

Sermon Discussion Questions



LOOKOUT
MOUNTAIN
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

"USEFUL IN THE HANDS OF GOD"

Discuss

In the beginning of Acts, we learned that thousands in Jerusalem came to faith during the first months of the early church (see 2:41, 4:4, and 6:7). We are not told very much, however, about how any of those thousands came to believe. The eighth chapter of Acts starts with what appears at first glance to be a major disaster in the history of the early church: because of great persecution, all of the new Christians (except the apostles) are "scattered." But right away we see the fruit of that scattering. Philip, one of the seven chosen to serve the widows, travels to Samaria and proclaims the Gospel there. And at the end of the chapter, we are given the detailed account of how one person came to know Christ as his Savior. Philip was useful in the hands of God, and the result was that the Ethiopian eunuch joyfully discovered that he, too, was beloved by God.

- 1) The Samaritan woman who met Jesus at the well was surprised that Jesus, a Jew, would ask her for a drink, since Jews did not (as John simply states it) "associate with Samaritans." (Jn. 4:9)
 - What did Philip have to believe about Jesus and about the situation in which he found himself to preach the gospel to the Samaritans? Are there any groups of people that we see today in a way that is similar to the way Jews viewed Samaritans?
 - If we believe that everyone is within God's providence (i. e., that God can call any person to himself) and that God is sovereign over everything, what specific effects should that have on the way we evangelize and share the Gospel?
- 2) There is much in the story of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch that is so unlike anything we encounter today: the chariot, a queen's treasurer reading from a scroll, Philip being suddenly carried away by the Spirit. Yet there is so much that we can learn from the way that Philip interacted with this man.
 - How can we share our faith the way that Philip did? Or, in other words, what might we find ourselves doing if we are humble, caring, and alert the way that Philip was?
- 3) The focus, over and over again in the book of Acts, is on Jesus. Philip, we are told, began with the passage in Isaiah and shared "the good news of Jesus." (v. 35)
 - Christians of almost every theological stripe say that we must make Jesus the center of our message to the world. What these various Christians say *about* Jesus can differ significantly, however. See, for example, this recent video about a "Jesus movement" called "Carry the Love" on U. S. college campuses: <https://carrythelove.com/>. What belief(s) does this video convey?
 - What specifically must we share about Jesus when we tell people the good news of the Gospel? (See Jn. 11:25-26 and Rom. 10:9-10.)

DATE: November 17, 2019

SPEAKER: Joe/Frank

SERIES: Acts

PASSAGE: Acts 8:4-8, 26-40

Pray

LORD GOD,

We praise you for the wideness of your mercy and the welcome you give repentant sinners.

We confess that we are prone to putting limits on your grace, assuming that certain people or certain groups of people are beyond the reach of the Gospel. Forgive our terrible shortsightedness, and fill our hearts with a deep and abiding love for those who do not know you. Make us charitable in the truest sense of that word, loving those around us selflessly and sacrificially.

Finally, Lord, help us to gladly accept every divine appointment you bring into each day, and enable us to be ever ready to listen well before we speak. In the name of our Savior Jesus, who loved us before we loved him. Amen.

PRAY FOR HOME MISSIONS
House Campus Ministry at UTC

PRAY FOR WORLD MISSIONS
Children's Nutrition Program of Haiti