**Round Top Church Christian Fellowship**

Twenty-Third Week Since the Resurrection

 ***Acts 8:26 – 40 Philip’s Witness***

*Pastor ~ Matthew Diehl*

September 20th In the Year of Our Lord 2020

(Unless otherwise noted, NAS is quoted.)

**Acts 8:**26 But an **angel** of the Lord spoke to **Philip** saying,

 "Get up and go south to the road that descends from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a desert road.)

 27 So he got up and went; and there was an

 **Ethiopian** eunuch,

a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians,

who was in charge of all her treasure;

and he had come to Jerusalem to worship,

 28 and he was returning and sitting in his chariot,

and was reading the prophet Isaiah.

 29 Then the **Spirit** said to Philip, "Go up and join this chariot."

 30 **Philip** ran up and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, **"Do you understand what you are reading?"**

 31 And he said, "Well, how could I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited **Philip** to come up and sit with him.

 32 Now the passage of Scripture which he was reading was this:

"HE WAS LED AS A SHEEP TO SLAUGHTER; AND AS A LAMB BEFORE ITS SHEARER IS SILENT, SO HE DOES NOT OPEN HIS MOUTH. 33 "IN HUMILIATION HIS JUDGMENT WAS TAKEN AWAY; WHO WILL RELATE HIS GENERATION? FOR HIS LIFE IS REMOVED FROM THE EARTH." **Isaiah 53:7,8**

 34 The **eunuch** answered **Philip** and said,

"Please tell me, of whom does the prophet say this?

Of himself or of someone else?"

 35 Then **Philip** opened his mouth,

and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him.

 36 As they went along the road they came to some water;

and the **eunuch** said,

"Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?"

 37 And **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."

 38 And he ordered the chariot to stop;

and they both went down into the water,

**Philip** as well as the **eunuch**,

 and he baptized him.

 39 When they came up out of the water,

 the **Spirit** of the Lord snatched **Philip** away;

and the **eunuch** no longer saw him,

but went on his way rejoicing.

 40 But **Philip** found himself at Azotus,

and as he passed through,

he kept preaching the gospel to all the cities

until he came to Caesarea.

**Spirit-Led**

In this passage of Scripture, we have an angel (Spirit) talking and guiding Philip to reach-out to the Ethiopian eunuch, a member of Queen Candace of Ethiopia, who had traveled to Jerusalem to worship. From this, we can assume that the Ethiopian was a believer in God. We see in this account that he was reading from the Old Testament book of Isaiah. He was worshipping the one and only God that we see in the Old Testament.

**Cold Call?**

 The point being that Philip was spiritually led to reach-out to a person with whom God was already interacting. In this case, through Scripture. Philip was not making a cold call. He was there to seal the deal, much like Billy Graham did at one of his crusades. The Graham team worked with local churches for months before the crusade came to town, by witnessing and then inviting people to attend. Billy was there to use His God-given and God-directed talent to make an appeal for salvation. For the most part, the Graham crusades were not “flash evangelism” and neither was the witness to the Ethiopian.

**Same Day Water-Baptism?**

We also do not need to use this event to push for a same day water-baptism. (Meaning, walk the aisle Sunday morning and water-baptize Sunday night.) Profession of faith and water-baptism may happen at the same time or close together, but this is not always the case. I have been told by some staunch denominational leaders that the reason to push for water-baptism Sunday night is because the person may die before that time. Meaning that they could get run over by a train or hit by lightning. Thus, the person was not sealing the salvation pledge. What confused me about the push for same day water-baptism is that the work of water-baptism was being presented as part of what a person had to do to get saved.

The Ethiopian was a mature person who possessed God’s Scripture. He already possessed a base of knowledge leading to accepting Christ. Water-baptism was something he understood. In our culture today, many do not have an understanding of spiritual acts. They go along to get along.

This passage does not identify the Ethiopian to be a Jew. He was identified as a person who was reading God’s Word. So, many people today read God’s Word, and like the Ethiopian, do not understand what they are reading. Even though the Ethiopian went to Jerusalem to worship, he was obviously still lacking in his knowledge of Scripture. This is where God calls Believers into action. We should be ready to explain the Bible.

**Responding to God’s Call Produces Fruit**

**Being in The Right Place God has Called Us**

God directed Philip to go to a location. Philip did not know who he would meet there. I remember God calling Renee and me to Round Top. We did not know who we would meet there. We had faith God would provide the people to whom to minister. So many times, in ministry, we are directed by God to go and make ourselves available. He takes care of the rest.

Years ago, my good friend, Pastor Mike, and I attended a large religious convention in San Antonio. We did not know who we would meet there. As conventions go, we attended meetings and work-shops for pastors. However, one evening, we got on the bus to take us back to the hotel and sat in the seat right behind the bus driver. Mike started a conversation with the bus driver. When it came to our stop, Mike and I stayed on the bus, and Mike continued to talk to the bus driver. I knew what Mike was doing and began to pray. Mike determined that the man was not a believer. Mike presented the Gospel to the bus driver. We stayed on the bus and passed our stop a number of times as the bus made a circular route. Soon, Mike and I were the only ones on the bus. Mike finally asked the man if there was a reason he knew that would prevent him from accepting the Lord as His Savior. The man said no. Mike then prayed with him to receive the Lord.

We do not know who we will meet on any given day. Being obedient in going where the Lord has called us to go opens all possibilities to witness. God has a plan to use us. We may not see all the details. Like Philip, we need to respond when the Spirit of God calls.

**Isaiah 53:7,8**

 Over seven hundred years before Philip meets the Ethiopian, God writes through the prophet Isaiah. By the time of Philip’s witnessing, the recent fulfillment of this Isaiah passage, in the Cross of Christ, had come to bear upon the Ethiopian. There are numerous passages in the Old Testament and particularly in Isaiah that point to Christ. They are called “Messianic prophecies.” Check-out this site for a list in Isaiah.

http://www.jesuswalk.com/isaiah/a3\_messianic\_prophecies.htm

‘Jews For Jesus’ lists 40 most helpful Messianic prophecies.

<https://jewsforjesus.org/answers/top-40-most-helpful-messianic-prophecies/>

 Critics of the Bible can criticize all they want; the facts do not change. God incarnated Himself as Jesus Christ and fulfilled prophecy.

32 Now the passage of Scripture which he was reading was this:

"HE WAS LED AS A SHEEP TO SLAUGHTER; AND AS A LAMB BEFORE ITS SHEARER IS SILENT, SO HE DOES NOT OPEN HIS MOUTH. 33 "IN HUMILIATION HIS JUDGMENT WAS TAKEN AWAY; WHO WILL RELATE HIS GENERATION? FOR HIS LIFE IS REMOVED FROM THE EARTH." **Isaiah 53:7,8**

Two thousand years ago, Philip knew exactly about who Isaiah was prophesying. Philip answers the Ethiopian the same way we would today. Because we have God’s Word recorded in the Bible, we have the answer.

34 The **eunuch** answered **Philip** and said,

"Please tell me, of whom does the prophet say this?

Of himself or of someone else?"

 35 Then **Philip** opened his mouth,

and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him.

 The text here does not give details of what Philip told the Ethiopian. However, we are told that Philip “*preached*” Jesus to him. Placing ourselves in Philip’s place, what would you think of regarding “*preaching Jesus”* to someone entails; considering the link to Isaiah? The reality is – is that most Christians would not be able to link Old Testament prophecies to Jesus. They know they are there, but where? Remember that an *angel* (v. 26 *messenger*) of the Lord directed Philip to go to the location where he met the Ethiopian. It is the *Spirit* of the Lord that directed Philip what to do and say once he arrived. Two beings outside of human ability were involved in this witness. We, too, need to realize that an angel of the Lord and His Spirit will direct our witness. We need to prepare ourselves. Paul writes to Timothy, “*Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth*.” (2 Timothy 2:15).

 With this in mind, we need to have our own personal witness of who Jesus is. We should be able to relate the following:

1. God incarnated Himself, according to prophecy, to be born of a virgin. (Isaiah 7:14).
2. Jesus claimed to be God several times. Examples are Jesus declaring that He is the “Son of Man” which is God. We see this at Jesus’ trial. Upon hearing Jesus make this claim, the Jewish authorities did not need any further proof to convict Jesus of blasphemy deserving the death penalty.

61 But He kept silent and did not answer. Again, the high priest was questioning Him, and saying to Him, "Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?" 62 And Jesus said, "I am; and you shall see THE SON OF MAN SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER, and COMING WITH THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN." 63 Tearing his clothes, the high priest said, "What further need do we have of witnesses? Mark 14:61-63 (Daniel 7:13,14)

In Psalm 110:1, God is talking about himself. A Psalm of David. The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet."

Again, in Luke 20 Jesus says. . . 41 Then He said to them, "How is it that they say the Christ is David's son? 42 "For David himself says in the book of Psalms, 'THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD, "SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, 43 UNTIL I MAKE YOUR ENEMIES A FOOTSTOOL FOR YOUR FEET."' 44 "Therefore David calls Him 'Lord,' and how is He his son?"

1. Jesus Died on the Cross for our sins.

(Romans 3:25; Hebrews 2:17; 1 John 2:2; 4:10)

1. Accessing God’s salvation by faith (John 3:16), surrendering our hearts to Him and having His Spirit indwell us, becoming reborn of Spirit (John 3; Ezekiel 36). Therefore, we belong to God (Romans 8:9-11).
2. Witnessing all of 1 John 4, including that God is love and there isn’t any fear in God’s love.
3. Through our rebirth - we love God and are able to love our neighbor which are the two greatest commandments to gain eternal life. (Deuteronomy 6:5; Matthew 22:35-40)
4. Witness God before other people (Matthew 10:32,33).

36 As they went along the road they came to some water;

and the **eunuch** said,

"Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?"

 37 And **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."

 38 And he ordered the chariot to stop;

and they both went down into the water,

**Philip** as well as the **eunuch**,

 and he baptized him.

 We do not have another specific account about Philip, but, from what we see, he continued his witness about God.

39 When they came up out of the water,

 the **Spirit** of the Lord snatched **Philip** away;

and the **eunuch** no longer saw him,

but went on his way rejoicing.

 40 But **Philip** found himself at Azotus,

and as he passed through,

he kept preaching the gospel to all the cities

until he came to Caesarea. AMEN