

Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2024

Transformed by Pentecost: Philip & the Ethiopian

## Welcome

- Can you remember experiencing a coincidence – it can be something trivial or important? Or maybe you know of someone else who has experienced a coincidence.

## Word

Read Acts 8: 26-30

### **The Ethiopian was ‘Looking’**

1. What 2 ‘places’ had he been looking? (verses 27 & 28)
2. Were these good places to look? If someone you know was looking for God – where would you suggest to them to ‘look’?
3. Even though he had been looking for God – he still doesn’t seem to have the answers he’s looking for. He doesn’t give up. How easily do you give up? Can we encourage each other to never give up?

*The Ethiopian was looking and he didn’t give up. We need to keep looking or searching for the answers to better understand God and what he wants from our lives. We need to keep looking by developing our relationship with God – going to church, reading the Bible, praying, asking questions, sharing with other Christians etc.*

*When we’re looking in the right places God will make sure we find Him!*

## **Philip was 'Listening'**

4. Why was Philip in Samaria? (It all started with Stephen's stoning – see Acts 8: 1-5)
5. What was happening in Samaria? (Acts 8: 6-8)
6. How do you think Philip felt leaving Samaria – how would you have felt in his shoes?
7. Is there something we should stop doing – even if it's successful – so that we can do something else?
8. How do you think Philip knew it was God speaking? How do we know when God is speaking to us?
9. How do you think Philip felt traveling a long way and then coming across an important official from Ethiopia in a chariot?
10. In verse 30 – we're given a clue to how Philip felt by the way he approached the chariot – what is it?
11. Have you ever experienced God telling you to do something that you don't want to do, or that seems ridiculous? How did you feel, what happened? (If you've never experienced this, how do you think you would feel?)
12. The Ethiopian was a foreigner and a Eunuch both of these were condemned in the Jewish faith – but Philip does not question whether the good news is applicable to this man. Are we sometimes tempted to think that there's no point in sharing the message with a certain type of person?
13. What practical things can we do to help us to listen or hear God's guidance better?

*Philip was listening to God even when God asked him to do something that seemed a little bit ridiculous – leave a successful mission to talk to one man. God knows best and individuals matter to him. The Ethiopian may have taken the message to a whole new continent (Africa) – sometimes we don't see God's big picture, but we need to trust him. God knows who is ready to hear the message and he will point us towards them if we are listening.*

## Looking & Listening

Read Acts 8: 31-35

14. Philip wasn't only listening to God, he also listened to the Ethiopian - he listened to what he was reading, he listened to his questions. Why was that important?
15. As a church are we good at 'listening' to our community or to the people on our frontline? How can we be better at this?
16. Read Acts 8: 35. Philip was ready to explain about Jesus. What can we do to be better prepared for situations like this?
17. Philip started with the scripture that the man was reading – he started where the man was – it was relevant and appropriate for him. How can we be more relevant and appropriate when we share the message – as a church but also as individuals on our frontline?
18. Philip used the Bible to point the Ethiopian man to Jesus – how relevant is this in a biblically illiterate culture? What else can we do to help people understand the purpose of Jesus?

Read Acts 8: 36-40

19. Why was it important for the Ethiopian to be baptised right then?
20. What does the Ethiopian do at the end of this encounter (verse 39)?
21. What does Philip do at the end of this encounter (verse 40)?

*The **Ethiopian** had undergone a transformation and it was important to demonstrate that in a public and physical way. His baptism would be something to look back on and remember, especially as Philip leaves immediately.*

*After this **Philip** seems to settle in Caesarea where he continues as an 'evangelist'. Paul later stays in his house and we're told that Philip's four daughters are prophets (see Acts 21:8-9).*

*In case you're wondering - Philip is not the same Philip who was a disciple of Jesus, but he is the same Philip who was one of the 7 people chosen (including Stephen) in Acts 6.*

## Worship & Witness

- Continue to pray for those people who are on your frontline
- Read aloud the following as people reflect on their journey:

*The Ethiopian was on a journey, Phillip had to go on a journey to meet him*

*Let's think about our journey through life*

*Think about people we have met, people who have been significant*

*Some people may have journeyed with us for a long time*

*Others we just briefly met*

*But they have all been significant*

*Remember those who we share our lives with*

*People who have supported us, encouraged us, taught us*

*People who have been there for us*

*Thank God for your journey,*

*Thank God for those people who have helped you*

*Pray that God will continue to give you his Holy Spirit to help, comfort, guide, empower and encourage*

*Help us Lord to be both looking and listening*

*Totally aware of those God incidences that you provide*

*Give us the courage to seize the opportunity for you.*

## Optional Extras:

- Read John 6: 35-40 to see what it has to say about people who are looking for God.
- A Different way of approaching Acts 8: 26-40 - Identify the 3 questions the Ethiopian asks and then ask the following questions for each one:
  - Why did the Ethiopian ask the question?
  - What did Philip say or do when he heard the question?
  - Was what Philip did helpful?
  - What helped Philip to do that?
  - What would you have done in that situation?