

ACTS: Advance – “A True Faith” (Acts 8:26-40)

For the week of February 7, 2016

Testimony

Have a volunteer share their testimony (5-10 minutes) if there is still anyone who has not had the opportunity to share.

Opening Question

As the church grew, the believers had to depend on God's Spirit more than ever for direction and wisdom. Think of a time when you knew with certainty that God was leading you to do something. How did you know? What happened?

Tell the Story

Tell the story of Acts 8:26-40. Then read the passage. Discuss any missing details from the telling of the story. Finally, rebuild the story as a group.

1. Look back at Acts 8:5-8, 12. Where was Philip ministering? With what results? In Acts 8:26-27 what is Philip told to do? Who gave him his direction? Whom did he meet?

- b. Philip went from ministering to the multitudes to a single man. Compare and contrast the parable of the lost sheep in Matthew 18:12-14.

- a. What would it have been like for Philip to leave a place where so many exciting things were happening to go down a desert road? What would your reaction be if an angel appeared to you and gave you direction?

2. The people Philip shared the Good News with were different in race, rank and religion. The Samaritans were of mixed race, half-Jewish and half-Gentile, and Asiatic, while the Ethiopian was African, probably a “God-fearer,” a Gentile who worshipped God but had not become a full convert. How is reaching others with varied backgrounds a part of God's plan to fulfill the prophecy from Revelation 7:9? On a personal note: is it challenging to share with others from different races, rank and religion? Why or why not?

3. In verse 29 who gave Philip instructions? What was the man reading? What did Philip ask him? What was the eunuch's response?

4. The passage the eunuch was reading was the perfect opening for Philip to share the gospel. It takes both the Word and the teachers of the Word to have an understanding of God's truth. Have you ever been given the same type of opportunity Philip was? Did you take the chance? Share and discuss in your group.

5. What did Philip do at the man's request in verses 36-38? What do you think Philip told the eunuch that made him want to do this? Use evidence from earlier speeches in Acts and/or from Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12.

6. What happened to Philip in verses 39-40? Compare with Elijah in 2 Kings 2:11. What was the Ethiopian eunuch's take away from his encounter with Philip? How did his seeking heart influence what happened?

7. What principles of evangelism do you see in this passage? Discuss in your group these key aspects of this story:
 - The Ethiopian had a seeking heart
 - Philip had a willingness to explain the truth of God's Word
 - Truth and power in God's Word was at work
 - The Holy Spirit was leading and guiding

8. Philip is the first missionary named in scripture and the first person to be given the title of evangelist. Resolve to be a disciple who makes disciples. Who can you share Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23 and 10:9-13 with this week? Do you actively pray to be placed in a situation in which you can have a "conversation" with someone about God and faith?

Pray

- Pray that you would daily yield to the Spirit's guidance, remembering that he guides in many different ways.
- Pray that you would understand and have the desire to proclaim the gospel – the story of God's gracious love and rescue of repentant sinners.
- Pray for the willingness to love people with God's love and then the opportunity to show that love to others.

Final Thought

The ordinary Christian life is an adventure in which extraordinary things may happen at any moment. The Spirit-led believer should expect the unexpected. In an ordinary day, we may see the Holy Spirit connect seemingly disconnected events to form a chain of circumstances that can only be described as miraculous. That's the normal Christian life.