up in Caesarea and raised FOUR Godly daughters - **Acts 21:8-9**
 - Defined by Jesus...

- Philip never got stuck in ONE role – he was open to how God wanted to use him...
- Serving tables - revival in Samaria - reaching the one – father!
- Maybe we are convinced that we are called to a specific career...
- And we get comfortable with our definition – and refuse to be open to anything new!
- It is so important that we only let ourselves be defined by Jesus...
- We need to not be so focused on where we are going – or what we are doing...
- Our identity is not in what we are doing – what our job is – where we live...
- Our identity is simply in Christ – and we need to be flexible in what He wants us to do...
- The only constant in life is change – the only guarantee – Jesus!