

## **“We’re on a Mission from God”**

by Pastor Jeffrey Miskus

**Text: Acts 8:25**

DATE: June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2011

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Philip is truly on a mission from God. Do you think of your life in this way? Are you on a mission from God? Every Christian is on a mission from God. Every single one of us – repent of every thought that might make you think otherwise. We are all called to share the good news about Jesus.

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Philip obeys the angel and as he makes his way down that desert road he meets and Ethiopian man. This African man was an extremely important official. He was in charge of all the treasury of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. This man was wealthy, powerful, and very influential. He is also on his way back to Ethiopia.

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DATE: June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2011

IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST, OUR CRUCIFIED, RISEN AND ASCENDED LORD, WHO IS NOT DEAD BUT ALIVE, WHO IS NOT IN THE TOMB, BUT IS WITH US HERE, NOW WITH HIS LOVE AND HIS POWER AS HE LIVES AND REIGNS AT THE GLORIOUS RIGHT HAND OF GOD OUR HEAVENLY FATHER. DEARLY BELOVED CHILDREN OF GOD...

We are traveling through the book of Acts – the book of the Bible that records what happened to the Church after Jesus rose from the dead. A few weeks ago we heard how persecution against the Jerusalem Church went viral...

A Pharisee by the name of Saul was going from house to house arresting and jailing anyone connected to Jesus.

We are told that all the followers of Jesus in Jerusalem – about 20 000 - except for the 12 apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. They simply fled the city. Despite this persecution – God was in complete control. What many thought was a tragedy for the church was used by God for good. He used that persecution to spread his Christians all over the area.

Last we heard a Christian by the name of Philip had fled to a city in Samaria. He preached and did miracles in Jesus name and many in Samaria came to faith in Jesus. In fact a famous sorcerer named Simon also came to faith in Jesus and was amazed at the powerful miracles done in Jesus’ name.

Today we continue learning about Philip’s ministry reading from *Acts 8:26-28*, *“Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Go south to the road--the desert road--that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the book of Isaiah the prophet.”*

Philip is truly on a mission from God. Do you think of your life in this way? Are you on a mission from God? Every Christian is on a mission from God. Every single one of us – repent of every thought that might make you think otherwise. We are all called to share the good news about Jesus.

Philip is on his mission from God. An angel of the Lord appears to Philip instructing him to leave Samaria and go south of Jerusalem. And he is very specific – to the desert road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.

An angel instructs Philip. This is our first hint that this particular mission is a very important one. Usually in Holy Scriptures, when God sends angels to instruct believers, he is about to do something or announce something big.

Also notice that God only sends the angel to instruct Philip. God uses people to carry out his mission. The angel's have their role, but God uses us – forgiven sinners - to accomplish his mission in this world.

Philip obeys the angel and as he makes his way down that desert road he meets and Ethiopian man. This African man was an extremely important official. He was in charge of all the treasury of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. This man was wealthy, powerful, and very influential. He is also on his way back to Ethiopia.

Then we are told about the man's faith... He had journeyed to Jerusalem to worship. He was actually sitting in his chariot reading the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. So this man was either Jewish by birth or conversion. He followed the God of Abraham and had made a pilgrimage to the temple in Jerusalem. He is reading the Old Testament, seeking to grow in his faith.

*Acts 8:29-31 tells us what happened next... "The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it." Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. "Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked. "How can I," he said, "unless someone explains it to me?" So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him."*

God's Holy Spirit immediately directs Philip to run over beside the chariot. This African man is the reason the angel sent Philip down this road. Can you imagine Philip's shock as he runs up beside this chariot and hears this man reading the Prophet Isaiah out loud?

But there is more revelation for us here as followers of Jesus. First – Philip is willing to be lead by God's Spirit. I think that there are times in our lives when we have heard God's Spirit telling us to speak up – to engage someone in a conversation about Jesus – and we don't. Philip is a great example to us of a willingness to follow the Spirit's lead.

But there is more hear that we need to see. Philip asks the man if he understands what he is reading. This man is a high official – wealthy – powerful – influential – and also a follower of the God of Abraham. Yet he is not too proud to say he doesn't understand what he is reading. He needs a teacher of Holy Scripture.

And God has sent him one – in fact the teacher is now running beside his chariot. The man immediately has Philip sit with him in the chariot and is ready to learn.

It is important for us to see that God has brought these two men together. God told Philip where to go. God told Philip what to do. God called that Ethiopian official to worship in Jerusalem that year. God set up this meeting – he has a purpose and a plan not only for this African man but also for Africa!

Philip simply humbles himself and follows God's lead. The Ethiopian man humbles himself and admits his need of a teacher. And God is at work, using both of them to do something that will impact the world.

When someone wants to learn about God – God sends them a teacher. Philip was willing to share Jesus and God found him someone to teach. The Ethiopian was willing to learn and God found him someone to teach him.

But let's get back to the account...*Acts 8: 32-33 reads, "The eunuch was reading this passage of Scripture: "He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before the shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth. In his humiliation he was deprived of justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth."*

Now brothers and sisters this passage comes from Isaiah 53. This Scripture was written down by Isaiah sometime around 700 years before Jesus. What is amazing is how clearly it speaks of Jesus and his crucifixion for the sins of the world.

I'll let you read the chapter for yourself but in the passages we the Ethiopian man was reading we hear about a person who was led to his execution... He didn't complain or curse or revile others. Even though he was humiliated, and treated completely unjustly.

*Acts 8: 34-35 reads, "The eunuch asked Philip, "Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?" Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus."* The passage was about Jesus. The good news about Jesus is that His suffering and death on the cross paid for our sins and the sins of the world. The good news that God had sent his Son to fulfill all the promises made in the Old Testament. The good news that our common enemies of sin, death, and the devil were defeated by God for us.

Listen to how this passage ends... *Acts 8: 36-40 "As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?" And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing. Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and traveled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea."* This is what God wants for every human being on the earth...that they believe in his Son, and be baptized in his name for the forgiveness of their sins and eternal life.

The Ethiopian man – now a baptized follower of Jesus – returns to Africa and begins to spread the Gospel there... The good news of Jesus begins to fill Africa. And history bears out that amazing spread of Christianity into Africa. Philip meanwhile is moved by God to another area where he continues on his mission from God.

**We are all on a mission from God.  
Some of us don't know that yet.  
Some of us haven't accepted that yet.**

**And some of us need kind reminders  
like this one.**

**Either way  
God will see that his mission gets done.**