



# 15 | ACTS 8:26-50

## THE GOSPEL TO ETHIOPIA

*God wants to expand his Kingdom beyond what you can imagine.*

### Outline

- 1. GOSPEL PREPARATION (8:25-28)**
  - The Spirit's Work
  - The Servant's Will
  - The Seeker's Worship
  - The Scriptural Word
- 2. GOSPEL PRESENTATION (8:25-29)**
  - The Spirit
  - The Surprise
  - The Scriptures
  - The Savior
- 3. GOSPEL TRANSFORMATION (8:36-40)**
  - Faith in Christ
  - Confession of Christ
  - Rejoicing in Christ
  - Applications
    - Come to Christ*
    - Confess Christ in baptism*
    - Tell of Christ*

### Call to Worship

Blessed be the Lord! For he has heard the voice of my pleas for mercy. <sup>7</sup>The Lord is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts, and I am helped; my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him.  
—Psalm 28:6-7

### Songs

*10,000 Reasons*

*There is a Fountain Filled with Blood*

*Crown Him with Many Crowns*

*All I Have is Christ*

## Introduction

We continue our series in the book of Acts called “Life on Life Discipleship.” Our title this morning is: “The Gospel to Ethiopia”.

God can do the unimaginable. Nothing is impossible for him. Jesus said that the gospel message of his death and resurrection was to go into all the world.

Throughout redemptive history, God has poured out his blessings to mankind through the channel of his covenant people. God never intended Israel to be a reservoir, storing up divine blessings for themselves. Instead, they were to be a funnel through which those blessings could be dispersed to a lost world. In Isaiah 42, God identified them as a lamp lighting the darkness around them. He said to Israel:

I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness, I will also hold you by the hand and watch over you, and I will appoint you as a covenant to the people, as a light to the nations. —Isaiah 42:6

Of course, Israel was a great failure in her mission. Israel seemed to go to two extremes: first to try and be like the nations in their idolatry and worshipping pagan gods. Then when they returned from captivity, they were separatistic, despising the Gentiles and wanting nothing to do with the outside nations. Israel failed. But with the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, God would cut a new channel through born again believers to reach the world for Jesus Christ.

In our last study, we looked at how the Gospel began to be preached among the “half-breed” Samaritans. They were more despised than the Gentiles.

**Acts 8:25** | Now when they had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans.

There was much joy where Philip preached in among the Samaritans (8:8). But now it was time to begin to reach the final group of people Jesus promised to save: the Gentiles. Philip is called away from the great Samaritan revival to go to one man: an Ethiopian eunuch in the middle of nowhere! Through this one man, God will set the tone for the great warriors of the faith in the early church. Many of the greatest and most enduring leaders of the early church were from Africa. So God takes Philip away from a booming revival to reach just one man. God knows what he is doing! Don't ever doubt his ways.

Remember, God's ways are not our ways (Isa 55:8-9). He can use you to save one soul or one million.

This was a time of unusual blessing on the church. To judge from the story, it would even seem that the incredible revival in Samaria was still growing. Philip was an important part of this, being the primary evangelist. Peter and John had been sent to inspect the work, but they had then gone back to Jerusalem to report. Philip was the front-line man. He seemed to be utterly indispensable. Yet it was at precisely this moment when

God called him to leave the area.<sup>1</sup> God will build his church in Samaria and everywhere else with or without you. We are all expendable. God sends an angel to Philip and says: leave the great Samaritan revival and go to the desert to reach just one man! I'm glad Philip obeyed. He reaches the first Gentile with the gospel.

Interestingly, before we hear of Paul and Barnabas going out as missionaries from the Antioch church, we find that the mission field has come to the church. There are people from all nations in Jerusalem for the three main festivals they have each year, and proselytes from everywhere come to worship the Lord with all the faithful.

In this passage we meet the Ethiopian eunuch who is a very high official in the royal court of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. He's in charge of all her treasure. Here is someone from the continent of Africa who is about to place his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as the first Gentile convert in the church. We are going to see that genuine faith requires three elements: the proper preparation, the proper presentation, and the proper response.

Key thought: God wants to expand his Kingdom beyond what you can imagine.

---

## 1. GOSPEL PREPARATION (8:25-28)

---

Genuine saving faith demands the proper preparation. We all know that God must do the work.

I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. —1  
*Corinthians 3:6*

God has to give the growth, but here in Acts 8, it is the Spirit's work that prepared the soil of the Eunuch's heart, and we see this in all conversions.

There must be preparation of the human heart if anyone is going to come to Christ. We are dead in our trespasses and sins, so the human will is free to do what it wants, but it wants to "drink iniquity like water" (Job 15:16). If we are to come to Christ, the human heart must be drawn by the Spirit of God. Listen to Jesus' words.

No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day. —*John 6:44*

Man's heart must be moved upon if he will come. This is vital to remember as we see the first Gentile convert. We can see God's fingerprints all over this conversion. Remember Philip was in Samaria, headed back to Jerusalem. God wanted him in a remote desert place in Gaza where a certain Ethiopian eunuch was reading from the Prophet Isaiah. Even to own a scroll, this man must have been wealthy. And we find out he's in

---

<sup>1</sup> James Montgomery Boice, *Acts: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1997), 140.

charge of the Ethiopian queen's treasury. But God had to make a divine appointment between Philip and the Ethiopian.

### THE SPIRIT'S WORK

The Spirit began his preparatory work by maneuvering Philip into a strategic position. Philip and the apostles John and Peter solemnly testified and spoke the word of the Lord to the Samaritan villages. (8:25). But God sovereignly interrupted Philip and gave him direction. Until this time there have been records of great revivals totaling a number exceeding 25,000 people. But now we come to our first one-on-one gospel presentation. And it is quite unusual.

**Acts 8:26** | Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is a desert place.

The circumstances that were to lead to the eunuch's salvation were sovereignly and specifically arranged by the Spirit of God. Salvation, both in its eternal planning and its temporal outworking, is totally God's work. Salvation originates in the sovereign will of God (Acts 13:48; Rom 8:29ff.; Eph 1:3-7) and is implemented by his grace (Eph 2:8-9; 2 Thess 2:13; 2 Tim 2:10; Titus 1:1; 1 Pet 1:1).

The city of Gaza, one of five important Philistine cities, had been destroyed by Alexander the Great. A new city was built as well as a new road. The old desert road that Philip is commanded to take would have been out of use for quite some time. Luke's mention of the old Gaza road in the desert underscores the strangeness of the Spirit's command to Philip. Nobody went on the old Gaza road anymore, so it was almost as if God were directing Philip into the middle of the desert for no apparent reason. But Philip obeyed the commandment of the Lord and went down from Samaria past Jerusalem and made his way along the road.<sup>2</sup> God had a divine appointment, though the command to go to this deserted road would have sounded very strange to Philip. Yet Philip obeyed! And praise God he did. He was a vessel of the Holy Spirit who was drawing this Ethiopian eunuch to salvation.

**Two insurmountable barriers** keep man from grasping God's salvation by his own efforts: spiritual death and satanic control. First, men are **spiritually dead** and therefore unable to respond to God. Ephesians 2:1 says simply and directly,

You were dead in your trespasses and sins. —*Ephesians 2:1*

The second is that all lost people are under **satanic control**. Paul says that the god of this world (Satan) has blinded the minds of those who do not believe.

The god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ. —*2 Corinthians 4:4*

---

<sup>2</sup> R. C. Sproul, *Acts*, St. Andrew's Expository Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 148.

Listen, if the Spirit doesn't work, man will remain dead in sin and enslaved to the wicked one. The Spirit must draw and enliven the heart (Eph 2:1-4; Eze 26:25-27).

### THE SERVANT'S WILL

A huge part of evangelism is the obedience of God's people. Praise God, Philip obeyed the Spirit.

**Acts 8:27a** | And he rose and went.

Are you being used of God for evangelism? Paul tells us there is a qualification. You've got to be holy and set apart to God.

Now in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver but also of wood and clay, some for honorable use, some for dishonorable. <sup>21</sup> Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work. —2 Timothy 2:20-21

Philip was such an instrument. He was in deep communion with God and heard the voice of God directing him. It seemed irrational to go to that deserted road toward Gaza. Who would be there? Just one man that God wanted in his kingdom. As we obey the Lord, he will give us those wonderful divine appointments where we can share Christ.

Philip obeyed *the subjective inner voice of the Holy Spirit*. He remained open as to how God would lead him. When we are in touch with the Holy Spirit, we will be sensitive to his guidance—sometimes through difficulties, sometimes through an inner voice, maybe even through angels—and thus we will be the touch of God to others.<sup>3</sup> Let me be clear that the word of God was Philip's authority. But God guides us in his providence. If you think the Spirit is leading you in a certain way, you must subject all things to the word of God. Those who claim to be led by the Spirit when it contradicts the word of God are deceived. Praise God that Philip, a man filled with the Spirit and the word, obeyed the Spirit to go and preach in that deserted place.

### THE SEEKER'S WORSHIP

God had prepared the way for Philip. The eunuch's heart had already been touched by the Spirit of God. We read more about him in verse 27.

**Acts 8:27b** | And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. He had come to Jerusalem to worship.

This eunuch was a proselyte or God-fearer and had come from his own country in order to worship at the temple in Jerusalem.<sup>4</sup> We now witness the first of three

<sup>3</sup> R. Kent Hughes, *Acts: The Church Afire*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1996), 118–119.

<sup>4</sup> Peter Williams, *Acts: Church on the Move: An Expositional Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Exploring the Bible Commentary (Leominster: DayOne, 2004), 93.

remarkable conversions. In chapter 8 we have the conversion of an Ethiopian, a representative of the family of *Ham*; in chapter 9 we have the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, a Jew, a representative of the family of *Shem*; in chapter 10 we have the conversion of Cornelius, a Roman centurion, from the family of *Japheth*. The families of the earth that were separated at Babel are now made one in the family of God. The curse of Babel, which enforced God's deliberate division of mankind, is reversed in the church.<sup>5</sup> The walls of hostility are torn down (Eph 2:14).

In ancient Ethiopia, the king was considered divine incarnations of the sun god, and the everyday affairs of government were held to be beneath them. Real power lay with the queen mothers, known by the official title Candace (which is not a proper name, but an official title, like Pharaoh or Caesar). So Queen Candace was the true ruler of the country. Her son, the king, was the "divine" figurehead. This Ethiopian Eunuch was in charge of all her treasure. In modern terms, he was the Minister of Finance, or Secretary of the Treasury.<sup>6</sup>

Note that this man was a eunuch. In antiquity a eunuch was someone who had been surgically made a eunuch in order to be trusted, and in this case he was the companion of the queen mother. The king could trust a man who was unable to be sexually tempted.<sup>7</sup>

Despite his power and prestige, the Ethiopian eunuch had a vast emptiness in his soul. He made a long, arduous journey from his homeland to Jerusalem, searching for the true God. Unfortunately, given the state of contemporary Judaism, he probably went away still empty. But the Spirit was drawing him, whetting his appetite for worship of the true God.

God's sovereignty in salvation does not obviate man's responsibility. That God rewards the seeking heart is the clear teaching of Scripture. In Jeremiah, God said,

You will seek me and find me, when you search for me with all your heart. —*Jeremiah 29:13*

The eunuch is a classic example of one who lived up to the light he had. God then gave him the full revelation of Jesus Christ through Philip's ministry.<sup>8</sup>

### THE SCRIPTURAL WORD

With all the preparation of the eunuch's heart, he would be helpless without the all sufficient word of God.

Acts 8:27b-28 | He had come to Jerusalem to worship<sup>28</sup> and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah.

He had just begun his journey back to return to Ethiopia. He was reading the prophet Isaiah. Good things happen when we read the Bible. The Spirit does his work. Can we all

<sup>5</sup> John Phillips, *Exploring Acts: An Expository Commentary*, The John Phillips Commentary Series (Kregel Publications; WORDsearch Corp., 2009), Ac 8:27.

<sup>6</sup> John F. MacArthur Jr., *Acts*, vol. 1, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1994), 254.

<sup>7</sup> R. C. Sproul, *Acts*, St. Andrew's Expository Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 149.

<sup>8</sup> John F. MacArthur Jr., *Acts*, vol. 1, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1994), 254–255.

agree that God's word is powerful? He was one of the few people in the ancient world that could afford a copy of God's word, likely in a scroll. Each copy of God's word had to be handwritten until the invention of the printing press in 1450. So he would have been reading a handwritten copy of the word of God.

It's good that he had that copy of the word. We all need the word of God to know God in a saving way. God's existence, and attributes, can be discerned from creation (Rom 1:20). That's why you'll never meet a true atheist. Paul says all men know who God is in their hearts, even though they are running from him. But creation is a **general revelation** of who God is. It cannot reveal the person and work of Christ to us. For that we need the written word of God, his **special revelation**. Indeed, a true, personal, saving knowledge of God comes only through the Scriptures. Jesus said the Bible is all about him.

You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that bear witness of me. —  
*John 5:39*

In verse 46 he added,

If you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me. —*John 5:46*

After the resurrection, Christ met two disciples on the road to Emmaus and gave them the true way of understanding the word.

Beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures. —*Luke 24:27*

You must be confronted with the word of God in order to know Christ, because the message of the Bible centers on the Person and work of Jesus Christ.

All the essentials were in place; the Spirit's work of preparation was complete. Philip had obeyed the Spirit's call and was in place to meet the man. The eunuch's heart was seeking, prepared by reading the Scriptures. All was set for the next step.

---

## 2. GOSPEL PRESENTATION (8:25-29)

---

Why was this Ethiopian finance minister there in Jerusalem, hundreds of miles from home? It might be that this Ethiopian man remembered the Queen of Sheba, a thousand years before, who had heard of the true and living God from Solomon. Perhaps all these years God preserved a remnant there in north Africa where Candace and her treasurer were from. This Ethiopian man had traveled hundreds of miles with the queen mother Candace to worship the true God.

## THE SPIRIT

The Spirit spoke to Philip's heart. The Spirit is constantly talking to the Christian's heart. The question is, are you listening?

**Acts 8:29-30a** | And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and join this chariot."<sup>30</sup> So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet...

The Spirit speaks, and Philip obeys and *runs* up to the chariot. He would have noticed that the chariot is decked out with rich furnishings. Philip is just a poor evangelist, but the Spirit gives boldness to all who are Spirit filled. He would have seen a driver in the front seat and the distinguished Ethiopian finance minister seated comfortably behind, busily reading the biblical scroll of Isaiah (8:28). The *Spirit*, now directing Philip (8:29) after the angel's initial command (8:26), tells the evangelist to join the carriage. To do so, he actually runs up alongside it, close enough to hear the man reading aloud (8:30).<sup>9</sup> What a sight! But **we are called to do what the Spirit tells us to do.**

How vital it is to have a tender heart so we can hear the Spirit's voice. There is a providential leading of the Spirit. He promises to direct our steps. There are so many **distractions** today. People are on their cell phones and media, and there is a cost to all that. We drown out the voice of the Spirit. God promises to lead us by his Spirit through his word to do his will. That includes evangelism opportunities. Your lost friends and neighbors and even strangers need you to be walking in step with the Spirit so you can hear his voice.

## THE SURPRISE

What a surprise that there's an evangelist in a remote desert. What are the chances of a man like this, burdened by his sin and searching for answers to some of the greatest questions a man can ask, finding someone like Philip on a lonely desert road? Slim to none! Yet in God's providence anything is possible! *Nothing* is impossible when God has determined a certain course of action.<sup>10</sup> **So here, in the middle of nowhere, you have a miscellaneous Jewish evangelist running by the chariot** of this Ethiopian official just as he is reading aloud the Scriptures.

**Acts 8:30-31** | So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?"<sup>31</sup> And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

This miraculous providence is a major theme here, because just as suddenly as Philip is running beside the chariot, at the end of this scene, he is miraculously taken away and transported by the Spirit to a destination twenty miles away.

<sup>9</sup> Chalmer Ernest Faw, *Acts*, Believers Church Bible Commentary (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993), 106.

<sup>10</sup> Derek W. H. Thomas, *Acts*, ed. Richard D. Phillips, Philip Graham Ryken, and Daniel M. Doriani, Reformed Expository Commentary (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2011), 240.



The ancient custom of reading aloud provided an opening for Philip, who, though a complete stranger, boldly asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” What a surprise! Perhaps the finance minister was praying just then for help in the Scriptures. We don’t know, but God can do anything.

The man was so perplexed by the passage he had been reading that he seems not to have cared who Philip was or why he was in his presence. The eunuch just exclaimed, “Well, how could I understand, unless someone guides me?” Amazingly, he then invited Philip to come up and sit with him. Philip’s heart must have been rejoicing at how God had so prepared this man. When you are walking in submission to the Spirit and the word, there are plenty of surprises in the Christ life.

## THE SCRIPTURES

An effective presentation of the gospel must be based solidly on Scripture. The use of personal testimony, stories, tracts, and other tools is no substitute. The gospel message in the Scripture alone is “the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek” (Rom. 1:16). The power is in the Word.<sup>11</sup> God uses his word to transform hearts of stone into hearts of flesh. The passage this man was reading is found in Isaiah 53:7-8.

**Acts 8:32-34** | Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this: “Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter and like a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he opens not his mouth. <sup>33</sup>In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth.” <sup>34</sup>And the eunuch said to Philip, “About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?”

Here is perhaps the clearest presentation of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament, and yet this very educated man is confused. “Is this about the prophet or someone else?” he asks. Satan has blinded the eyes of all those who do not believe in Christ (2 Cor 4:4). And we have the responsibility to restore sight to the blind as evangelists. That’s exactly what Philip did.

## THE SAVIOR

How exciting it must have been for Philip to explain this passage to this distinguished Ethiopian man.

**Acts 8:35** | Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus.

Whenever we giving the gospel, and really in whatever we do, Jesus is there. He’s the most important presence in this story. And Philip proclaims him and lifts him up. Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (Jn 1:29). He is the

---

<sup>11</sup> John F. MacArthur Jr., *Acts*, vol. 1, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1994), 257.

substitute for all the world. Though he is God in human flesh, absolutely perfect in his humanity, he was led to the slaughter. He chose to be silent like a lamb, gladly suffering for the sins of his people. He didn't get justice for himself, but he received the full justice and wrath of God for the sins of all who will believe (Jn 3:16; 36).

Dear saints, let's preach the gospel! So many people, even pastors, cannot give a clear gospel presentation. There are many verses that simply present the gospel.

Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God. —1 Peter 3:18

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. —John 3:16

He made Him who knew no sin to be sin in our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. —2 Corinthians 5:21, NASB

Jesus said, "I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." —John 12:32

Lift him up! And when you lift him up, the Spirit can transform the heart, and Jesus becomes irresistible.

---

### 3. GOSPEL TRANSFORMATION (8:36-40)

---

When we lift Christ up, and a person comes in faith to Christ, there is true salvation.

#### FAITH IN CHRIST

It seems as the Ethiopian official understood the gospel, he must have expressed his faith in Christ to Philip, and Philip likely explained to the him about baptism.

**Acts 8:36** | And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?"

Salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone to the glory of God alone. Anyone who believes the simple Gospel should not be refused baptism.

Some manuscripts (and therefore some translations) omit Acts 8:37. In the New King James Version it reads,

**Acts 8:37 (NKJV)** | Then 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."

These words are very similar to what Paul said to the Philippian jailer in Acts 16.

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved.  
—*Acts 16:31*

The Greek is not just “believe *in*,” but “believe *on*” or better yet “believe *into*” Jesus Christ, suggesting that our faith must lodge in the most intimate of ways with Jesus Christ.<sup>12</sup> It is **not enough to believe the right things** about Jesus Christ, for James tells us:

The devils believe and tremble. —*James 2:19*

We must trust on Jesus. That means founding our whole life up our Lord Jesus who is our chief Cornerstone. Often the language of “asking Jesus into your heart” can be confusing. The main place we hear that in Scripture is in Ephesians.

That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. —  
*Ephesians 3:17*

This is fine if by it you mean Christ is coming into your control your inner being. He is Lord! **Sadly, often when people “ask Jesus into their heart” they are just adding him to a thousand other idols.** Let’s work to be clearer as to what true Christianity is. It is absolute conversion. It is the miracle of regeneration that transforms the heart of stone into a heart of flesh (Eze 36:26). It’s when the old passes away, and the new comes, and you become a new creation (2 Cor 5:17). It is God making our inner man alive and raising us from death to life (Eph 2:4). This is not attainable through human effort or manipulation. It is a miracle of God (Eph 2:7-8).

## CONFESSION OF CHRIST

**Acts 8:38** | And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him.

**Philip had surely talked about the Great Commission**—the call to go into all the world preaching and teaching Christ and baptizing all nations in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—and about the fact that **baptism is the sign of the new covenant.**<sup>13</sup>

They came across a pool or stream in the desert at just the appropriate moment for the man to publicly testify to his saving faith by being obedient to the ordinance of immersion. That is yet another example of the sovereign Spirit’s control of events.<sup>14</sup>

Baptism is an outward sign of an inward reality. **The Greek word is *baptizo*, which means to immerse.**

<sup>12</sup> Derek W. H. Thomas, *Acts*, ed. Richard D. Phillips, Philip Graham Ryken, and Daniel M. Doriani, Reformed Expository Commentary (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2011), 240–241.

<sup>13</sup> R. C. Sproul, *Acts*, St. Andrew’s Expositional Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 151.

<sup>14</sup> John F. MacArthur Jr., *Acts*, vol. 1, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1994), 259.

### Baptism is a picture of Christ' death and resurrection.

Philip immersed him. There's a symbolic reason for immersion. Baptism is a picture of our union with Christ in what he did in his death and resurrection. When we go down into the water, we show that we are united with Christ's death and burial. When we come out of the water, we show that we are united with Christ in his resurrection. It's a beautiful picture of our faith in Christ.

### Baptism is like a wedding ring.

It's symbolic, but it is the willingness to come before all and make vows before the whole church, that you are his Body and Bride.

Why did he do that? As we said, he was demonstrating the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We are buried with Him by baptism, like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we all should walk in newness of life. But also, he was going public with his faith. He demonstrated his faith to all his entourage. He's not traveling alone. This man is a government official, so there's a great entourage. Can you imagine what it meant to them to see this high ranking official humble himself? He got out of the chariot and went down into the water there, and he let this Jewish evangelist plunge him beneath the water. It was a testimony that something radical had happened in his heart, and it was a testimony to others. When he went under the water, he's saying, the old life is dead and buried, and when he comes up out of the water, it pictures a new person raised to walk in newness of life.

### Are you here today as an unbaptized believer in Christ?

You've seen several baptized here today at Living Hope. Baptism is the first step of obedience as a believer. If you've believed but not been baptized, there ought to be an excitement about obeying the Lord. I remember when I realized that I was attending a church, but I was unbaptized. I was seventeen years old. The Spirit of God moved in my heart. I had been a believer for two years. But suddenly I couldn't wait to get baptized. I told the pastor and was baptized the next Sunday. Baptism is a first step of expressing your faith in Christ and making yourself accountable to a local church. It's saying, "I'm part of the Body and Bride of Christ, and I'm unashamed."

### REJOICING IN CHRIST

**Acts 8:39-40** | And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. <sup>40</sup> But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he preached the gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

Philip was suddenly taken away. I'm sure he was rejoicing at the faith of this Ethiopian diplomat. But the eunuch was also rejoicing. He was so grateful for his salvation.

And so Philip was transported twenty miles away to Azotus, or as the ancient name is Ashdod. What an incredible privilege to preach the good news. As he made his way north toward Caesarea Maritime, where he and his family apparently made their home (Acts 21:9), he preached in the cities (such as Joppa and Lydda, which Peter would shortly visit) as he traveled.<sup>15</sup> There is so much to rejoice for when you are spreading the gospel seed everywhere.

And if Philip only knew the great things that would happen in and through the Ethiopian eunuch, he would have been rejoicing even more. The conversion of this one man from Africa would impact the church for centuries to come. We need only remember that some of the most important names in early church history were Africans—Cyprian, Tertullian, and Augustine, to name but three.<sup>16</sup>

### *Conclusion*

We have a privilege that angels don't have: that's bringing souls to Jesus Christ. And we have an opportunity that we will not have in the world to come: that is, to bring souls to Jesus Christ. Now, God is calling you to be an evangelist. Every member of Jesus' church is to be an evangelist.

## **APPLICATIONS**

### **1. Come to Christ**

God brought Philip out of Samaria down to the desert, why? He brought him there because there was somebody there that needed the gospel. I am bold enough to say that you're not here by accident today. God put this message on my heart, and God brought you here. You know why? He loves you. He wants you to be saved. You may be here without Christ. The same Savior who saved this Ethiopian official desires to save you. God's been preparing you to know him. He has no desire for you to go to a Christless eternity in the Lake of fire without any hope. There is hope today, but there may not be hope tomorrow. You may die at any moment, and the Bible says that after death is the judgment. If you're not ready for that judgement day, let me give you hope. You can be ready. It's not by making yourself better. You cannot heal yourself. But if you put your faith in Christ, God will heal you.

### **2. Confess Christ in baptism**

If you are here today as an unbaptized believer, I want you to consider something. Do you have the Spirit? If baptism is the first step of obedience, won't you obey the Lord? Come and tell an elder or a pastor that you need baptism. It's one of the most joyous things you can do to tell the world about Christ.

### **3. Tell of Christ**

---

<sup>15</sup> John F. MacArthur Jr., *Acts*, vol. 1, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1994), 260.

<sup>16</sup> Derek W. H. Thomas, *Acts*, ed. Richard D. Phillips, Philip Graham Ryken, and Daniel M. Doriani, Reformed Expository Commentary (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2011), 236.

Are you sharing this gospel everywhere you go? Or are you a slave of what people think of you? Break free. You cannot be a true disciple if you are not evangelizing. If you have no heart for the lost, you are not growing and maturing like you ought. So many need to hear.

**The most sobering reality in the world today is that people are dying and going to hell today.**

Will you tell the lost? Think of children in your family or other family members. You need to give Christ to. They need you to explain it to them. Think of your co-workers who need Christ. Who are you praying for today to be saved? When is the last time you shared your faith?