

And He Arose and Went

A sermon by Pastor Byron Chesney 10.31.2021

Act 8:26 - 40

In the very first chapter of the Book of Acts, we read where Jesus once again gives the Great Commission. He says: **Acts 1:8** *But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.*

The events in our opening text occurred shortly after that familiar great meeting on the day of Pentecost when Peter preached and thousands were saved. It was at that point that the Church was empowered and what we know as the New Testament Church was formed.

26 *And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.*

This Philip that is mentioned here is not the same Philip that was a disciple of Jesus. This Philip is also known as Philip the Evangelist. He was one of those that was chosen as a deacon back in Acts chapter 5 when they appointed these men to assist the Apostles in the ministry. Philip was the second deacon that was appointed after Stephen.

Philip had been preaching in Samaria just previous to this. If you look back up to the beginning of this Chapter you will see what he was doing: **Acts 8:5-8: 5** *Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. 6* *And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. 7* *For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed. 8* *And there was great joy in that city.*

...Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.

I asked you to underline those 3 words in your Bible, "**Arise, and go.**" I notice that the Lord spoke to Philip and just gave him the command to "Arise and go." He didn't ask him if he wanted to go he just told him to go. I also notice that he didn't tell him what he would be doing when he went.

May I say to you this morning that God often works through us in steps. The most important step is the very first one and that step is called OBEDIENCE. Without obedience we are unable to accomplish anything for the LORD.

You may have seen the video from a few years ago where Victoria Osteen (who claims to be co-pastor with her husband Joel) saying the following in front of a crowd of 30,000 people: *"I just want to encourage every one of us to realize when we obey God, we're not doing it for God—I mean, that's one way to look at it—we're doing it for ourselves, because God takes pleasure when we are happy. . . . That's the thing that gives Him the greatest joy. . . ."*

First of all she's a heretic and completely WRONG. In fact, your obedience to God is the most important thing to him, not your happiness.

...unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.

Whether he was still in Samaria or had returned to Jerusalem we aren't positive but either way the Angel of the Lord comes to him to send him on another mission trip. He tells him to go South to Gaza which is a desert. Gaza was a Philistine city that was about 50 miles south of Jerusalem. This route that Philip was to take to Gaza would be a well traveled route that many people would take to get from Jerusalem to Egypt.

27 *And he arose and went:...* **And he arose and went.** And here we see Philip obedience kicking in. He arose and went. He didn't make up excuses or cry about it and tell everyone how unfair it was that he should have to be the one who goes. The Bible says that **"he arose and went,"** no questions asked.

There is a cost for following Jesus. Philip was not like the Scribe that claimed he wanted to follow Jesus over in the Gospel of **Matthew 8:19-22** *And a certain scribe came, and said unto him, Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. 20* *And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head. 21* *And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. 22* *But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead.*

People say, "well, that is so unfair of Jesus not letting that man bury his dad." Listen, the Scribes dad wasn't dead. What he means by burying his dad is he didn't want to follow Jesus until after his dad died and he received his inheritance. His dad was alive and well but the Scribe wasn't wanting to leave just yet.

If you are waiting around until it is convenient for you to serve God, then you might as well just give it up right now because it will NEVER be convenient.

27b...and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, **28** *Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet.*

This eunuch of Ethiopia was the intended object of the Lord for Philip to share the Gospel with. He was a high ranking officer in the court of the queen of Ethiopia. He was obviously one that worshiped God and was interested in the things of God because he was reading from the Prophet Isaiah.

29 *Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. 30* *And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?*

Here again we find Philip following the leadership of the Holy Spirit and being obedient. Did you notice that the Bible says that Philip **"RAN" to him?** So obviously the chariot is moving down the road.

Philip never even hesitated when the Spirit told him to go. How many times has God bid you to do something and instead of you going ahead and doing it, you sat around and talked yourself out of it?

Not long ago someone told me that they had it on their heart to do something for someone but they had put it off and decided to just not do it because it has been so long and thought they would look stupid. My friend, if the Lord is in it, you aren't going to look stupid. The best way to avoid things like that is to step out on faith when the Lord is guiding you and just do what he wants you to do. Don't question whether or not the person on the other end is going to understand or think you are stupid. Just do it.

You can only imagine what it must have been like for Philip to approach this high ranking official sitting in a chariot reading a book. Most of us would say things like, "well, they probably don't want to be disturbed," or "they don't want to hear anything I've got to say." I'm sure it wasn't the easiest thing for him to do. Sometimes the work the Lord has laid out for us isn't all marshmallows and fluffy pillows. It seems that everyone wants everything to go smoothly and to fall into place. When in fact, following God's will and being obedient to Him is normally a tough row to hoe.

In Acts 9, the Lord says this about the Apostle Paul to Ananais: **Act 9:15** *But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: 16 For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.*

Even Peter in his writings says: **1Peter 4:12** *Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: 13 But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.*

Back in the 70's that was a popular song by Lynn Anderson that said: "*I Beg Your Pardon, I Never Promised You A Rose Garden.*" Friends, the Lord hasn't promised us a rose garden but he has promised that he would never leave us nor forsake us. Philip believed in that promise and he ran to that chariot.

30b...and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?

And Philip asked him if he understood what he was reading. Now that seems kind of odd to be asking someone doesn't it? I mean, how many people have you come up to while they were reading and asked them if they understood what they were reading? But this was the Lord's way of getting Philip's foot in the door. Of course Philip would be familiar with the Book of Isaiah and so he uses this opportunity to share the Gospel with him.

31 And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.

So we see the Gospel door has been opened and the eunuch asks Philip to come up in the chariot and join him so he could tell him what he was reading. Sometimes that is all it takes, something small to get your foot in the door.

32 The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: 33 In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. 34 And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? 35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.

The eunuch was reading from what we know as **Isaiah 53**, one of the most wonderful chapters of the Bible which gives prophecy of the Jesus the Messiah, 700 years before he was even born. Don't you love how the Lord continues working in this missionary endeavor?

Of course Philip is the perfect missionary to be able to explain this passage of Scripture to the eunuch. The Bible says that Philip **"opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture and preached unto him Jesus."**

In missionary work or sharing the Gospel there are 3 ingredients necessary to win lost souls to Christ. We see all three of these in this story this morning:

1. You must be led by the Holy Spirit. - The Holy Spirit is the one that convicts men of their sins. The Holy Spirit is the one that leads someone to share the Gospel. The Holy Spirit is the one that illuminates the Scripture so that we can understand it. Without the Holy Spirit, true conversion cannot happen.

2. You must be saved by the Word of God. - Let me say to you this morning. People do not get saved by listening to music. The only way anyone might get saved through a song is if the lyrics of the song are from the Word of God.

Music and singing is great to stir the waters and it may aide in someone submitting their will to be saved, however, you are only saved by the Word of God. **Romans 10:17:** *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

3. There must be a proclaimer of the Gospel. - **Romans 10:14:** *How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? That word "Preacher" means "a herald, or a proclaimer, a public cryer." In order for people to hear the Gospel they need a herald of the Gospel to tell them.*

36 And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? 37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. 38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

Now we see the results of Philips missionary endeavors. As the Bible said he preached Jesus unto him. In other words the death, burial, and resurrection and the way unto salvation. Obviously the eunuch believed and so he asks Philip what would hinder him from being baptized? Philip's answer was simple, nothing as long as you believe with all your heart. The eunuch told him that yes, indeed, he believed that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Notice he used the title of Jesus, CHRIST. The Christos, the Anointed one, the Messiah. He recognized Jesus for who He truly was and believed and trusted Him as his Savior. This is true conversion.

The Spirit lead - The Word of God was read - Someone proclaimed the Gospel. It doesn't get any better than that. Then they had themselves a good old-fashioned Baptist Baptizing. It says that they "went down into the water." Full submersion Baptism just the way the Lord ordained it.

39 And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing. 40 But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea.

And just like that, Philip is called away on another missionary journey by the Holy Spirit and is taken away to work.

Now, I want to ask you this morning. How many of us are willing to step out and be led by the Holy Spirit to tell others about Jesus?

How many of us are willing to take the commandment of Christ seriously? **"Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel unto every creature."**

Some people say, "well now, Bro. Byron, he was only speaking to the disciples when he said that and so that commandment was for them and not me." Oh really?

So you want to pick and choose which of Jesus' commandments are for you?

What about what Jesus said over in **Mark 8:34b-35:** *...Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. 35 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it.* --- Is that one not for you either? Because he was talking to his disciples then too.

The command to share the Gospel is for EVERY Christian.

Jesus says to **"Arise and Go"** may it be said that we **"Arose and Went"**