

## THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

APRIL 19TH, 2026 // THE BOOK OF ACTS

### PHILIP AND THE EUNUCH (ACTS 8:26-40) THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED

Philip was called to leave the success he had experienced in Samaria and go into the desert. There were two roads out of Jerusalem that led to Gaza, and Philip was commanded to take the "desert road" which was seldom used.

- While Philip was being led, there was an Ethiopian man who was being led as well.

### THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH

The eunuch would have been a very dedicated and wealthy high court official of Candace, the Queen of Ethiopia.

- It's possible that his exposure to Judaism, which led to him worshiping in the temple in Jerusalem, came from the Queen of Sheba professing faith in the God of Israel after her encounter with Solomon (1 Kings 10).

### THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME

The eunuch, using his wealth, had purchased a scroll, showing his desire for God's Word.

- It was customary to read God's Word aloud, and the eunuch was traveling down a desert road, reading the words of the prophet Isaiah at just the right time for Philip, who had been told by the Spirit to **"go and join that chariot,"** to overhear the words.

### THE KEY TO UNDERSTANDING THE SCRIPTURES

The passage the eunuch was reading was from Isaiah 53, describing God's suffering servant. The eunuch was missing an important component to the comprehension of the Scripture he was reading: Who is the prophesied Messiah?

- Philip then showed the eunuch how **Jesus often quoted Isaiah 53 as being fulfilled in His death** (Matthew 8:17; John 12:38; Luke 22:37).

### RESPONDING TO THE GOSPEL

Verse 35 says, **"Philip proceeded to tell him the good news about Jesus,"** meaning that he gave a full gospel message. We know the topic of baptism came up while Philip shared what God did for us through Jesus because of the eunuch's response: **"What would keep me from being baptized?"**

- **Is there something stopping us from responding to the gospel today?**

### MYSTERIOUS DEPARTURE

Philip did not simply leave the area led by the Spirit—"the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away." The Greek word used here shows he was suddenly transported 20-40 miles away by the Spirit.

- Philip's miraculous departure didn't stop the Ethiopian eunuch from **joyfully testifying of a greater miracle: salvation through Jesus Christ.**

### ROAD TO DAMASCUS (ACTS 9:1-9)

#### PERSECUTING FOLLOWERS OF "THE WAY"

Saul believed the early Church was immoral and wrong, so he gained permission from the high priest, Caiaphas, to make the six-day journey to Damascus to imprison followers of "the Way."

- Christians being referred to as "the Way" shows that following Jesus, who claimed to be "the way, the truth, and the life" (Jn. 14:6), is **more than an acknowledgement; it is a way of living.**

#### "STILL BREATHING THREATS AND MURDER"

Saul, **full of hatred toward the disciples** (Galatians 1:13) and **convinced of his own righteousness** (Philippians 3), was almost finished making the 130-mile journey to Damascus when, at midday (Acts 22:6), a light "flashed around him" (Acts 26:13), knocking him down to the ground.

- Tradition and paintings depict Saul on a horse, though Scripture makes no mention of it.

#### CONFRONTING WHAT WAS ONCE BELIEVED

The rabbis of Saul's day believed that God no longer spoke to men directly as He had in the days of the prophets. This fracturing of what Saul believed started the moment he heard from God directly, and it was this fracture that led to the tearing down of everything he believed.

- **We must allow truth to tear down the walls of traditions if those things do not align.**

#### HE PERSECUTED GOD, NOT MEN

Saul was confident in the fact that he was justified in the persecution of the early Church because he was punishing those he believed had blasphemed God.

- We can't begin to imagine the shock he must have felt to hear the voice of God ask him, **"Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?"**

#### "WHO ARE YOU, LORD?"

Paul spent the rest of his life searching to understand the answer to the question, **"Who are you, Lord?"** His goal was **"to know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, being conformed to his death"** (Philippians 3:10).

- **We should humbly ask the same, making our goal to be conformed to His image.**

#### "HE WAS UNABLE TO SEE FOR THREE DAYS"

Saul possibly kept his eyes closed because of the bright light, and when he opened them, **he could not see anything**, as the men who were traveling with him **stood speechless.**

It is almost as if God gave Saul physical blindness to match the spiritual blindness he had displayed against Jesus.

In an act of dying to himself, **he did not eat or drink for three days.**

### MY CHOSEN INSTRUMENT (ACTS 9:10-19A)

#### "HERE I AM"

Luke tells us of an ordinary man named Ananias and how he received a vision from the Lord to go to Saul.

- Before Ananias was instructed by the Lord, his response to being called was simply, **"Here I am, Lord."** He was willing, and though he expressed his reluctance, he wasn't saying he wouldn't go as Jonah had.

#### "THIS MAN IS MY CHOSEN INSTRUMENT"

The Lord gave Ananias the assurance he needed about his safety in answering the call by telling Ananias that He had already gone before him and given Saul a vision of him laying hands on him so he might regain his sight.

- In the former persecutor of the Church, **God had chosen a vessel to carry the message of Jesus to the Gentiles and the Jews.**

#### LEAVING THE PAST FOR A NEW LIFE

Saul's vision from the Lord did not include the fullness of what God was calling him to. In His time, Saul would be shown **"how much he must suffer."**

- Saul would leave a life of comfort and privilege to accept a high calling from the Lord, but that high calling would come with a lot of suffering.

#### SENT BY GOD TO COMMUNICATE HIS LOVE

- Saul could not see, so Ananias communicated the love of God and recognized Saul's conversion by laying hands on him and addressing him as **"Brother Saul."**
- God effectively broke Saul with his blindness, but **his conversion that began on the road to Damascus was accomplished** as he regained his sight and was filled with the Holy Spirit.

#### "THEN HE GOT UP AND WAS BAPTIZED"

We are not sure if Ananias talked to Saul about baptism or if the Lord spoke directly to him while he was waiting for Ananias. It's possible he had witnessed the baptisms during Pentecost (Acts 2:41).

- Once Saul was healed physically and spiritually, he immediately wanted to identify with Jesus and His disciples by being baptized.

### THE SPREADING OF THE GOSPEL

- The Ethiopian eunuch shows us the importance of the Word of God and the leading of the Holy Spirit, as well as the urgency to spread the gospel.
- For a person to hear the truth, it must be preached.
- All followers of Christ are called to preach the message of Christ (Matthew 28:18-20).
- *"How, then, can they call on Him they have not believed in? And how can they believe without hearing about Him? And how can they hear without a preacher?"* (Romans 10:14).

#### "I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS" (MATTHEW 28:20)

- Jesus promised His disciples that He would be with them.
- He was with Philip, giving him success in preaching the gospel in Samaria, and He remained with Philip as He called him into the desert.
- He was with Ananias as he went to the house of Judas.

### WHAT'S STOPPING ME?

- Jesus' promise to be with His disciples before ascending into Heaven still holds true for us today.
- We can be confident that God is with us and goes before us wherever He calls us.
- What call have we been apprehensive to answer that we need to respond to today? We need to ask, **"What's stopping me?"**