

Acts 8:26-40 ESV

An Example of Philip Living for Christ!

Sunday, May 3 at 8:00 & 10:45 + Monday, 4 at 7 PM

Fifth Sunday of Easter

Join us on Ascension Day, May 14: Meal at 6, Service at 7

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: We live in a world of mostly bad examples – *just read, listen to, or watch the daily news*, but God’s Word is filled with many good examples! Following them do not save us, but they show us how to live as ones who are saved! Today we focus on God’s work through Philip!

What does the Bible say about Philip prior to today’s text?

- Acts 6:1-7: Seven godly men, *which included Stephen and Philip*, were chosen to distribute food to people in the church who were in need.
- Acts 6:8 – 8:3: Stephen was arrested and killed – in response to his bold telling of God’s truth. His death caused most believers in Jerusalem to leave that area.
- 8:4-25: Philip went to Samaria, not to hide but to *proclaim the Christ*. The Bible says that “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” (Acts 8:6 ESV). We now move into today’s text, which leads Philip from Samaria to his next assignment.

1. **Open and Obedient:** 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 [so earlier Philip had fled from Jerusalem to Samaria – to the north; now he was being told to head back toward Jerusalem; then to the west – toward Gaza]. ²⁷ **And he rose and went.** // So the Lord, *through an angel*, made His will clear to Philip: “**Rise and go...**” So we note his openness and obedience: “**He rose and went.**” What about us: Are we being open and obedient to the Lord’s leading?

2. **Right Place and Right Time:** **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** [probably in connection with one of the annual feasts (Lev. 23)] ²⁸ **and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah** [since he was in a chariot, had his own scroll, and had the ability to read, he must have been a wealthy man; we are also wealthy – cars, Bibles, ability to read]. ²⁹ **And the Spirit said to Philip, “Go over and join this chariot** [which may have been stopped for a rest].” ³⁰ **So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?”** ³¹ **And he said, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.** // The Holy Spirit is God, so He knew the location of the Ethiopian eunuch and his need for instruction. Therefore, He put Philip in the *right place* at the *right time*. The Lord is doing similar work *through Pastor May (of Lutherans in Africa)* as he helps Lutheran pastors, evangelists, and seminary students to better understand God’s truth.



What about us: Are we aware of our God-given opportunities? May we always see and seize them!

3. **Opportunity and Teaching:** Regarding our approach to the Bible, Martin Luther wrote: *“We should hear God’s Word with fear [respect] and study it with humility; we should not pounce upon it with our own notions of what is right”* (TLSB, 1851) ³² **Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this** [from Isaiah 53]: *“Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter and like a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he opens not his mouth.”* ³³ **In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth.”** ³⁴ **And the eunuch said to Philip, “About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?”** ³⁵ **Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus.** // So the opportunity was *golden*: The eunuch was reading from the most significant chapter in the OT regarding Jesus’ suffering and death, *yet he did not understand*; therefore, *Philip taught the eunuch about Jesus’ work to remove our sins!* Even though we may be reluctant to speak, let us **treasure** God’s gift of eternal life and **kindly** teach God’s Word to others!
4. **Understanding and Desire:** ³⁶ **And 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?”** [Apparently Philip had taught the eunuch about *God’s work through baptism to impart forgiveness!* Maybe Philip had shared these words of Peter: *“Repent and be baptized every one of*

you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38 ESV). So the eunuch *believed God’s truth and desired God’s blessings!* ³⁷ ¹ ³⁸ **And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him.** // As the eunuch **was** made aware of his sin, **was** brought to understand God’s Word, and **desired** to receive God’s blessings, so may God grant those same blessings to many people in today’s world!

5. **Moving On and Next Opportunity:** ³⁹ **And 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.** ⁴⁰ **But Philip found himself at Azotus [on the coast, north of Gaza], and as he passed through he preached the gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.** // So the Lord used Philip to eternally bless the eunuch, who took the good news of Jesus back to Ethiopia – *which is now about 60% Christian!* Then the Holy Spirit *immediately* and *supernaturally* took Philip away to his next assignment.

Conclusion: Even as we live in Christ, may we live with *openness* and *obedience* to the Lord’s will for our lives!

And all God’s people said: **Amen!**

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¹ You may have noticed that verse 37 has been skipped; why? Because it is found in some ancient manuscripts *but not in others*; therefore, many Bible scholars believe those words were added by a man – *not inspired by God*.