

Sunday Morning Message

July 14, 2024

Phillip – A Soulwinner for Jesus

Text – Acts 8:1 – 13; 26 - 40

Congregational Reading – Acts 8:1 - 4

Introduction

Read vs. 1 - 4

These first four verses transition us from the events surrounding the death of Stephen in chapters 6 and 7 into and the ministry of Phillip, which is discussed in chapter 8. Phillip and Stephen were both part of the original seven men that were chosen to serve the church at Jerusalem as the first deacons.

We saw Stephen martyred in chapter 7. Now, we read that the persecution became intense against all believers in Jerusalem, forcing many of them to leave. In v. 3, we see that Saul “*made havock*” (ἐλυμαίνετο from λυμαίνω – *lymainō*), which means to ravage, devastate, or ruin. The religious leaders at Jerusalem were doing everything they could, including torture, imprisonment, and death to stop the gospel message from influencing more people. This intense persecution forced many believers to flee for their lives.

Notice, however, that the Apostles would stay in the Jerusalem area.

Jesus had commissioned them to preach the gospel to every creature in “all the world” teaching all nations about the Lord Jesus:

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." - (Acts 1:8)

God had a plan to get the gospel to everybody that went beyond the voluntary participation of the Jews in Jerusalem.

How many times did you struggle doing something that you knew God wanted you to do, and then suddenly, there was a circumstance that happened upon you that forced you to get moving.

Saul is mentioned again here. The first time his name comes up is in Acts 7. He will be the focus of the next chapter, as well as most of the rest of the Book of Acts.

In this message, however, our focus will be on the ministry of Phillip who, like Stephen was one of the men selected as deacons in chapter six to serve the Grecian widows who were being

neglected “in the daily ministrations.” He apparently served in that office well and then, like Stephen became an evangelist, though, unlike Stephen, his ministry extended beyond the borders of Jerusalem.

Here in this passage, we see the first movement of the gospel outside of the Jerusalem area.

I. Phillip Was Positioned in Samaria Through Persecution (vs. 5 – 13)

Explain the map



Note – we will deal with vs. 14 – 25 next week. Today’s message will focus on the ministry of Phillip.

Notice in vs. 9 – 13 – the discussion of Simon the Sorcerer. We will discuss him in greater detail in the next message, but for now we will only make the connection between him and Phillip. Phillip went to Samaria and influenced so many people with the gospel that this man who was a sorcerer took notice and became “a believer” also. Whether his faith in Christ was a genuine saving faith will be part of the discussion in the next message.

The thing that we need to notice here in these verses is that Phillip was mightily used of God in Samaria, an area that was typically disdained by the Jews from Judaea (Explain). What was Phillip doing? He was preaching the gospel to them (v. 5). The gospel is the message of salvation that comes through the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"1 Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; 2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. 3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; 4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:" (1 Corinthians 15:1-4)

II. Phillip Was Pushed Further South by a Powerful Angel (vs. 26 – 28)

God wanted Phillip to witness to one man – the Ethiopian Eunuch. God is concerned about individuals (i.e. the woman at the well).

Notice that the Angel, a messenger for God, took Phillip away from the crowds to a remote place for the purpose of speaking to this one man. God knows what He is doing. He knows where the lost sinner is who is searching for Him, and He knows where the soul winner is who is willing to stop what he is doing to get the message of Christ to the lost sinner. Phillip was sent to a man that was a “eunuch.”

Explain what a eunuch is:

"For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it." - (Matthew 19:12)

Ethiopia at this time in history was not exactly what it is today. It was the ancient kingdom of Nubia, an area south of Egypt that was a very powerful nation in that day.

This eunuch was a man who was given responsibility for protecting the queen of Ethiopia. He was possibly physically altered to prevent him from having any kind of intimate relationship with the queen. This eunuch, besides being a guard for the queen, was also a treasurer for her. He had a great deal of responsibility.

He was a proselyte to Judaism, meaning that he converted to the Jewish faith. He was not Jewish by blood but was Jewish by his religion. “This Ethiopian represents many people today who are religious, read the Scriptures, and seek the truth, yet do not have saving faith in Jesus Christ. They are sincere, but they are lost! They need someone to show them the way” (Wiersbe)¹

III. Phillip Perceived the Leading of the Holy Spirit of God (vs. 29 – 34)

How did the Spirit speak to Phillip? Probably the same way he will speak to you. He will prompt

¹ Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 437.

you to speak to somebody about Jesus.

Notice that Phillip sized the man up to determine what his spiritual condition was; and he determined that the man was receptive.

Here in this story, we see the three necessary ingredients for winning people to Christ:

1. **the Word of God** - *"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God"* (Romans 10:17)

This Eunuch was reading the Book of Isaiah in chapter 53.

2. **the Spirit of God** who was leading Phillip and was also working in the heart of the Eunuch, convincing him that the message of Christ was true:

"7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. 8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9 Of sin, because they believe not on me; 10 Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; 11 Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." (John 16:7-11)

3. **the man of God**, the soulwinner – the Eunuch stated that he needed Phillip's help to understand the Scriptures. *"How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?"* (Romans 10:14)

You will notice that soul winning is not hard at all when you have a willing soulwinner who is working with a lost sinner who is under the conviction of the Spirit of God and who is ready to be saved. Illustrate – Lydia, Philippian Jailor.

IV. Phillip Preached the Scriptures to the Eunuch (vs. 35 – 39)

Phillip took the Bible and preached Jesus. Notice that he used the Old Testament Scriptures to prove that Jesus was the Messiah.

Turn to [Isaiah 53](#)

We need to become proficient enough with the Scripture – both Old and New Testament – to answer all the questions that people may have, and to prove to them that Jesus is their only hope for Heaven.

Explain the eunuch's baptism.

He was a believer – "if thou believest with all thine heart"

He was immersed - "they went down both into the water"

V. Phillip Was Plucked Up by the Spirit to Azotus (v. 40)

Refer to map again.

Phillip was caught up – Gk - *harpazo* – same word that we used to describe the rapture.

Phillip may have wanted to stay with the Ethiopian and perhaps travel with him to go back to his country and start a revival there, but God had a different plan. Phillip had to be sensitive to go where God wanted him to go.

Conclusion

In this passage, we see the wonderful privilege and great joy there is in leading someone to a saving faith in Christ. Notice in v. 39, the statement – “he went on his way rejoicing.” I often read that and wondered which one was the Scripture referring to – the Eunuch, or Phillip. I think it could easily be applied to both. The Eunuch was obviously thrilled to be saved, but Phillip was also very happy to be used of the Lord in assisting in the birth of a new believer.

1. If you are not saved, or not 100% sure of your salvation, trust Christ today. Let one of us take the Scriptures, just like Phillip did with this Eunuch, and show you how you can receive the Lord Jesus as your Saviour.
2. If you are a Christian, get involved with winning souls to Christ:
 - a. Learn how to share your faith with others.
 - b. Carry gospel tracts with you – always be ready

"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:" (1 Peter 3:15)

- c. Participate in soulwinning outreaches.
- d. Develop a prayer list of people you are praying for regarding salvation. Illustrate – Brother Chappell calls it a “sweetheart list,” a list of names of people you are praying for and actively looking for opportunities to talk to about their salvation.

In addition to praying for the people who need salvation, Jesus told us to pray for laborers:

"2 Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest." (Luke 10:2)

Illustrate – George Diehl – he is always looking for someone to witness to. God puts people in his path.

"The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise." (Proverbs 11:30)

