

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

APRIL 19TH, 2026 // BOOK OF ACTS

OBEDIENCE (ACTS 8:26–35)

"GET UP AND GO..."

During a time of fruitful ministry in Samaria, Philip is given clear directions to get up and go to a desert road. From a human perspective, this didn't make sense. But Philip obeys.

- **Following God sometimes pulls us out of our comfort, but immediate obedience puts us exactly where God wants to meet others and work through us.**

PHILIP SEES AN ETHIOPIAN MAN

As Philip travels along the road, he sees an Ethiopian man who is on his way home from worship. Because he was a Gentile and a eunuch, he was kept at a distance and not fully welcomed in.

- **No one is outside the reach of God's grace. God sees, knows, and draws near to those who feel overlooked.**

PHILIP ENGAGES WITH THE ETHIOPIAN MAN

Philip is told by the Spirit to "go and join that chariot." As Philip obeys and walks toward it, he hears the man reading Scripture, and it is a perfect opportunity for Philip to engage.

- **Are we led by the Spirit (like Philip) or by our feelings? God is opening doors all around us—are we too distracted? Will we step through the doors?**

PHILIP OFFERS TO HELP THE ETHIOPIAN MAN

Philip comes alongside the man and offers to help him understand the passage. The man gladly receives it. Philip shows him that the passage is pointing to Jesus—and from there, he shares the good news about who Jesus is and what He has done.

- **Meet people where they are, and point them to Jesus and God's Word.**

REJOICE (ACTS 8:36–40)

ROADSIDE BAPTISM

When the man hears the good news about Jesus, his heart responds right away—he wants to be baptized! He had just come from a place where he was kept at a distance and not fully welcomed in. **But now, through Jesus, he discovers that he is invited all the way in.**

- **Jesus removes every barrier and invites us in. Have we responded?**

PHILIP'S MYSTERIOUS DEPARTURE

As they came out of the water, the Spirit carried Philip away to continue sharing the good news in other places. Even after Philip was gone, the man's joy remained. Why? **Because his faith was not built on a person. It was rooted in God.**

- **When our faith is rooted in God, our joy doesn't depend on people.**

BLINDED (ACTS 9:1–9)

SAUL'S MISSION

Saul was breathing threats and murder against "the Way." His mission was simple: find Christians and stop this movement. Saul was trying to wipe it out completely.

- **We may not persecute Christians, but we can resist Jesus in quieter ways—through pride, control, or unwillingness to surrender.**

A LIGHT FROM HEAVEN

As Saul neared the city to persecute the Church, a light from Heaven—brighter than the midday sun—suddenly broke in. Terrified, Saul fell to the ground. The man who came to arrest Christians was now arrested by God.

- **Sometimes, the most loving thing God does is disrupt our plans to redirect our lives.**

A VOICE FROM HEAVEN

As the light overwhelmed him, Saul heard the voice of Jesus and came face-to-face with the truth that he wasn't fighting people—he was fighting God. It shook him because he was convinced he was doing the right thing.

- **To persecute Christ's people is to persecute Christ Himself. We, the Church, are the Bride of Christ.**

UTTERLY HELPLESS

Saul began his journey in strong defiance of the gospel, but he entered Damascus guided by the hands of others, having lost his sight. Saul was so shaken by the experience that he was unable to eat or drink for three days. All Saul could do was simply sit in blind silence.

- **In the three days of blindness and deprivation, Saul was dying to himself.**

SIGHT (ACTS 9:10–19)

ANANIAS

The Lord called Ananias, and he responded, "Here I am, Lord." But then God asked him to do something hard—to go to Saul. Ananias hesitated because he knew Saul's mission. But God reassured him; Saul wasn't the same man anymore.

- **Our obedience can be part of someone else's breakthrough.**

"BEHOLD, HE IS PRAYING..."

This indicated a true change of heart in this man who was famous for persecuting the Way. Before this: 1) Saul's prayers were more mechanical than spiritual, 2) he had never prayed in Jesus' name, and 3) he had not prayed with a humble heart, near to God.

- **Saul had said many prayers, but he had never truly prayed.**

"BROTHER SAUL"

Ananias went to Saul, laid his hands on him, and said, "Brother Saul." The first word Saul hears from a follower of Jesus is "brother." In that moment, he didn't just receive a new identity but also a new family.

- **In Christ, we're not just saved; we're adopted. We don't just get forgiveness; we also get a family.**

NEW IDENTITY IN CHRIST

God broke Saul, but He didn't leave him broken. He broke him so He could fill him. And when Saul could finally see—both physically and spiritually—his first response was to identify with Jesus through baptism.

- **We must surrender and die to ourselves so God can fill us and make us alive.**

DO WE WANT TO KNOW GOD?

- The eunuch wasn't fully welcomed, yet he still went searching. You may feel distant or out of place, but don't stop seeking. A seeking heart will always be met by a faithful God.
- The eunuch didn't just read; he wanted to understand. **God invites us to know Him, not just know about Him.**

ARE WE LED BY THE SPIRIT?

- Philip lived with intentional awareness and was led by the Spirit.
- Do we position ourselves to hear from God? If our life is full of noise, our heart will rarely be still enough to hear the Spirit.
- **Will we sit still long enough to hear from God? Are we willing to obey what He tells us? God knows what's best for us.**

HAVE WE HUMBLY SURRENDERED?

- Saul stood strong one moment and fell to the ground the next. An encounter with Jesus will humble us. *Will we respond with surrender or continue to resist?*
- Saul lost his sight but gained true vision. **Sometimes God takes away what we rely on to show us what we need.**
- **Are we willing to die so we can truly live?**

DO WE WANT AN IDENTITY IN CHRIST?

- Saul's past no longer defined him—Jesus did. No one is too far gone. The hardest heart is not beyond the reach of God.
- Identity in Christ places us into a family. We are not meant to walk alone.
- **Will we keep holding onto our old lives? Or will we surrender and receive the new ones Jesus is offering us?**