

Subject: *Anytime Evangelism*

Scripture: *Acts 8:26-40*

In 1931, Joe Thompson became president of the Southland Ice Company, and in 1946 stores were renamed 7-Eleven to call attention to their extended hours from 7:00 AM to 11:00 PM, seven days a week. In our generation people can shop online and sometimes in-person 24 hours a day, seven days a week, or as we say 24/7. We now have anytime shopping, anytime eating, and anytime fitness.

Acts 8 is a story that describes anytime evangelism. In Acts 1:8, Jesus told the disciples they were to be witnesses everywhere. The Book of Acts tells us that evangelism can take place anywhere and anytime.

The story of Philip and the Ethiopian man shows how God sets up divine appointments to save lost sinners. God plans the details of salvation from beginning to end. When someone is saved, God is not surprised. He knows it is going to happen, and not only does He know it, but He plans it. God's sovereignty and man's responsibility work together in salvation. Our salvation involves two things: the perfect sacrifice of Christ on the cross; and the application of that sacrifice to us when we repent and believe in Christ. I want you to see four ingredients that are needed for someone to be saved.

1. A PROMPT SERVANT

- Philip was one of the first deacons (Acts 6:5). He was one of the seven men chosen by the church to oversee the food ministry to the widows. He was a man of good character, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom (6:3).
- God was using Philip in Samaria (8:4-8)
- Philip was willing to go where God sent him (8:26-27)
- Philip was willing to go near where the man was (8:29-30)

Jesus invites us to "Come," but He commands us to "Go." Great things were happening, but Philip didn't make excuses to stay in Samaria. He was willing to go.

He could have said, "God is using me right here, why should I leave and go there?"

He could have said, "I'm too busy."

He could have said, "I'm not a missionary, I'm just a layman."

He could have said, "Let someone else do who can do a better job."

The Bible says, *The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord.*

God had an assignment for Philip, and He was going to set up a meeting with this man from Ethiopia. The Holy Spirit said, "Go near," and he went near. When we leave this sanctuary we enter the mission field.

2. A PREPARED SINNER

- What a contrast to Acts 2 where we see 3,000 people saved and baptized after Peter preached on the day of Pentecost. People are saved one at a time, and every

- soul is important to God. (story of the boy walking along the beach throwing starfish back into the water... he said, "It will make a big difference to this one.")
- This Ethiopian was *a respected man* (Sec. of the Treasury) – he was a trusted man
 - He was *a religious man* (he had been to Jerusalem to worship, but he was lost)

He had been to Jerusalem, but He found that the Jewish religion didn't satisfy his thirsty soul. Religion may cause a person to look right, seem right, and feel right, but only in Jesus can a person be right with God. The world is full of people who are religious, but they are lost and are on their way to Hell. Sometimes the attitude seems to be "We need to let them alone. They have their gods and their religion." Yes, but they are false gods and false religion that lead to eternal punishment.

- He was *a receptive man* (he was open to God's man and God's message)

As we talk to people, we will find that some are careless, cold, complacent, and even calloused, but others are warm, eager, receptive, and ready to hear what we have to say. We have to go and keep trusting that God will prepare people as we go. Our approach is to reach the reachable, teach the teachable, and win the winnable.

3. A PRECIOUS SCRIPTURE

Romans 10:17 *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

- Isaiah 53 (12 verses and 12 references to Christ's death as a substitute for sinners)
- The Book of Isaiah was written in the 8th century B.C., then copied by hand for 800 years. This man lived in the 1st century A.D. Just think of the way God preserved His Word for men like this to read and believe. But one thing stood in the way of faith. He didn't understand. The man from Ethiopia wondered, "Who is this talking about?"
- This man needed someone to help him understand the Scriptures. That's where we come in. We ought to know enough to guide a person to Christ.
- **John 5:39** *Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.*
- Many people are confused about the Bible. What's it all about? That's where you and I come in. We can tell them, "It's all about Jesus." The Old Testament says, "Someone is coming." The Gospels say, "Someone is here." And the rest of the New Testament say, "Someone is coming again."

4. A PERSONAL SURRENDER

Something happened between verse 35 and verse 36. We can use our imagination.

- Salvation was *settled in his heart*

Romans 10:9-10⁹ *That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*¹⁰ *For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

- Salvation was *shown by his baptism* (salvation is personal, but it is not private)
- Salvation was *shared with others* (he went on his way rejoicing, a changed man)
Just think of the influence this man had for Christ in Africa.

These are the four ingredients that come together when a person is saved.

- God's work in the servant (Philip)
- God's work in the sinner (the Ethiopian)
- God's work through the Scripture (Isaiah 53)
- God's work in salvation (he believed in Christ and confessed his faith in baptism)

Anytime is the right time for evangelism for at least three reasons:

- Because eternity is a long time
- Because life is a short time
- Because now is the accepted time

2 Corinthians 6:2 *...behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.*) The word for "time" here is the Greek word *kairos*, which means a certain time, the right time, or the opportune time.