



Discussion Notes

Philip's Story, Part 2 • Acts 8:26–40

April 26, 2026 • Kirsten Anonby

Main Theme:

As we walk through the book of Acts, we are coming to see that living in the fullness of the Spirit is both normal and necessary for the believer. The Spirit's leading of Philip as he ministers to the Ethiopian eunuch helps us to gain a deeper sense of what it means to live in this new way. How does the Spirit lead Philip, and how does the Spirit lead us?

Sermon Outline:

If we were to turn this text into a play it would have three characters: Philip, the Ethiopian man, and the Holy Spirit.

Philip: Who is he, and what do we know about him?

- Philip the Apostle, or Philip the Deacon? Likely Philip the Deacon.
 - Acts 8:1 — The Apostles stayed in Jerusalem.
 - Acts 8:14 — The Apostles felt that Philip needed help, might not have felt this way if it was Philip the Apostle.
 - The direction of Acts 8 is towards these Greek-speaking deacons — more able to grasp the idea of the Jesus movement not just being a Jewish thing.
- Philip has had powerful experiences with the Holy Spirit in Samaria.

The Ethiopian Man: What do we learn about him?

- He has power and influence.
 - In charge of all the treasury of Ethiopia.
 - People in this kind of position were often eunuchs.
- He is spiritually hungry.
 - Has made a 3,000km pilgrimage to Jerusalem.
 - Worships YHWH even though as a eunuch he could never full participate in Jewish worship (Deuteronomy 23).
 - Reading the scroll of Isaiah and trying to understand.

The Holy Spirit: Who is the Spirit in this story and how does he lead Philip?

- The Spirit is the one with the plan.
- The Spirit is the one who gives Philip what he needs, but not necessarily what he wants:
 - Just enough direction, but certainly not as much as Philip wants.
 - The Spirit wants to cultivate a trust relationship with Philip.
- The Spirit is the one who has a heart for people that Philip does not know.
 - The Ethiopian man.
 - The Ethiopian people.



Study Questions

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Engage:

- Read the text. At your initial reading, what stands out to you?
- What is your emotional reaction to this story: Excitement? Fear? Anticipation? Caution?
- There are three characters in this story: Philip, the Ethiopian, and the Holy Spirit. If you could sit down and chat with the three of them about this incident, what would you be curious about?

Observe:

- Look over all of Chapter 8: what are some of the qualities that you notice about Philip? How would you describe him? (Note that this is likely not Philip the apostle, but Philip the deacon — see Acts 6:5).
- What are we told about the Ethiopian man, and why do you think these details might be important?
- Look at Isaiah 53, the passage that the Ethiopian is reading. How do you think Philip might have used this text to tell the Ethiopian about Jesus?
- Acts is the story of how Jesus followers moved from being a small Jewish sect to being a multi-cultural movement that eventually made its all the way to Rome. How do you see Acts 8 fitting in that broader story?
- What do you notice about how the Holy Spirit shows up in this story? What does the Spirit do, and what does He not do?

Apply:

- Have you ever acted on a prompting by the Spirit to do or say something? What was that like? What happened?
- What do you notice in this passage about how the Holy Spirit leads and guides?

- What do you want to take away from this passage/from our conversation today?
- Pray for each other.