

“Spirit Directed”

Introduction

- Continuing series, “Unleashed”

Tension: Sharing our faith is a daunting task for most people; we don't do it; if the Gospel is going to gain ground, we gotta do it; it's what being a church/follower is about; it's the bottom line...

Acts 8:1-8

Gospel Gains Ground through persecution

- Stoning of Stephen is Ground Zero - epicenter
 - Drop a boulder in the water, big splash; waves ripple out noticeably...
- Saul began to ‘destroy’ the church
 - Bible note: Greek word itself implies ‘animalistic’ quality; Ravages Injuriouly;
 - ‘Drug’ people (literally, not metaphorically) men and women to jail
- “Gospel gains ground through persecution” - every time, persecution is a catalyst for the spread of the Gospel

Philip:

- Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.⁵ Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah there.
 - - Samaria (one of the places specifically mentioned in Acts 1:8 - with regards to becoming Witnesses to ends of the Earth
- Not the Disciple Philip; ‘All scatter EXCEPT for the Apostles’
 - One of the 7 chosen in chapter 6 to distribute food
 - Another “Regular Joe” - like Stephen - just a guy who was full of the Spirit and wisdom allowing God to use him however God wanted
 - See Philip doing what Jesus did: Healing; Delivering; Proclaiming [Lean In]
 - Jesus does it, then Disciples/Apostles do it, then ‘regular church folks’ do it
 - Response was JOY...result of letting Jesus transform your life

We get this general look at Philip's witness and how God uses him for the Gospel to gain ground, then verses 26 - 40, have an opportunity to zero in and see how Philip does it

Philip and the Ethiopian

Acts 8:26

- Philip desired to hear from the Lord; God desires to talk to His people, God speaking to us all the time; ; are we listening?
 - Sometimes we think “God speaks to specific people in specific ways”, no God desires to speak to us all in a myriad of different ways
 - Some of those ways are
 - We've all had times when felt urged to reach out to someone - may not have been obedient to that urge, but has been there none-the-less
 - God can get things done whether we listen or not, but we miss a blessing
- And when God spoke, Philip OBEYED (God's love language is obedience); not going to be able to spread the Gospel if you don't obey God

Acts 8:27

- Eunuch
- The other character in the story is a bit of a surprise as well. The Law had proscribed men with crushed, mutilated, or missing genitalia from full participation in Israel's worship (Leviticus 21:20; Deuteronomy 23:1)

- may also refer to a man who is not castrated but is impotent, celibate, or otherwise unlikely to pro-create.
- Eunuch - castrated male, typically castrated before puberty, be seen as “safe among women” and to perform social functions for royalty (like being a treasurer) Law said this guy was not - physical identity impacted his spiritual standing (law - this guy is ‘out of bounds’ in terms of his ability to be in a close relationship with God and be able to live-out his faith in all the deemed acceptable ways’
- When we’re in Jesus through faith - nothing stands in the way of being reconciled with the Father, including physical identify
 - Jesus’ righteousness makes us righteous before the Father
- Philip doesn’t see Eunuch as inferior outsider, but simply sees as a person in need of some good news

Acts 8:28-29

- Spirit Spoke; Philip listened; Philip obeyed

Acts 8:30

- One of most important things when it comes to spreading the Gospel, you have to talk to people [I know that’s painful to all the introverts in the room!]
 - Conversation serves as the pathway to talk about Jesus
 - Unfortunately, more than likely, not going to be as obvious in real life - not going to come across people in Kroger reading the Isaiah out-loud
 - Tips for engagement: “What’s Your Story”; “What does family look like for you?” [‘half sister’; step dad...]; ‘tell me about your tattoo?’...Ask the right questions
 - Look for opportunity to share good news...how Jesus has changed your story...
 - May get the question, “How do you do that?” or “How did you do that?”
 - Opportunity for engagement are all over the place - gotta keep eyes and ear open...

Acts 8:31

- Philip meets the Eunuch where he is - physically in this case, but also spiritually - all at different places Sounds like **Romans 10:14-15**
 - Something to take the pressure off: “Not responsible for anyone else’s salvation; we are responsible to be obedient and share the basic Gospel story...and give people good news”
 - When engaging people, like us, they are just people in need of good news

Acts 8:32-35

- The Gospel...

Acts 8:36-37

- Bible Footnote: Verse 37 - after “What can stand in the way of my being baptized?”
 - Acts 8:37 Some manuscripts include here *Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” The eunuch answered, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”*

Acts 8:38-40

- Like Samaritans, Response of the man was JOY...result of letting Jesus transform your life
- *It’s personal, Jesus died for YOU, often we think “He died for the sins of the world” and he did but its for YOU and for ME and for Everyone*
 - Often Baptism is the ‘next step’ after belief/confession...

Response : Remembrance of Baptism / Baptism

- Remember you’re baptized, and be thankful - a moment for You!
- Chris - give “Remembrance of Baptism” instructions
- Brent - additional invitation to prayer / healing