**Acts 8:26-40**

**Fly On, Philip! 10/01/23**

Things to notice thus far:

Jesus’ directive is coming to be – First Jerusalem, then Judea, and now Samaria.

Also, until Acts 6, it’s all about Peter, then in Acts 6-7, it’s Stephen, then in Acts 8, Philip is carrying the ball. We will see in Acts 9 that Paul ends up carrying the gospel in Jesus’ plan.

**Review of Last Week:** Acts 8:4-25 “Simon the Magician”

Last week we looked at an interesting character, Simon Magus, or Simon the Magician. Not Simon the born-again Christian, but Simon the Magician.

Let’s read the passage once again...

**“Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word. 5Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. 6And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. 7For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. 8And there was great joy in that city. 9But there was a certain man called Simon, who previously practiced sorcery in the city and astonished the people of Samaria, claiming that he was someone great, 10to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, “This man is the great power of God.” 11And they heeded him because he had astonished them with his sorceries for a long time. 12But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized. 13Then Simon himself also believed; and when he was baptized he continued with Philip, and was amazed, seeing the miracles and signs which were done. 14Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, 15who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. 16For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 17Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. 18****And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, 19saying, “Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit.”**

**20But Peter said to him, “Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money! 21You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God. 22Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. 23For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity.”**

**24Then Simon answered and said, “Pray to the Lord for me, that none of the things which you have spoken may come upon me.” 25So when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.”**

There is a lot going on with Simon. In review, it is fascinating that the text says that Simon believed when he heard the words Philip preached and saw the miracles that attested to Philip’s preaching. This prompted me to review the criteria for salvation.

**SLIDE 1**

How are we saved?

**“...these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.” - John 20:31**

**“For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” - Romans 4:3**

**“...if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” - Romans 10:9-10**

And here’s one more that we all know well..

**“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”**

- John 3:16

So was Simon saved? Only he and God knows.

But we can learn from Simon. He was definitely a false teacher. We know this from not only his response to Peter and John, but by his legacy according to church historical tradition.

This begs the question...

**SLIDE 2**

**What’s the Deal with Simon?**

1. He is obsessed with and practices the magic arts (v. 9-11)

2. He is full of pride and works to elevate his own name (vs. 9-11)

3. He is drawn to a power greater than his own. (v. 13)

4. He wants to wield this power, and profit from it. (vs. 18-19)

5. He doesn’t understand this power he covets. (v. 20)

6. His heart is not right before God, therefore he is not a partaker in the things of the spirit. (v. 21)

7. He is called to repentance. (v. 22)

8. He is poisoned by bitterness and a slave to iniquity (v. 23)

These questions,

“How are we saved,” and “What was up with Simon?” led us to our application points for last week.

**Last Week’s Application**

1. Beware of False Teachers

**“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. 16 You will know them by their fruits.”** - Matthew 7:15-16

2. Examine Yourself

**“Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?”**

- 2 Corinthians 13:5

3. Help One Another

**“Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”** - James 5:16

**Today’s Sermon**

This week we follow Philip through another adventure in serving the Most High God. His adventure includes being spoken to by an angel, riding in a chariot with one of the most important men in the world, teaching that man about Jesus, dunking him in the water, and then being spiritually transported to another town twenty miles away!

I want for us all to see several things in this passage:

First, a great and grand adventure comes by way of serving the Lord in whatever way He has for us. It comes down to faithful (what the world would refer to as blind) obedience. You see, there is more to all of this than meets the mortal eye. Philip is our example once again this week. He is nothing more than obedient.

Secondly, God has laid out the circumstances and situations before us, though we can’t always recognize that God has planned them. We are meant to obediently walk through the doors He has opened for us.

Lastly, the result of our obedient service and His divine providence will ultimately glorify His name, which is the end game. The result of the obedience of Philip and the events recorded in this passage is that the entire continent of Africa is exposed to the good news of Jesus Christ.

So the question I hope you’ll ask yourself after this sermon is this:

What does God have for me today? Will I follow Him wherever He leads? Will I accept the honor of being the instrument of His purpose being accomplished?

Sermon Outline

**SLIDE 5**

1. Philip’s Faithful Obedience

2. God’s Design and Providence

3. A Glorious Outcome

Today’s Passage:

**Acts 8:26-40**

**26Now 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. 27So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship, 28was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet. 29Then the Spirit said to Philip, “Go near and overtake this chariot.”**

**30So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, “Do you understand what you are reading?”**

**31And he said, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him. 32The 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.
33In His humiliation His justice was taken away,
And who will declare His generation?
For His life is taken from the earth.”**

**34So the eunuch answered Philip and said, “I ask you, of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?” 35Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. 36Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, “See, *here is* water. What hinders me from being baptized?”**

**37Then 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.”**

**38So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. 39Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing. 40But Philip was found at Azotus. And passing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea.”**

So, what is happening here?

Luke the Historian is writing the book of Acts with a purpose, but the Holy Spirit is guiding him in the writing of this account, just as He has orchestrated and ordained the events Luke is retelling. Luke chronicled the events that established the church, but he could not have seen how it was unfolding in real time. We have the advantage of retrospect...

So Let’s take our outline points one by one.

1. Philip’s Faithful Obedience.

 Note:

Delayed obedience is disobedience...

Acts 8:26-27

**“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. 27So he arose and went.”**

Notes:

**Acts 8:29-30**

**Then the Spirit said to Philip, “Go near and overtake this chariot.”**

**30So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, “Do you understand what you are reading?”**

Notes:

**Acts 8:35**

**Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him.**

Notes:

**Acts 8:40**

**But Philip was found at Azotus. And passing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea.”**

Notes:

Every time Philip is prompted to act, he acts. Immediate obedience.

2. God’s Design and Providence

Acts 8:26

**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.**

Notes:

Acts 8:27-28

**And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship, 28was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet.**

Notes:

**Acts 8:32-34**

**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.
33In His humiliation His justice was taken away,
And who will declare His generation?
For His life is taken from the earth.”**

**34So the eunuch answered Philip and said, “I ask you, of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?”**

Notes:

Acts 8:35-38

**Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. 36Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, “See, *here is* water. What hinders me from being baptized?”**

**37Then 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.”**

**38So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.**

Notes:

Acts 8:39-40

**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; and he went on his way rejoicing. 40But Philip was found at Azotus. And passing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea.”**

Notes:

3. A Glorious Outcome

Acts 8:36-38

**Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, “See, *here is* water. What hinders me from being baptized?”**

**37Then 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.”**

**38So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.**

Notes:

Acts 8:39-40

**39Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing. 40But Philip was found at Azotus. And passing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea.”**

Notes:

**Conclusion:**

Jeremy Thomas says this of Luke’s account of the events of Acts as he presents the history for Theophilus (Remember?):

*It’s as though Luke is saying,“Just look Theophilus, we’ve convinced the David Copperfield of magic, the treasurer of the Nubian government and the Valedictorian of Israel’s Harvard Law.”*

*High people, important people, influential people came to the gospel very early on. He’s (Luke’s) not trying to downplay the significance of the common man believing, he’s just making the argument to Theophilus about how God the Holy Spirit started this movement. He started with people high up, people who had influence. What’s the strategy? Anyone see what the Holy Spirit is doing? He’s getting the gospel in place with very influential people so the gospel can spread rapidly. These people are respected; people will listen to them. And at the same time we learn something else because they are all as different as you can imagine. Simon’s a Samaritan, the Ethiopian’s a Gentile and a Paul’s a Jew. People from all different cultural backgrounds responding to the same message, coming together in the church. That’s the bigger picture of chapters 8-9. God the Holy Spirit is building a body of believers.”*

This is a part of what I want for us to see in this passage – that the Holy Spirit is at work in the details.

There is a concept here that I want us to understand. The depth of our pagan or fallen thinking is on display here if we are honest with ourselves.

**Application:**

**1. Obey God’s Command**

I beseechyou therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service. – Romans 12:1

**2. Operate in God’s Reality**

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose. – Romans 8:28

**3. Observe God’s Glory**

For I *am* God, and *there is* no other;
*I am* God, and *there is* none like Me,
**10**Declaring the end from the beginning,
And from ancient times *things* that are not *yet* done,
Saying, ‘My counsel shall stand,
And I will do all My pleasure,’

- Isaiah 46:9-10

Gospel

Communion