

**The Joy of Jesus**  
**Acts 9:26-40**

This morning I want to return to Acts 9 and discuss the church's evangelistic witness while under persecution from the Jews.

Context:

1 - Great persecution arose. 8:1

8:2-3 - *Devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him. <sup>3</sup> But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison.*

7:54-60 – Stephen is stoned

9:1 – Saul is breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord,

2 – The Church responded with a witness about Jesus. 8:4

4-5 - *Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word. <sup>5</sup> Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ.*

8:8 – *So there was much joy in that city*

8:13 - *Even Simon himself believed, and after being baptized he continued with Philip.*

8:14-24 – *Peter and John preach in Samaria*

At that point, the narrative returns to Philip who travels south of Jerusalem for one of the most memorable evangelistic encounters in the Bible. So much so that in this full presentation of the Gospel, Philip's witness to the Ethiopian eunuch is one of the best places in the Bible to see the Holy Spirit's work in the Gospel.

**First: A Prepared Sinner (v 26-31)**

The eunuch was:

- a) A dedicated man – 27 - *a eunuch*
- b) A respectable man – 27 - *a court official*
- c) A powerful man – 27 - *of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians*
- d) A wealthy man – 27 - *who was in charge of all her treasure*
- e) A religious man – 27 - *He had come to Jerusalem to worship*
- f) A sincere man – 28 - *He was reading the prophet Isaiah*
- g) A confused man – 30 - *"Do you understand what you are reading?"*
- h) An honest man – 31 - *"How can I, unless someone guides me?"*

i) A humble man – 31 - *“And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.”*

This is everything we would want in a Christian but...

j) A lost man – 34 - *“About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?”*

Wow. What makes the difference between this eunuch and us? Jesus!

k) A prepared man – *Through preaching and reading God was preparing his heart to hear the Gospel*

### **Second: A Prompt Soul-Winner (vs 26-31)**

Philip was:

a) Obedient – 26 – *“Rise and go toward the south”* (about 100 miles)

Philip was in the midst of a great revival in Samaria (5-8) and God asks him to leave the multitude for one person. It didn't make sense. It didn't fit his schedule. He wasn't even told why.

b) Patient – 30 – *“And heard him reading Isaiah the prophet”*

Listening before talking. It would have been unprofitable to ask about Genesis or Deuteronomy.

c) Risking – 30 – *“Do you understand what you are reading?”*

d) Knowledgeable – 35 - *“...and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus”*

e) Persevering – 38 – *“he baptized him.”*

### **Third: A Powerful Scripture (vs 32-35)**

The Bible is:

Isaiah 53 has been called the miniature Bible because it is easily divided into two sections: chs 1-39 and 40-66. The center chapters in the latter section is chapter 53. And the verses he was reading are the center verses in that chapter.

There are many things we can discuss with people but the most powerful thing we can discuss is the Bible. Why? Because it has a power of its own to do what we cannot do.

**Isaiah 55:8-13** - *For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. <sup>9</sup>For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways*

*and my thoughts than your thoughts. <sup>10</sup> “For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, <sup>11</sup> so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it. “For you shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. <sup>13</sup> Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle; and it shall make a name for the LORD, an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.”*

- a) An exposing power – 8 – *my thoughts not your thoughts*
- b) A revealing power – 9 – *my ways and thoughts are higher than your thoughts*
- c) A sure power – 10-11 – *my word...shall not return empty but shall succeed*
- d) A happy power - 12 – *joy, peace, singing, clapping*
- e) A transforming power – 13 - *instead of thorns, cypress, instead of brier, myrtle*

The Bible will convince me of:

- a) My sinful heart
- b) My dependence on God
- c) My need for change

This is the same thing the Holy Spirit does...in cooperation with the Word -

**John 16:8** - *And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment*

- a) My sinful heart – *“concerning sin”*
- b) My dependence on God – *“and righteousness”*
- c) My need for change – *“and judgement”*

Of all the things we can share, we need to share the Bible –

32b-33 - *“About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?”*

#### **Fourth: A Personal Salvation (vs 36-40)**

The Eunuch's:

- a) His desire – 36 – *“What prevents me from being baptized?”*
- b) His faith – 37 – *“I believe that Jesus is the Son of God”*

*And Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he replied, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."*

c) His obedience – 38 – *"...they both went down into the water...Philip...baptized him."*

He made his faith public as the first Ethiopian convert.

Throughout the OT, Ethiopia is a rich country but an enemy of Israel. But this is the business of the gospel, is it not?

### **Conclusion:**

Let's be willing to witness

Let's be capable to witness

Let's follow-through with our witnessing

### **Community Groups:**

1 – How are you suffering?

2 – How are you excelling?

3 – What do you find most meaningful about Acts 9:26-40?

4 – What do you find most challenging about Acts 9:26-40?

5 – What kind of persecution was the early church facing? See Acts 7:54-60 and 9:1 for a reference.

7 - What persecution are you aware of in the local or global church?

8 – Take some time to pray. Use Acts 4:23-30 as your guide.

9 – What do we know about the Ethiopian Eunuch?

10 – How could you use Isaiah 53 to point to Jesus?

11 – What Bible texts would you or do you normally use to talk to people about Jesus.

If you don't know of any, perhaps you could learn these verses from the 'Romans Road;'

3:10 – *No one is righteous*

3:23 – *Because everyone has sinned*

6:23 – *The wages of our sin are physical and spiritual death* (Rev 20:14-15)

5:8 – *But God loves us so much that he sent Jesus to die for us*

10:13 – *And Jesus will save any person who asks him*

12 – Describe Philip using Acts 9 as your ‘paint-by-number’ canvas

13 – Using John 16:8, talk about the ministry of the Holy Spirit toward unbelievers

14 – What evidence did the Eunuch provide that he believed?

15 – Take time as a CG to pray for specific unbelievers and your relationships to them