

The Church in the New Testament

(Sunday AM — Church Campus)

Week 4: Evangelism and Obedience

Acts 8:26–40

The story of Philip and the Ethiopian official is one of the most vivid accounts of personal evangelism in the New Testament. Philip was already doing fruitful work in Samaria when an angel directed him to a desert road. There he found an Ethiopian man—a court official of great authority—sitting in his chariot, reading from the prophet Isaiah.

Philip approached with a simple question: “Do you understand what you are reading?” The man’s honest answer opened the door to a conversation that changed his life. Philip began with the very Scripture the man was reading and “told him the good news about Jesus.” The gospel was not a formula disconnected from Scripture; it was the fulfillment of everything the prophets had spoken.

When they came to water, the Ethiopian asked, “What prevents me from being baptized?” He had heard the gospel, believed it, and wanted to respond immediately. Philip baptized him right there. The Ethiopian went on his way rejoicing—not because of an emotional experience, but because he had obeyed the gospel and been united with Christ. This passage teaches the church that evangelism begins with the word of God, leads to faith in Christ, and calls for immediate, obedient response.

Group Discussion: Philip left a successful ministry in Samaria to go to a desert road and teach one person. What does this teach about God’s view of individual souls and the willingness we should have to go wherever God leads?

Personal Reflection: If someone asked you today, “What must I do to be saved?” could you walk them through the Scriptures clearly and confidently? What steps could you take to be better prepared for those opportunities?

Read Acts 8:26–40

Study Questions

1. In verses 26–27, an angel directs Philip to a specific road. What does Philip’s immediate obedience teach about readiness to serve when God opens a door?
2. The Ethiopian was reading Isaiah 53 but did not understand it (vv. 30–31). Why is it significant that Philip began with the Scripture the man was already reading?

3. In verse 32–33, the passage from Isaiah describes one led “like a sheep to the slaughter.” How does Isaiah 53 point to Jesus, and why is this connection central to the gospel message?
4. The Ethiopian asks, “About whom does the prophet say this?” (v. 34). What does this question reveal about the importance of understanding that Christ is the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy?
5. Verse 35 says Philip “opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus.” What does this teach about the content of the gospel message?
6. In verse 36, the Ethiopian says, “See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?” What does this immediate response reveal about what Philip had taught him regarding baptism?
7. The text says they both “went down into the water” and Philip “baptized him” (v. 38). What does this description teach about the mode and meaning of baptism?
8. In verse 39, the Ethiopian “went on his way rejoicing.” What was the source of his joy, and what does this teach about the assurance that comes from obedience to the gospel?
9. How does this passage challenge the modern idea that baptism is optional, merely symbolic, or unrelated to salvation?
10. Looking at Acts 8:26–40 as a whole, what model does this passage provide for how the church should approach evangelism and how individuals should respond to the gospel?

Now or Later

Reflect on these passages: **Isaiah 53:1–12** — The Suffering Servant prophecy Philip explained; **Romans 6:1–4** — Baptism as death, burial, and resurrection with Christ; **Mark 16:15–16** — The Great Commission: believe and be baptized