

# 9/11/22 - Acts 8:26-40 - "Hope in the Desert"

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Date: 11 September 2022

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- [ 0 : 0 0 ] Acts 8, verse 26 to 40. Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, Rise and go towards the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.
- This is a desert place. And he rose and went. And there was an Ethiopian 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 and was returning seated in his chariot. And he was reading the prophet Isaiah. And the spirit said to Philip, Go over and join this chariot.
- So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, Do you understand what you are reading? And he said, How can I? Unless someone guides me.
- And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this. Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter, and like a lamb before its shearers is silent, so he opens not his mouth.
- [ 1 : 0 4 ] And his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth. And the eunuch said to Philip, About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?
- Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this scripture, he told him the good news about Jesus. And as they were going along the road, they came to some water, and the eunuch said, See, here's water.
- What prevents me from being baptized? And he commanded the chariot to stop. And they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized them.
- 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. But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through, he preached the gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.
- This is the word of the Lord. Amen. Let's take a quick poll real quick.
- [ 2 : 1 5 ] Who has, who's using an NKJV or a KJV today? How about the new American, NASB?
- Yeah? You'll see a verse in there that was left out of the ESV due to textual criticism in some of the early manuscripts.
- In verse 37, if you have a KJV or an NASB, you'll see that verse 37, there is one that does not look like the others. We'll just say, you see, we don't have a verse 37.
- So I just want to hit that at the front end, that that's due to some distinguishing things with textual criticism of what was truly Luke's writing.
- And it's often thought that some scribes may have added that in there. So being that it's so far removed with the manuscripts, the ESV, even the Byzantine textual critics left it out.
- [ 3 : 1 7 ] And theirs is very similar to what we have today. So if that is a pondering thought, it doesn't seem like an issue, so I'll just shut my mouth. But if you want to Google later on, that'll be a fun Google search for you.
- But we are definitely going to continue our series today. And look at us. Look at this layout. How about it? Is anybody leaving the church over it?

We were talking about the colors of... Yeah, you're gone? All right. See ya. We were talking about the colors of the carpet not long ago, and it was funny.

So we were just like, let's test them out. Let's rearrange the sanctuary to see where we're at in sanctification and getting along. I am totally kidding.

But I think it disrupted less this morning. We'll just pick on less. There it is.

[ 4 : 18 ] It is great to be at this family gathering of Steel Valley Church today. And so it's exciting to dive into the words of the Book of Acts today.

And we have little sick kiddos at home. I think that there is something going around. But it's great that we're all gathered here. And anybody on the live stream, thanks for joining at a distance.

And we trust that you will recover from your illness or maybe your traveling pursuits that you'll return safely. So let's not delay any longer.

We're going to continue in Acts. And this series has been remarkable in my own life and what God has been drawing out of Scripture over so many weeks.

And honestly, so many hours of just tilling over the words of Scripture. And this is no ordinary book. This is a supernatural book which God inspired for us to reveal who He is and what He is like.

[ 5 : 33 ] And that coming into climatic emphasis in the person of Jesus Christ. This is... If you thought you were just going to church, you're at church. We're going to open God's Word today as we just read.

And so, the sermon title today is Hope in the Desert. The last several weeks, specifically in this series, we have been watching the unfolding drama of the birth and the beginnings of the New Testament church, the early church.

And specifically, within the most recent weeks, we have seen Stephen and Philip. These dramas unfolding within these two guys.

Stephen being stoned to death as being accused of blasphemy. And so, he's out.

And then Luke picks up on the narrative with Philip. And he's like the star character right now in the book of Acts at this moment.

[ 6 : 56 ] These two men were appointed for a specific task. And that was to serving the needs of those back in their day.

Stephen was appointed in Acts 6. Philip was one of those who were appointed in Acts 6. And they were appointed to serve the needs of those back in this day. And additionally, I believe they have truly served our needs today, have they not?

In our faith. By understanding how their critical role played out of the inaugurating God's expansive plan and His promise of hope that has invaded the world.

This is something that began in Acts 1. verse 8. And so continuing today, we meet our newest favorite character in the book of Acts.

He might not be your ultimate character, but it's like watching a TV show. And you got the main character. He's our main character right now. And he's led us through quite a story of his usage by God back in Samaria.

[ 8 : 11 ] Samaria. This is a man named Philip, the man who boldly entered Samaria and sparked a revival in Samaria in this demonic region that was led by Simon, the sorcerer.

If you missed that message last week, I encourage you to check out it on our websites or Apple Podcasts or Spotify. Every platform that you can think of, that sermon is on there.

And so today, we are taken away from Samaria from the large crowds, this revival, this Billy Graham crusade in Samaria.

We're taken away to arrive in a desert. What we're going to see today is that the author of the book of Acts being Luke.

Luke intends for us to grasp that Scripture is Christocentric. Scripture is Christocentric.

[ 9 : 19 ] That means at the center of our Bible reading, the center of these words. Even long ago when the cultural day today will say that we serve an Old Testament God, but there's a New Testament God, and He seems like a nice fellow.

He came and washed people's feet, but this God, He drove out nations and killed them. Same God. And at the center of the message within this supernatural book is Christ.

And so Scripture is Christocentric. Christ is found. If Scripture may be found, there Christ will be. Okay? And furthermore, the impact of this discovery does not yield to geographical borders, economical, ethical borders, or biographical borders.

Secondly, this impact of this discovery prevails among congested crowds at the Billy Graham Crusades and even in a distant land in the deserts, all alone, one on one, in a desolate solitude fashion.

Where Scripture is there, Christ will be found. And where Christ is found, there will hope be found. this is important.

[ 10 : 48 ] Why? Because as I am opening the Word of God to you today, your stress, your anxiety, you could probably look at your work schedule this week and be like, oh, not another week, not another week of trying to juggle vacancies at your job.

you probably have tests going on at school, you have all these to-do lists. As I am opening this book, we are opening it together with our stress, with our anxiety, with our often hopelessness.

And all of that can bow to Scripture's instruction. May we be found in Christ today and find Christ today on our journey and embrace the greatest hope that continues to prevail in our world today.

Before we dive into the three sections I have today, imagine that, three sections. We're diving in, and before I do, I want us to go to prayer at this moment.

I want us to captivate this moment to truly depend on the Holy Spirit to help us. So let's do that. Please join me in prayer. Sovereign God, we come to you and we acknowledge our frailty in this life.

[ 12 : 19 ] We acknowledge that we're often the ones straggling around in the desert, kicking sand, and just trying to figure out things in this life.

Father, we come to you as needing of your help, that unless you illuminate your word to us, it's just words on a page.

We need your help and we need your understanding, we need your guidance today, and we thank you for this time. We praise in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. first section for us today is divine appointments.

And so I'm going to use these sections not necessarily to place points forward. I just want sections to identify what's going on in this section of passage with a point towards the end.

And so what we're going to see is the first section, this divine appointments, Philip and the foreigner. Verse 26 read, just as David read, 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.

[ 13 : 38 ] This is a desert place. And he rose and went. Divine instructions, let's pause there, divine instructions church, rise and go.

Where? South. Samaria's up here, Jerusalem's here, and you're going down here. And it's like, almost like, thank you, angel of the Lord, that is a desert place, why am I going there?

Right? But Philip's response is that he rose and went. Right away, we receive insight of how God often leads the church.

It doesn't make sense all the time. That even the plans that we put together that might make sense in our mind, we know that God's got a whole different set of plans, and watch him do the unthinkable through that.

He is a toe-stepper. And I say that in the most reverent sense of the phrase. He is a toe-stepper for our good.

[ 14 : 53 ] I'd imagine us having a little bit of trouble with these directions. Maybe it's just me, but I don't think I'm alone in this. To embark in this type of journey, you know how long it would take to get from Samaria all the way down?

Right? And now there's speculation at the end of this passage of this like teleporting phenomenon of Philip off to Caesarea, but there's no indication of anything like that.

This was literally a travel, foot travel, maybe a chariot, maybe something riding in the desert, a camel or whatever. But what we know is that Philip did not delay in God's guidance.

And where did, what did he find on this desert place? As we often question God, why are you saying to go here, Lord? Why here?

If you're from out of town, why Youngstown? Right? Most people are trying to get out of Youngstown. Why have you called us here? Well, let's see what he finds on this desert road.

[ 16 : 00 ] The verse continues, and there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, a queen of the Ethiopians who was in charge of all her treasure.

He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah. Well, that's interesting, isn't it? What an interesting set of events.

He's on his way down, gets to that road that the Lord told him to go, and all of a sudden, apart from a couple scorpions around that desert plain, he sees this chariot going by, this guy sitting on it, reading the prophet Isaiah verbally.

It's like an image that you could imagine of just going out in the desert. I'm totally basing this off of movies. I have never been to a desert, but I think that the movies would be maybe an accurate depiction for us sheltered folks like me.

So, out in the desert, you kind of have those heat waves in the distance around the horizon. It distorts the image as you're approaching your destination. But just making a little figure out, you see this chariot coming down, right?

[ 17 : 16 ] This is what Philip saw. Do you see him in this narrative? Who is this mystery man? Who is this guy? Philip says that he is an Ethiopian.

He served, financially, the royal courts. And this is a job that requires great devotion. Great devotion, even to the point of, you ready for it?

Castration. A eunuch. He has devoted his life to the service of the royal courts.

So far as to remove remove any possibility, pun intended, of possibly planning for his future, he would be in it.

He's not worried about a family. He is so devoted to this job that he has cut off any possibility of corrupting the royal family line.

[ 18 : 23 ] divine. This is a devoted person, a eunuch. In the act of such devotion to being a servant, he was physically cut off, literally speaking, but also societally speaking as well.

This man not only was a foreigner traveling in the desert, this man was a foreigner even among his people. They were looked down upon, great devotion they had, great titles and everything, but still you got a guy who is castrated.

It is a sense of ridicule, humiliation, and outcast. He is even a foreigner among his own people. And this led to a second prompting by God to Philip, the first being the angel of the Lord and now in 29.

And the Spirit said to Philip, go over and join this chariot. So Philip ran to him and heard.

He heard him reading Isaiah, the prophet, and asked, do you understand what you are reading? And he said, how can I unless someone guides me?

[ 19 : 40 ] And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. This is divine instructions again. Go and join.

Where? The chariot. I'm with this stranger. That his own family wouldn't join that chariot. Philip's response? He ran.

He didn't putter along. He didn't walk. He ran and had his ears tuned to what this opportunity may possess and hold. And the details of this passage indicate that this chariot, being kind of equivalent, this guy had a lot of money.

He's the treasurer for the royal court. So traveling in a chariot like this, kind of just going along, this was like a luxury. This was like a private jet in those days. So this guy had it made. He's the man, right?

And he was clearly cruising. His private jet was cruising at a reasonable speed that you can come alongside and you don't have to run too much longer. You can hear and comprehend above the traffic of the wheels hitting the sands.

[ 20 : 49 ] You can hear something and the dialogue begins with Philip next to this chariot. Do you understand what you're reading?

How can I? I mean, I was blown away by this remarkable set of progression of events. Philip approaches, he hears and asks, this Ethiopian confesses, I don't know what I'm reading.

How do I know? And he invites Philip to help him, to give his explanation.

This is similar to the microphone that was held out to Stephen by the Sanhedrin that said, what is your plea? This is important and I don't want you to miss this in the text, church.

Philip displays the power of a listening church. In every facet of this text so far, Philip is listening.

[ 21 : 54 ] He is listening. In that we can be reminded in our evangelism. That evangelism, a priority of a Christian.

If you're a Christian, welcome to the mission field. It's time to evangelize. It's time to not conceal your faith, but say, I am a Christian. Welcome to the family.

And this is not just attentive with a message that we want ears to be attentive to us, but there's an aspect of evangelism here that our ears must be attentive to God and others.

others. Philip is attentive to every aspect of God's leading of this moment and this time. And not only that, his ears are attentive to even what the world is asking, being the unbelievers.

Far too often, I believe that the church is guilty of simply listening for the sake of rebuttaling somebody. listening to kind of like, oh, how am I going to sharpen my sword to really slice this argument down to the ground?

[ 23 : 10 ] And not listening to hear, not listening to understand. As if you're standing before a project and not a person. How foolish we can become and have lost this.

This invades not only our witnessing of other people of people who need the gospel, but this is also invading even our relationship with God in our prayers.

Because instead of just listening to God, we're saying, well, I know you said this, but this makes a lot more sense. It might not be as blatant as that, but our lives often reveal this subtle rejection of God's ways.

If we really want to be honest. You see, we must be careful in our evangelism, in our evangelization, from being void of listening to God and listening to those that we are witnessing to.

There is urgency. We can, if we delay from witnessing, somebody may not come to faith in Jesus Christ. Yes, there's urgency, but God operates on His own timeline.

[ 24 : 26 ] Won't He allow one of His future children the opportunity to come to faith in Jesus Christ? Won't He allow the time for us to be patient in our conversations?

Patient to listen and hear before we try to explain? Right? Quality, not quantity. And this isn't just a one-size-fits-all.

This is not saying that all corporate evangelistic endeavors. If God tells me to stand upon the rock at the Canfield Fair and preach the gospel, I mean, that's what you're going to get.

You're going to get the gospel. And God does use those types. He used that in Peter and John's life in the temple. But how often we just kind of have relinquished to this drive-by evangelism.

Throw a Bible and good luck, God's sovereign, and I'm on to my next project. Impersonal. And unfortunately foolish. I want you to think about this in practical terms.

[ 25 : 33 ] I like statistics. Do you know that? I really do like statistics. So I looked up some numbers here. So considering the USA population, the population in America, you've got over 300 million people.

And according to statistics, I mean, we're not going to talk like specific, but we can argue that there's probably about 150 million of those 300 that are Protestant Christians, born-again Protestant Christians.

So that would be just the church, everyone in here, just reaching out to two people to change a nation. Two people to invest in. In Ohio, there's 11 million people, and arguably, and we'll go again, like 7 million of those 11 million are considered Protestant Christians.

That would be less than two people for you, each and every one of you, to invest in. Invest in. Now, Youngstown struggles a little bit.

The numbers go up for us because, I mean, it's highly Catholic and everything. And so we understand that there are 64,000 people in Youngstown, and arguably, you know, 16,000 of those of the 64 were 64 and 16.

[ 26 : 50 ] That would be about every one of us investing in four people. Just four. You want to change a nation?

You want to change a state? You want to change Youngstown? We all have a part in this. And it comes to being obedient to God's leading, and then seizing the opportunity of which God brings into our lives.

And so we're going to talk about this additionally, but allow the Holy Spirit in our lives to be fanned, church. To allow the Holy Spirit to step on our toes.

Yeah, you thought you were going to Home Depot for a piece of wood and a screw that you forgot, and it's the second or third trip that you're making to Home Depot. Amen. Amen.

But if God has led you there for a third time, might there be a reason? This is what we're talking about. Let Him step on your toes. Keep forgetting your nails, too.

[ 27 : 57 ] We see that our priorities are not set by to-do lists, man-made methods of drive-through evangelism, say this and this and this and this, and then all of a sudden, voila, you got a convert.

Right? But let's submit to His to-do list and divine appointments using divine methods. What for unbelievers in your life might you be able to invest in?

So, the second part of this passage, we see a foreign message here. We see this foreign message of who is the servant?

This is, again, think it's a eunuch. He's a man who devoted his life to service. Philip is a man who has devoted his life to service in Acts 6.

And here, guess what we have? We have a text that this eunuch is reading out of the prophet Isaiah of the suffering servant.

[ 29 : 08 ] Verse 32 says, Now, the passage of Scripture that he was reading was, Like a sheep, he was led to the slaughter, and like a lamb before its shearers is silent, so he opens not his mouth.

In his humiliation, justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth.

And the eunuch said to Philip, About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this? About himself? Or about somebody else?

Then Philip opened his mouth and began with this Scripture, where he was at, and he told him the good news about Jesus. About who does this, who is this servant?

Is it talking about the prophet Isaiah? Is it talking about another person? Or maybe me? Right? A man devoted to service.

[ 30 : 17 ] This unbelievable story is just reaching its climax at the reading of the prophet Isaiah. This is where Luke has been taking us in this narrative.

It's the turning point as the narrative is reaching the brink of the mountain. This unbeliever has half of the story here.

He has God's Word in his grasp, but God sovereignly works through the church. He sovereignly works through the church.

Yes, it's the power of God's Word. Faith comes by hearing and hearing the Word of Christ. But look here. Us who are hiding behind our evangelistic efforts, he uses the church to bring about understanding.

And yes, we could fatalistically say, well, God is sovereign and all he needs to do is give someone a Bible. It's up to the Holy Spirit to act. But that's not always the case.

[ 31 : 26 ] Sometimes he's calling you. And so, in the art of exposition, what I'm called to do primarily in this church, Philip is invited to reveal not only how to pronounce the Septuagint words in Greek in this text and all that and give all the cool information and the background stories, but he is given the opportunity in the art of exposition to explain how this passage written by Isaiah fits within the broad scope of God's redemptive plan in humanity.

He exposes of where it fits. It's like a straggling note within a symphony that all of a sudden this note has a place and he takes that lone note and puts it right upon the staff so you hear the melody of the gospel and that being Jesus Christ.

He's got the tools. He's got God's Word, but he needs help in how to use them. That's exactly why we pray for the Holy Spirit to help us every morning that we come here.

And so Philip enters his chariot after this eunuch has already gone through much of the scroll of this section of Isaiah. He's in about chapter early 50s here.

And so it's actually 53. And so Philip enters the chariot. He's gone through these sections, but it's interesting the sections that he just previously got done reading.

[ 33 : 09 ] This eunuch, obviously, it's a pretty long journey. If you have Jerusalem here and he's traveling down a road, oh man, let's turn around because I'm doing it backwards.

So you've got Jerusalem here and then you've got his destination down here. They're on this road like right here. And so it's like a distance of a thousand some miles.

It would be like us traveling by a chariot sitting there down to Myrtle Beach, we'll just say. That's about a thousand. You can check me later. Call me a heretic. That's fine. And so this man has been traveling for a long time.

He's been in the prophet Isaiah. He's been in these chapters. And he's been in these sections written to the post-exilic Israel and introduced post-exilic Israel.

Isaiah is writing to them about a suffering servant. And there's four songs within this. Back in chapter 42 of Isaiah, it introduces this servant.

[ 34 : 14 ] The second servant song is found in Isaiah 49 where this servant would do a specific work in the world and he would have a certain success.

In verse 50 of Isaiah in the third song of the servants, Isaiah contrasts Israel's sin and the servant's obedience.

And then finally, in this last servant song in Isaiah, it's the climatic suffering and triumph of the servant.

That starts in verse chapter 52 of Isaiah. He's got the pages. He doesn't have the context. And Isaiah is one of the most quoted books by Jesus Christ himself.

He's one of the most quoted books by the apostles. And the question to the unbelieving world is who is the servant?

[ 35 : 23 ] Who is the servant? It's time to wake up today, church. Who is the servant? The eunuch is asking the questions that every unbeliever is asking.

It's either by the trajectory of how they're living their lives or by the lie that they have been duped to believe upon. Who is the servant? He's asking the same questions as eunuch.

Is there hope for me? Can my identity be restored? Can I be certain of God's promise even to me? Physically cut off as an outcast and foreigner and now it seems like I am spiritually cut off as an outcast and foreigner within the family of God.

And maybe you're here today. Might you be pondering here the same question? Is there hope? Is there a way that I can be restored and redeemed to be brought into God's promise?

Your life has been marred in sin and you feel you are so far removed from the family of God. Is there hope for us foreigners here today?

[ 36 : 41 ] Well, God's word proposed a life-changing proposition to this eunuch within the scope of his promise in Jesus Christ. He would receive a new identity.

Once he'd be cut off, now he might be grafted in. This is remarkable. This is a new hermeneutic, a new understanding of the text where all Scripture finds its Christocentric fulfillment in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Christ. He came, he died, he rose, he ascended, and guess what, church? He still has yet to return. And Luke records that Philip explained this Christocentric hope not as detailed as Stephen's speech before he died or Peter's sermon in the temple, but the good news that he explains in here is none other than a scriptural message about God's initiative, man's complacency, but a promise of restoration and our response.

That God rules as creator and king over all things and it's not contingent if we believe it. That's who he is. He is creator.



He is king. We live in his kingdom and he is who he is. Our identity then, if that is true, is theological. This is all theological.

[ 38 : 12 ] Every problem in the world, every news headline, 9-11 being so far removed out, yeah, we will never forget where sin was made manifest on every TV across this nation.

Not only that, but we see that man has sinned against God, the creator, the king, and therefore, man is guilty of that sin.

But the solution is foundationally theological too, is it not? God solves the problem himself. God has literally, as clearly as I put on my coat this morning, it's a little bit cold in here, as quickly as I put on my coat, God has clothed himself in flesh.

Right? And because of this sufficient sacrifice then, he satisfied the penalty for sin because the penalty for sin, there is blood involved, blood atonement, not of bulls and calves, as was sacrificed within these pages of quite a mixture of things going on, but now fulfilled in the sufficient sacrifice in Jesus Christ in the flesh.

And a response. We see a response here. from God's grace we come to Jesus Christ in faith.

[ 39 : 41 ] It is God who is given the status by our profession of faith as our creator, as our king. Our little kingdoms that we run selfishly in this life is no kingdom at all.

It's idolatry. You see, the foundation of being lost is theological. The solution is equally theological. Philip opened his mouth stating about whom the hope of Israel is found in.

It's a hope that's available to all who are similarly cut off, not physically but spiritually. And those, if you're a planter and a green thumb that I try to be at times, grafting in, those that have been cut off are now taped and grafted into the vine to create a new creature, a new species.

Look up grafting, too, when you're looking at textual criticism later, too. It's such a fascinating aspect that we often lose its vividness of hope that lasts for us.

When faith is made alive, it's something that changes us. It's a new identity that causes us to run after Jesus and put him first before all things. Let's see how this response occurs within this eunuch's life.

[ 41 : 09 ] In verse 36, we see the third section, a faithful response, immersion into the family. Verse 36, it says, and as they were going along the road, they came to some water.

And the eunuch said, see, here's water. What prevents me from being baptized? And he commanded the chariot to stop.

And they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. 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 about his way rejoicing.

But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through, he preached the gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea. There's this response of what God initiates in our lives that we just can't deny.

And it's almost like if you have been a Christian and you can think back to maybe when that started, that time where you're just like, what do I do?

[ 42 : 22 ] I have this hope. I'm about to sing right now. I got the joy, joy, joy down in my heart. Like, it's just an overwhelming fulfillment in your life that you can't explain.

That everything in your life that once was seen broken and lost and all messed up, all of a sudden you have this peace. It's like the center of a hurricane. And you see that Philip gives this man how to respond.

What do I do? Philip says, go and be baptized. The same words from Jesus Christ at the Great Commission. Right? This is where God's election through grace and faith meets human responsibility of initiating followership.

Look, water. What prevents me from being baptized? Where's the water? And thinking within the context of what occurred previously in Samaria of the gospel finally reaching, he's not saying, where's Peter and John so that I might be filled with the Spirit like all the Samaritans?

No. We see that something has changed. The gospel has come, has breached the walls of Jerusalem and has come to the surrounding lands. At the moment of this person's faith, he is sealed with the Holy Spirit.

[ 43 : 50 ] And he says, where's the water? The baptism by water is a symbol of followership of believers. It's that first response that we do as believers, as one who are immersed into water.

We're immersed into the family of God. It's a symbol of what has happened with the Holy Spirit within you. It's something tangible that people can see.

It's the greatest miracle, this regeneration, that we could ever imagine. And usually, there's nothing that can testify to the world about it other than baptism.

I am a Christ follower. And this eunuch, he responded to that. What a miracle, too.

I mean, who would find desert water? Right? What a miracle in and of itself. And early Christian fathers even write that this eunuch, he returns to his treasurer position.

[ 44 : 55 ] And he was the first missionary in Ethiopia. Read about it. That reminds us of the fulfillment in Acts 1.8.

As quickly as Philip is taken away to continue evangelizing the north, he returns to the north. The Lord says, we've got work to do. We can argue all we want of how that transportation took place, but we serve a sovereign God who works anything according to his plan.

And he may have, poof, there he goes. God is God. We are not. And we can argue that all we want. I would suggest maybe trying that for your next vacation travels.

Let me know how that goes. The gospel continues to be set forth by the way of servants. First, the table waiters, now, the treasurer.

What a monumental, life-altering time for the gospel to have spread from Jerusalem to Samaria and now approaching the ends of the earth. Amen? This is our God.

[ 46 : 05 ] He is living water in the desert. He turns foreigners into family. He opens hearts of unbelievers.

He opens the mouth of believers. We are servants of the Almighty. It is Him we proclaim. It is in Him that we prevail.

This is our great God that we serve. So as we prepare to land this plane today, are we prepared as a church to allow our toes to be stepped on by God?

our timelines, our excuses, our insecurities, our slothfulness, our apathy, our Myers-Briggs letters and things that may be used in our lives as a crutch of why we can't do what we're called to do by the Bible standards or we can actually talk about what it means to die to our flesh, to die to our Myers-Briggs results in order to be living examples of new creations.

Our mission has been set forth by Jesus Christ in the Great Commission to go and is fueled by the Holy Spirit that has come. And now, church, we are without excuse for passive obedience.

[ 47 : 35 ] And even I'm guilty of that at times. I don't have it all together. You'll find me in the grocery store. If you can get inside my head, I'm like, man, I'm looking at my watch and I already spent all this time in the milk aisle looking for this little thing that my wife wants.

Right? All of us guys in the grocery store are lost like it's stuck in Alice in Wonderland's world. Man, it's, I get all these things going through my head and how many times I have disobeyed God and the Holy Spirit's leading in my own life.

So I stand here not anywhere as someone elite. I'm preaching to myself and this text has changed me this week to be attentive to this.

So we are in this together. But a text like this should invigorate us and get us back on our game. Should it not? So return us to our first love. So I want us to remember the mission of the church is seen through its members.

Each and every one of us here today. If your seat is warm, you're part of that mission. There's no excuse. If this is true, we might consider a heightened sensitivity to the spirits of God leading us and guiding us throughout our day.

[ 48 : 54 ] Charles Spurgeon put it wonderfully regarding the Spirit of God. He said, without the Spirit of God, we can do nothing. We can do nothing. And we are as ships without the winds, branches without sap, and like coals without fire.

We are useless. Do not live as useless Christians. Not just drive by evangelism, throw a track at somebody, run away, but a conversational endeavor of listening, of hearing, bringing understanding.

Second thing I want us to remember is may we as missionaries be tuned in and obedient to the promptings of the Holy Spirit in our lives, that we may live a life of surrender to His leading.

This is not living this life out of coincidence, but living this life out of providence, that every moment in our weeks is providentially served and brought to us by God Himself.

Do not pass those opportunities up. With that, might we finally see that God works at an individual basis, He works in big crowds, He works in all shapes and sizes, He travels His church by all different ways.

[ 50 : 16 ] He is our sovereign God and it's a theological hope for those who are cut off. Authentic Christianity is evangelistic.

Authentic evangelism is theological, right? And authentic theology is Christocentric. May we be empowered in the Christocentric Word of God, all of us, okay?

Or might the question that was asked by the eunuch sometimes be true of us? Do we understand what we are reading?

The fruit of our lives will testify to that answer. And this fruit, church, can change your family, can change our state, can change our nation.

Let's pray.