

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

APRIL 19TH, 2026 // THE BOOK OF ACTS

OBEDIENCE (ACTS 8:26-40)

"GET UP AND GO SOUTH"

Philip had been sharing the gospel in Samaria and was now going even further south into Gentile territory.

- Believers had been forced out of Jerusalem, but now, Philip was clearly being sent.
- **We may not hear an angel, but the Holy Spirit is clearly nudging us to go and share what we know in our community.**

AN ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH

Luke describes a man from modern-day Sudan who would have had wealth and influence but would not have been allowed to fully participate in temple worship because of his race and physical condition.

- Despite his limitations, he was devout and had traveled over 200 miles to worship in Jerusalem. But his heart was not satisfied.

"GO AND JOIN THAT CHARIOT"

Up to this point, Philip was traveling in faith, not knowing his destination.

- When the Spirit told Philip to join the chariot, he ran up to it, then took the initiative to start a conversation.
- **God will give us opportunities, but we must still recognize our part and be ready to take the next step.**

"DO YOU UNDERSTAND?"

Hearing the man reading aloud, Philip recognized an opportunity to proclaim Christ.

- Recognizing his need for someone to interpret, the Ethiopian man invited Philip to sit with him.
- **Jesus is the key to unlocking Scripture. Passages like the one being read by the Ethiopian eunuch cannot be completely understood apart from their fulfillment in Christ.**

WHO IS THIS ABOUT?

The passage from Isaiah 53 describes Jesus as the willing sacrifice for sinners, even to the point of losing His human rights.

- This man understood sacrifice but didn't know that Jesus was the fulfillment of all sacrifices.
- **There will be people who desire salvation and are sincere in their pursuit. It's not enough to hear and desire. The heart that understands the Word eventually bears fruit (Matthew 13:23).**

BEYOND BAPTISM

When they came up out of the water, Philip apparently disappeared, directed by the Spirit of the Lord.

- It seems that the Ethiopian eunuch returned to his kingdom, rejoicing and sharing his new Savior, while Philip continued preaching the gospel as he traveled.
- **Salvation and baptism aren't the end of faithfulness. There are places to go and people to meet. Do we have our eyes open? What will be our next encounter?**

BLIND (ACTS 9:1-9)

BREATHING THREATS

Luke brings us back to Saul and how every breath he took filled his lungs with a passion to destroy the Way.

- With the power of the Sanhedrin behind him, he pursued Christians far beyond Jerusalem.
- **Knowledge does not equal understanding. Many self-righteous religious people don't see their need for a Savior and resent it if you tell them they are sinners.**

"WHO ARE YOU, LORD?"

After being exposed to the light of Christ, Saul heard the voice of Jesus challenge his mission to wipe out the Church.

- Saul recognized the power that struck him blind as the living Jesus and responded in obedience as he continued to Damascus—with help.
- **The Holy Spirit does the work of revealing our blindness. How long will we walk in blindness before we are obedient and receive the sight only He can give? Are we praying for sight?**

CHOSEN (ACTS 9:10-19)

A DISCIPLE NAMED ANANIAS

Luke now introduces us to Ananias, who also had an encounter with Christ.

- Unlike Saul, when Christ called his name, Ananias responded with a simple, "Here I am, Lord."
- **As followers of Christ, we should be ready to follow Him wherever He leads us. But sometimes, we may need clarity.**

A DOUBTING DISCIPLE?

Ananias was available to do God's will, but he didn't seem anxious to obey.

- He knew that Saul had been preying on Believers, so he had some fear in his response.
- He missed the details: Saul was praying. After sharing his observations with Jesus, it was enough to hear Jesus say, essentially, "go and take my name."
- **We don't understand everything. We can even doubt our ability, but we can trust that what God calls us to do, He will equip us to accomplish.**

BROTHER SAUL

Ananias went, found Saul, placed his hands on him, and immediately called him "brother."

- Ananias knew what Saul had done and, in that moment, recognized what Christ had done in Saul.
- Philip could see that the Ethiopian man was not like him, but he could see what Christ was doing in him.
- **Are we so blinded by racism, prejudice, self-righteousness, and hate that we can't see what God is doing in those around us? Do we want God to work in their lives?**

A NEW BEGINNING

After Ananias's declaration, Saul's sight returned, he received the Holy Spirit, and he was baptized.

- Everything was changing for Saul, but it wouldn't be easy, as we will see as we work through Acts.
- **What we see is that even the hardest heart can be softened by God and the most violent opponent can become a servant of Christ, a great champion of the gospel, and a servant to others. Who are we in God's plan to change people?**

LOST

- We know lost people.
- **They are here today and also outside of these walls.**
- **How does that make us feel? Are we worried about what they will do? Are we concerned about their future? Are we worried they may be us?**

SEARCHING

- Everyone is searching for something.
- **Some are satisfied with a portion of the truth, but there is still an emptiness.**
- **What are we doing to get more understanding? Where are we going to find answers? Who are we listening to? Who are we telling? Why are we sharing or not sharing?**

RADICAL

- There needs to be a radical change.
- **We need to start listening to what Christ is saying to us.**
- **He absolutely loves us. He desires to save us. He is the ONLY one who can. He loves to speak to us. He gives us His Holy Spirit to empower us to share with others. Are we expecting something radical to happen in our lives and the lives of the people around us? Why or why not? Do we have a question, or are we just afraid of the answer?**

COMPASSION

- Everyone needs compassion.
- **We can easily forget how God has been patient and compassionate with us.**
- **How people respond to the gospel may reveal what they believe, but how we respond to them may reveal our relationship with Christ. Every response is an open door. Will we take the next opportunity to listen? To share?**