**10/4/15 “Whatever it takes”**

Acts 8:26-40

1. Introduction
   1. You all have been saying how glad that you are that I am here and how happy ya’ll are to have me
   2. I am doubly glad to be here and w/o a shadow of a doubt know that this is exactly where God wants me to be
   3. Telling everyone I know about the great things going on here
      1. Making the parsonage available to Bill and Angela
      2. Average 55 last three weeks
      3. Largest SS in ? last week
      4. Cookout honoring lay speakers
      5. 12 at Wed Night Discipleship group= Split in Future
      6. OnetilEveryone= One saved, one at service last week
      7. GLORY BE TO GOD!!! Bounce the glory up!

It was one of the most moving and powerful testimonies I have ever encountered. A former sex worker, drug addict and dealer described how she had reached a point at which, in her own words, she was ‘dead’. She said her ‘blood was black’ and her ‘heart was black’. She described how she came on Alpha (Christian Retreat) and heard that Jesus loved her so much that he died for her. She described how this had broken the concrete of her heart. She experienced God’s love for her for the first time. She is now filled with love for everyone, forgiving those who abused her, and radiating the love of Christ. After she had given her testimony to a stunned congregation, I went up to thank her and said how extraordinarily powerful it had been. She replied, ‘I need to bounce it back up!’ I didn’t understand what she meant, so I asked her to explain. She said, ‘It’s all his grace. I need to bounce the glory back to him.’ She has a profound understanding of grace, glory and what it means to be Christ-like. –Pastor Nicky Gumbel HTB Londan

* 1. So I thought we were off to a good start and everything until. . . . . . . .last week Someone accused me of being Baptist! Ha

1. Continuing with our look at what the singular purpose of the church is and what our mission here at Ebenezer is, which is to MAKE DISCIPLES

Acts 20:24b The most important thing is that I complete my mission, the work that the Lord Jesus gave me—to tell people the Good News about God’s grace.

* 1. We are taking a look in Acts to see what the first church did and how the first disciples where able to fulfill God’s purpose for the church
  2. Last week= Holy Spirit, Pattern of=pray, receive, evangelize/make disciples
  3. This week= look at how we go about evangelizing/exhaling to make disciples

1. Acts 8:26-40

26Now 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. 27And he rose and went. 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 28and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah. 29And the Spirit said to Philip, “Go over and join this chariot.” 30So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” 31And he said, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. 32Now 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. 33In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth.”

34And the eunuch said to Philip, “About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?” 35Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. 36And 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?” 38And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. 39And 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. 40But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he preached the gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

* 1. Philip the evangelist
     1. Acts 21:8 On the next day we departed and came to Caesarea, and we entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him.
     2. Not the same as the disciple
     3. Was one of seven that the first church selected along with Stephen the martyr in Acts 6 to help with the work of the church (distribution of food, etc.)
  2. 2 things about Philip
     1. Church member, not apostle or pastor
        1. Ordinary guy
        2. Dedicated to the faith
     2. Evangelist
        1. Brought the Gospel of Jesus toSamaria(8:4-7)

4Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word. 5Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ. 6And the crowds with one accord paid attention to what was being said by Philip when they heard him and saw the signs that he did. 7For unclean spirits, crying out with a loud voice, came out of many who had them, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. 8So there was much joy in that city.

-2 weeks ago Jesus in Acts 1:8 you will be my witnesses in. . . . . . . .Samaria

* + - 1. Here in Ch. 8 through his efforts we learn that he brings the Gospel to Ethiopia

1. We can learn several things about how we are to go about the business of Making Disciples from this story in Ch. 8
   1. Listen

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

8:29 And the Spirit said to Philip, “Go over and join this chariot.”

* + 1. Posture of hearing like the disciples last week in the upper room in Ch. 2
    2. In tune with the Holy Spirit
  1. Obeyed

After verse 26 . . . . . 8:27 and he rose and went

After verse 29 . . . . . . 8:30 So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet

* + 1. Obeyed the Holy Spirit, did exactly what he felt Him calling him to do
  1. Whatever it takes
     1. Picture the scene
        1. Angel tells him to go to road, and he goes down there not knowing what to expect
        2. Sees a chariot going down the road, Holy Spirit says “Go over and join this chariot”, so Philip doesn’t question , Run along with the chariot, hears him reading Isaiah, “Hey you understand what you are reading”, Invites Philip up to talk with him
        3. How crazy does that sound?
     2. Willing to make a fool of himself
        1. Philip did it for the gospel
        2. Game day in Athens
        3. I do it all the time
        4. CRCT idol at WJMS
     3. Opened His mouth v.35
        1. Spoke when he wasn’t sure of what to say
        2. Last week- Holy spirit speak for us

Mark 13:11 And when they bring you to trial and deliver you over, do not be anxious beforehand what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit

* + - 1. He was willing to open mouth
  1. Spontaneous
     1. Baptism of the enuch
     2. Monica and my date night
     3. Willing to deviate from schedule when it comes to the business of Making Disciples

1. Church
   1. Listen
      1. Praying, set our clocks to 12pm for Connectional group
      2. Speak to us when we are in a posture of hearing
   2. Obey,
      1. When HS tells us something (no matter what it is) we obey
   3. Whatever it Takes
      1. Willing to make a fool out of itself for the gospel
      2. Excellence in presentation of the gospel b/c it might be the only picture of Jesus they see!
         1. Some people to hours to paint themselves for the game
         2. Costumes etc.
      3. Church is and should be the Hope of the World
   4. Hospital nursery vs. funeral home
      1. Hospital nursery= Love visiting; place of joy, gain, life; Invigorating; have to be kicked out
      2. Funeral home= Avoided; only out of love and respect; represents loss, sadness, death; Many desire to leave as soon as possible
2. Ebenezer
   1. Listen= posture of hearing, in tune with Holy Spirit
   2. Obey= Do what we hear Him telling us to do
   3. Whatever it takes
      1. Steve Collins saying he would be willing to sing praise music
      2. Lee’s story of the little church they visited when in St. Simons (Looked from the road= Fence, sign-Keep off grass)
      3. Excellence= Col. 3:23 Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men
         1. Realizing the importance
         2. Might be the only picture of Jesus for someone
   4. What can we do to draw in someone that is innovative and imaginative to our God-given uniqueness
      1. What are we currently doing or not doing that is hindering people from becoming disciples
      2. Small church can’t do everything, but we need to ask what can we do with what we have or what should we stop doing
   5. Celebration
      1. Celebrate everything!
      2. Sunday morning should be celebration
         1. Doesn’t mean other things can’t happen (Discipleship, learning the word, fellowship)
         2. Time to Bounce the Glory back up
      3. Joy

**Praise and Thanksgiving** Praise is giving glory to God for who he is. Thanksgiving is giving glory to God for what he has done for us. It is the lens through which to view our entire life. –Nicky Gumbel, Vicar of HTB in London

* + 1. Going to do everything at Ebenezer with praise and thanksgiving

1. Individual
   1. Listen and Obey
      1. Made in the image of God and we should reflect Him!
      2. Holy Spirit
   2. Make Disciples One at a time
   3. Excitement and invitation
      1. Whatever it takes, people willing to follow someone who is excited
      2. Celebration (Just like this am)
   4. Spontaneous
      1. Focused on Philip, but I want us to close by looking at Ethiopian enuch
      2. Asked Philip “What prevents me from being baptized”, Answer= Nothing
      3. Holy Spirit spoke to me this week
         1. Some here similar ?= what prevents me from accepting Jesus
            1. Answer= nothing, no sin, no past
            2. All you have to do is ask for forgiveness of sins and accept Jesus as Savior/Lord of Life/Leader of Life
         2. Some here same ?= Baptized?
            1. Answer=Nothing
            2. We are going to be a spontaneous church that responds to the call
            3. Come forward today