

I've gotten no less than four requests in the past two weeks to preach a sermon on Acts 8:26-40. All of these requests have come from students in the 2nd to 5th grade Bible classes! I love it. Let's do it! -- **Read Acts 8:26-40** – A beautiful story of God's providence. He timed this perfectly where a travelling man with the Truth would be sent in a direction to intersect with a seeking man and put water before them and everything. God's care for the faithful and the faith seeking is marvelous!

I. The Characters

a. Philip

- i. ***Spiritually Active*** (Acts 6:3-5; 8:3-8)
- ii. ***Actively Evangelistic*** (Acts 8:5)
- iii. ***Empowered by God*** (Acts 6:6-7; 8:6-7)

b. Ethiopian Eunuch

- i. ***Foreign Worshipper*** (Foreign born: Jew or Proselyte and Successful)
- ii. ***Committed Worshipper*** (3000 mile round trip! To worship God!)
- iii. ***Developing Worshipper*** (Indicated by public reading along the road)

II. The Event

E: **Reading the Book of Isaiah (28)**

P: **Sent by God and Engages (30)**

E: **Asks for Help (31)**

P: **Explains the Scripture**

E: **Listens Attentively (34)**

P: **Preaches Jesus (35)**

- **Death of Jesus in Prophecy**
- **Death with Jesus in Baptism**

E: **Ask to be Baptized (36)**

P: **Demands a Confession (37)**

E: **Confesses Jesus (37)**

P: **Takes the Eunuch into the Water**

E: **Went on his way Rejoicing (39)**

P: **Is Moved by the Spirit to more Souls (40)**

Note, these events illustrate how EASY conversion to Christ can be! But it also illustrates why it doesn't happen as much as it should. BOTH the lost person and the saved person have responsibilities. When both approach the Word correctly, it's as simple and powerful as it can be!

I want to dig into both sides of that equation today, but let me begin that with this question:

With which of these two men do you most easily identify? I mean, as you look at who they are and what they did, which would you say you are most like or at a stage in life most like: resonate with.

A fair amount of us might say: *"well, kind of neither."* Not because they aren't good or helpful, but because they seem to represent extreme ends of the spectrum. The Eunuch opens the story as a person outside of Christ and the story ends with his wonderful journey to conversion. For some of us, that part of this was a long, long time ago. That's who I was. On the other hand, Philip is this super evangelist. Ignoring the fact that he had spiritual gifts, he still might seem so far advanced of us, we might say, *"well I'm not him, but maybe will be one day."*

I'm okay with that assessment so long as it doesn't cause us to "tune out" to what we can learn from these men. Instead, we ought to "tune in" and say – *"there are things about when I became a Christian like the Eunuch that I need to reconnect with. And there are things about men ahead of me like Philip that I can connect to in order to grow to that end!"*

Lessons from Philip:

1) LOOK for SEEKERS

- a. The Spirit was ready to change someone's life. But Philip had to obey and go up to the charity and engage the Seeker in conversation. How many people are the Eunuch just waiting for a Philip to come up and ask. We need to be inviting everyone, but also specifically trying to identify people who are seeking to know God. BY ASKING!
- b. This can show up in asking them to services, offering material, or just asking if they have any questions about faith or worship or their spiritual condition!

2) PROVIDE ANSWERS

- a. **II Tim. 2:2, 15** – Familiar passages. I was one told most people are afraid to ask for a Bible study because the person may say YES. Now what? Philip was a strong spiritual person who loved God and the Truth before even being inspired. Now he was equipped. We should be PREPARED to answer questions.
- b. This means preparatory work on denominations or Calvinism or a certain book before engaging people. Or having material ready to study. Or connecting them.

3) LEAD to REJOICING

- a. I love that Philip stayed with him until he realized rejoicing. Something tells me Philip was not somber about this whole thing. He was likely excited and positive and rejoicing and welcomed a brother into it as he rejoiced as well.
- b. Attitude is everything. And evangelism is both an attitude and a heart that wants to see that person experience the freedom in Christ, and nothing less. This occurs through our POSTIVE "testimony" of Christianity and leading them to it.

Lessons from the Eunuch:

1) SEEK for TRUTH

- a. This man didn't know it all. Maybe not much. But he acted on what he knew by going to Jerusalem to worship. And he was in the Book reading and learning. A heart for God. Reminds of first true Gentile convert – before God did anything – **Acts 10:1-2**.
- b. Sure, we are praying our friends will be this man. But are we so distant from this? We don't know it all. We act on what we know but we stay HUNGRY FOR TRUTH.

2) ASK for HELP

- a. He didn't understand the prophecy of Isaiah. He could have been ashamed of it, or prideful and reserved. Instead, he took a chance. He voiced his lack of confidence and asked for help and it made all the difference.
- b. Again, we pray this for our friends to ask questions. But maybe we could use a little more of this guy in us – humility, honestly and reaching out for help. Silence and doubt and lack of direction are scary and unnecessary.

3) SETTLE for REJOICING

- a. The more he heard about Jesus the more he understand God had something MORE or him. More than the Law of Moses, more than a works based system. He could have settled for learning more and hoped one day it turned to something. He didn't settle for anything except full reception of the blessings of God in water.
- b. Once again, I pray for friends and family to move past information and embrace the blessings. But maybe someone here needs to take their own advice. Settle for nothing less than confidence of the blessings of Christ through baptism & fellowship.

Conclusion: Both men have qualities God is drawn to and can use. Find yourself in them. See what made this all work and investigate those saved qualities in yourself. Be these men.

Then look for these qualities in others – both saved and lost. Find people who are seeking or people with answers you are seeking. When people find each other carrying these qualities there is one result: **rejoicing!**