

The Power of the Holy Spirit

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Wait for it...

By Dr. Jeff Meyers

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Church family, today I have an exciting introduction, in fact, many of you I know were a part of an exciting ministry that we have the privilege of being a part of every year know as Vacation Bible School. Just a few weeks ago, we had over 1,000 students and adults here to be a part of that week and one of the things that we did, as you well know, is on Wednesday night we had a family night. We were out in the courtyard, we had everybody there, we had the food, we had the jumpies, just a good ole' time and because it was a sport's theme, we brought basically a sports evangelist to come in, a man, a friend of mine by the name of Chip Minton, and when I introduced Chip, I typically talk about the fact that he served on the USA bobsled team several times, he's got a background in wrestling and all kinds of sports and he bends bars, he breaks bricks and all that kind of stuff, but today I have the privilege of introducing somebody to you not just that bends bars and breaks bricks, it is my privilege at First Baptist to introduce a friend of mine and a friend of yours who God brought back from the dead a few weeks ago, Chip Minton is with us here today.

Chip Minton: Alright, guys, I've got to be honest, I'm so grateful to be here. One of the first things I told Pastor Jeff in the hospital is that I wanted to come back and I wanted to talk to the church. I want to thank you guys for what you did for me. I mean, it happened for a reason. It happened for a reason and I want to thank the nurses, the doctors, everyone that came on stage, even the person that put the AED in the church. There's a few of them around here and that's a valuable thing to have. If it would've been the night before, I wouldn't be here. The night before, I was in Louisiana, a friend of mine named Mike Cleaver. You might have seen him on "Swamp People." Mike Cleaver, his alligator farm. He had a program he wanted me to do for the special needs kids and I drove down and I did it and I'm pretty sure if it would've happened at Mike's alligator farm, he didn't have an AED. The only thing he could do is give me some jambalaya, "Here you go, man. Get better."

He's a good friend of mine but I want you to know, the way it happened here, it was just incredible, the teamwork of people that came on stage. I don't know everything that happened on stage after I passed out. Austin's got a great video of me dying, by the way, but you know, just the way it happened when I was sitting there in the recovery room and I shared this at the first service, I should've been ore concerned. I should've been more

rattled. My wife came, she walked in the emergency room and she's crying. My daughter drove in, she was just upset and rattled and I was still okay. I was still okay and I was telling someone about that incident and I said, "You know, it didn't matter if I didn't wake up. It doesn't matter." They said, "What do you mean? If you didn't wake up, that would mean you would be dead." And I'm okay with that because, "You see, why would you be okay with that, Chip?" You see, June 28, 2003 a while back, I made a decision in my life to accept Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. The Bible says absent from the body is to be present with the Lord, so if I wasn't here, I'd be standing with the Holy Spirit, with God Almighty, Jesus Christ.

Guys, I'm so grateful for that, so I was pretty comfortable with the way it happened. I wish I would've been able to share the Gospel that night but like Pastor Jeff said because of the way things happened, the Gospel was shared more personal at people's houses with families, that a lot of the parents doing the ministering. A lot of times we think it's Pastor Jeff's job to go out and call people in the ministry or to preach the word of God to people but we're all being called into ministry. I shared this earlier, God's probably put someone in your life that you can share the Gospel to and 95-96% of Christians never share their testimony. We never get outside of our box where we don't feel comfortable going out into the world. You say, "I chased the world for the first 33 years of my life, I wanted the satisfaction in the world." If somebody had given me a pat on the back and said, "Chip, you're doing a good job," I thought that was all I needed but that gave me no purpose in life. It gave me no peace. Being on the Olympic team was great but it didn't give me peace. It gave me no purpose. Being a professional wrestler was great but it didn't give me what I was looking for.

Like I said, I woke up every day full of fear but that incredible day on June 28, 2003, in an \$18 a night hotel room, I asked Jesus Christ to come into my life. I believed the Gospel. I believed he died on the cross and rose again. I felt the Holy Spirit come into my life in that room that night and change my heart. It gave me some new desires. All of a sudden I didn't desire the world anymore, I desired Scripture. I wanted to get into the Bible and learn Scripture, not only learn Scripture but apply it to my life and my life radically changed.

For what you guys did for me on June 13, Friday night I was able to go to Jackson, Mississippi and I shared the Gospel in front of 350 people, 80 people responded and they raised their hands, they came forward and they gave their life to Jesus Christ. If you think that's good news, put your hands together and say amen.

Again, I want to thank you guys for allowing me to be here. I followed Pastor Jeff around a long time. We've been friends for about 10 years. A lot of Team Impact programs. We've seen a lot of people come to know the Lord, but this was just done in a different way and I'm still grateful for it. I'm grateful for you guys. I love you guys, thank you.

Jeff Meyers: Let's pray together.

Lord Jesus, today we come to celebrate that no matter what the professionals may say, that you are the Author, you are the Sustainer, and you are ultimately the Finisher of our physical life but more importantly, you're the only one who can give us spiritual life. God, we thank you for the testimony of Chip. We thank you for the first responders. God, we thank you for the nurses and the doctors and all the trained personnel who were on our campus that night, but more importantly, God, we thank you that in that cheap little hotel room years ago, you reached down with your Spirit and you saved a soul out of the clasp of death. God, we thank you not just for physical life, today we thank you for spiritual life and, God, we just pray that the testimony we've heard, the inspiration we've heard, would inspire us to heed the challenge of your word today. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

This morning, I want to encourage you to open your Bibles to the book of Acts 8. As you're turning to Acts 8, if you're a first time guest or visitor with us, we as a family of faith, we're on a journey together in this season studying the person and the work of the Holy Spirit and as we do that, today we come to a title, we come to a subject matter that to be quite honest with you is somewhat redundant. I've titled today "The Power of the Holy Spirit." Now the reason that that is redundant is because in Acts 1 when Jesus Christ has the apostles assemble together, he's telling them that he's about to ascend, he's telling them that the Pentecost event is about to come, just wait in the Upper Room until it does, that when the Holy Spirit comes upon them, they will receive power. Every situation you see not just in the book of Acts but in the New Testament and in our lives through the power of the Holy Spirit, every situation is powerful. However, as you walk through the book of Acts, you see folks that are miraculously healed, you see heaven opened up and Jesus standing at the right hand of the Father, next week you see the Apostle Paul who is blinded by the light on the way to Damascus, in chapter 10, you've got this vision that Peter has of a sheet coming down with all these animals, there are all of these miraculous physical things that happen that I think sometimes we forget that anytime the Holy Spirit moves in our lives, it is a powerful event.

So when we come to Acts 8:26, the reason I want to address this subject from this text is this is just an everyday event in everyday people's lives. We're about to see two men who are just on their course of life and supernaturally, powerfully, the Holy Spirit is going to come and operate and move and coordinate things in their lives where we see the Lord move mightily in their lives. When we come here to Acts 8, beginning in verse 26, we're going to meet the Ethiopian eunuch and we're going to meet Philip, whom we introduced earlier as one of the first called deacons. This is the first incident of what we call personal evangelism, one man sharing with another individual their need for Jesus Christ.

Let me encourage you to turn to chapter 8 of the book of Acts, verse 26. It says,

26 And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goes down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert. 27 And he arose and went: 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. 29 Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join yourself to this chariot. 30 And Philip ran to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Do you understand what you read? 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. 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 speaks 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.

Now I'm going to stop for just a moment there because we're going to finish the passage, we're going to finish the account, but you will notice as you're reading that there are some of your Bibles, there are some of your study Bibles and such, that do not have verse 37 listed straight in the text. Some of them will have it in the margin, some of them will have it down at the bottom. That being said, just kind of locate that because we're going to go ahead and read through verse 37, alright? Are y'all ready? Verse 36,

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 you believe with all thine heart, you may. 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. 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.

Now as I shared with you, this is the first account that we have in Scripture in the New Testament of one person sharing with one other individual their need for Jesus Christ in their life, but yet even though it seems ordinary and even though it seems just in the routine and maybe even the mundane of life, I believe that what you see as far as the Holy Spirit and his power in this story is no less or no more than all of the stories that we find in the book of Acts. So today, the purpose and the goal of the message today is to discuss this issue: how can you and I just in the course of everyday life, experience the power of the Holy Spirit?

I know sometimes we think, "Well, unless the food is multiplied in front of us, or unless somebody walks across the water, or unless somebody is physically dramatically healed, unless somebody who's been dead for a few minutes comes back to life on a flatbed trailer in the middle of the street, then we haven't seen the power of the Holy Spirit." But what you do see here is the power of the Holy Spirit and I want to share with you how

each and every one of us can be a part of the power of God each and every day of our lives. What I want to do is just kind of walk through this passage beginning in verse 26 and just kind of hit the highlights here. What are the things that happened in this scenario? What happens in the course of events? And how can we translate those events into our own lives?

The first thing I want you to notice in verse 26 is participation. The Lord comes to Philip, in fact it is an angel of the Lord in verse 26, and you may say, "Well, I've never experienced that." Fast forward to verse 29 and it says, "and the Spirit said unto Philip." I want you to notice how just everyday the request is, "I want you to go down the street and join yourself to that chariot." In our language today, it would be, "I want you to go around the corner and talk to somebody in a car of a certain brand, in a certain color." Why is this important? Because if we're going to experience the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives, we have got to be a willing, desiring participant in what God is doing in and around our lives each and every day.

It's very reminiscent of the book of Isaiah 6. The story goes that in the year that King Uzziah died, Isaiah saw the Lord high and lifted up. In fact, if you begin to kind of peel away the layers of Isaiah 6, most likely the prophet Isaiah had some type of relationship to King Uzziah so it was an economic travesty, it was a relationship crisis, but he sees the Lord high and lifted up. A very famous passage of Scripture that we usually quote at missions conferences and commissionings and such. The Lord says, "Who shall I send and who will go for us?" Do you remember what Isaiah said? He put his hand up and said, "Send me, Lord." He didn't ask the details. He didn't ask the parameters. He didn't ask how much it was going to cost or how long he was going to have to stay, and what we see in the life of Isaiah, very similar to the life of Philip, is the power of God, the power of the Holy Spirit moving in our lives when we are simply a willing participant. In fact, in the book of 2 Chronicles 16:9 it says that the eyes of the Lord are moving to and fro across all of the earth, seeking whose heart is desirous. In other words, the Lord is desiring to move and wanting to move and active in moving. You and I, just like Philip, when he calls us, when his Holy Spirit says, "I need you to go there," when the Holy Spirit says, "I need you to go over here," when we participate, when we join him, we get to see him move in mighty powerful ways.

So the first thing we see here is just the participation that Philip was willing to take part in. The second thing and this is one of those theological words that gets a little dense is "providence." Notice what happens in verse 27, "he arose and went: 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." He was returning, sitting in his chariot reading Isaiah the prophet. Then the Spirit said unto Philip, "Go near and join yourself to the chariot." Now "providence" is one of those words that I think oftentimes just kind of gets a little misconstrued. Providence is not fatalism. Fatalism is course of events set in place, nothing can change, nothing can alter it. It is what it is. You can't change anything. Providence is a little different definition. Providence is God orchestrating events behind the scenes whether the participants that are a part of it realize the other parts of the plan that God has.

Let me show you what I mean by this particular passage. It says here that this eunuch, the one who was in charge of Candace's treasury, that he was from Ethiopia. You say, "Why is that important?" A thousand years earlier there was a woman by the name of Queen of Sheba who was fascinated with King Solomon, his teaching, his wisdom, and she wanted to know more about the God of the Israelites and the God of the Jews so she made her way up to Jerusalem, she sat with King Solomon, she heard from the Scriptures, she goes back to her home country, what we know as Ethiopia, and a thousand years later, the royal members of the family are still visiting Jerusalem. For one thousand years whatever was taught under Solomon is still interesting to Ethiopians, so much so that they would take a road trip of this magnitude.

Now on the other side of the equation, we've got Philip. Why is that important? Because Philip has only been a believer in Jesus Christ for a short amount of time. I mean, yes he observed the ministry of Jesus, he saw the miracles of Jesus, but the empty tomb was just a few months back, maybe a year in the background. So here's a man who his willingness, his desire to participate in the things of God has only been in existence just for a little while.

So one of the characters is a thousand years of history come to fruition, one of them is maybe a year or 18 months and, by the way, do any of you find it coincidental, accidental that the passage of Scripture that he is reading is Isaiah 53 which is a passage of the Suffering Servant which is all about Jesus? Do you see all this working in the background? One case for a thousand years, one case for 18 months. It just so happens to be the perfect passage to point somebody to Jesus and Philip is right around the corner. My friends, that's what providence is and when we participate and when we're willing like Isaiah or Philip to say, "Okay, God, whatever you tell me to do, I'm there," we have the privilege to be in on the providence of God.

Let me give you a 21st century version of this. It was shared just a few minutes earlier. Chip Minton who was here on behalf of Team Impact for Vacation Bible School, he made mention we've had the privilege of working together for over 10 years. Do y'all think it's accidental, coincidental or a mistake that this year's Vacation Bible School theme just so happened to be sports and we wanted to bring somebody in to share the simple Gospel with our students and families who had an incredible athletic background but also could share the truth and the message of Jesus Christ? So about a year ago is when we planned all this together. It kind of parallels the story, does it not? We had a 10 year relationship, for about a year we put it all together. He comes. Do y'all think it's an accident that he comes to a church that has a full AED program and a fire station half a mile away? In other words, if there was any place where his heart would stop beating that was physically in the right place, it was this place on June 13th and that, my friends, is what we call providence.

You say, "Well, how did all those things orchestrate?" 1. God's behind all the orchestration. 2. Chip years ago decided, "I'll go wherever God tells me to go, whenever he tells me to go." We as a church said, "Hey, why don't we go in this area," and so all

the pieces began to get put together and what do you see? The power of God before our very eyes.

Last but not least, for those of you that were not a part of Vacation Bible School, I can't make this up. Go and talk to Taylor. He'll verify it. Do you think it is a coincidence, do you think it is an accident that the day before Chip had his incident on our campus, that the lesson in VBS was Lazarus? You can't make this stuff up. It's the same story. I mean, can you imagine here you are, Philip, you join yourself to the chariot and he's like, "Okay, how am I going to do this? Isaiah 53, well this is easy. I've got this." When parents and caretakers took children home on June 13th, the students had already heard about Jesus bringing somebody from the dead, then they saw it happen in front of their very eyes. Folks, that's not accidental. That's not coincidental. That's providential is what that is, and that's what we see in this story as well.

So there's the participation, there's the providence, and then in verse 29, I'm going to use a word that you may think is out of order here, you may think, "Well, that should be at the beginning." It's the word preparation. Verse 29, "Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Do you understand what you are reading?" Now, you say, "Why do you use the word 'preparation' in this context?" Because the preparation for this event had been in the process when Philip began to participate with what God was doing.

Let me give you the scene here. When Philip shows up to this chariot, he had no idea who was inside of it. He had no idea who this person would be, he's just following the Spirit's direction in his life. Not only was the Ethiopian eunuch from another continent but he was a Gentile. You say, "Well, why is that important?" Philip had been raised a Jew and they had been told for years, "Have nothing to do with the Gentiles. In fact, if they come to Jerusalem, stick them in the outer court. They are a second class citizens at best."

I know what some of you are thinking, "Well, but God changed all that." Because Peter was on top of a roof, brought this sheet down and said, "Hey, everybody's welcome to the kingdom of God." That doesn't take place until chapter 10. We're in chapter 8 and so the Lord had prepared his heart to share the Gospel with whoever was on the other side of the door. Most likely it was somebody, we know he was a Gentile but because he was from Ethiopia and Philip was from what we know as Israel, most likely they had different shades of color of skin, most likely they even spoke different languages. Now have you ever wondered how is it that Philip could understand what he was reading? How could he hear it? Either A, Philip knew Ethiopian. Slight chance. Or the Ethiopian was speaking Hebrew, even slighter chance.

Do you remember Acts 2 when Peter got up empowered by the Holy Spirit and he spoke and every man heard in their own language? You see, Philip didn't go to the school of preparation to learn Ethiopian because he knew one day he would use it, he hadn't gone to cultural sensitivity class because one day he's going to meet somebody that looks different than him and he needs to know how to act, what he had done in preparation is each and every day of his life he said, "God, wherever you want me, whatever you want

me to do, I'm right there." And the Lord prepared his heart for what was ever behind the door. He doesn't open the door and go, "Whoa, this is gonna be hard!" He just opens it and he begins right there preaching the message.

So you see a willing participant, you see the providence of God acting behind the scenes even for a thousand years in advance, you see a man whose heart was prepared for whatever lay before him in the person of the Ethiopian eunuch. The next thing we see in this passage is preaching. Now you may think to yourself, "Well, that's what pastors do." Well, Chip already took care of that this morning. He told you that about 95-96% of Christians have never shared their testimony or the truth about Jesus in anybody's life or set of circumstances or situations. The word "preach" does not mean sermon. That's not what it means. To preach is to open your mouth and say something; to declare truth.

Now let me bring this into everyday life. How many of you, and I'm not going to pick a specific gender here because it goes both ways, how many of you have been at work one day or in a situation and you've been talking to a fellow worker or friend and say, "Boy, last night my spouse was preaching to me." What that means is they were declaring emphatic truth in your life. There was no pulpit. There was no church and no music before or after it. When we talk about preaching, it just means to open your mouth and talk.

So what does it say here? Verse 35, "Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture," key point and I'm going to take a little rabbit trail here but hold on for me. He didn't preach the latest greatest bestseller. He didn't preach the latest political commentary. He didn't preach the latest philosophical opinion. He preached the Scriptures is what he preached. Folks, you understand that God had orchestrated this, God had prepared his heart and when that Bible was opened up or that scroll in those days, to Isaiah 53, all he did was read, walk him through it and say, "That's Jesus. You need him." He preached the Scriptures. I think sometimes we think we're smarter than God. We need this and we need that if we're going to share. No, you don't. All you need is a Bible and somebody to listen to you. That's it.

He preached the Scriptures but what did he preach? He "preached unto him Jesus." Not his personal pet doctrine. Not a denominational stance. He preached Jesus.

Now some years ago, I had a friend of mine who had an incredible opportunity come into his life. I wish I could tell you this was my story but it's not. He had the opportunity when who we know as the late, great Billy Graham was still alive, to actually go to North Carolina and to meet him face-to-face and to spend time with him in his study. So he made the trek across the country and he did exactly what you would do or I would do, he wanted to make sure he was not late. In fact, he showed up about 45 minutes early because he knew if he was late and something happened, he wasn't getting a second chance at this.

So he's there early and he checks in with the receptionist, tells them who he is, why he's there, and in the complex, the office complex of the Billy Graham Evangelistic

Association, there's all kinds of banners and memorabilia from all the great crusades and overseas travel and they told him, they said, "Hey, I mean, it's an open place. Go. Enjoy yourself. Go walk around. See all the stuff."

So he did. He made his way around the office complex of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and he got to this one place, kind of right there in the middle, and there was just a simple desk with all of these boring looking file cabinets behind it. It didn't seem to work in at least the aesthetics of the room. It wasn't bright and cheerful and colorful and it wasn't about some great crusade, it just looked like plain office stuff and he asked the lady who was at the desk, he said, "What's all the file cabinets?" And she said, "Oh, that's all the sermons that Dr. Graham has preached throughout all the years." He said, "Wow," and she said, "Hey, we've got lots of copies. You can look at them." He said, "I can open up the file cabinet?" She said, "Absolutely. Those are just copies of copies. It's okay. Anybody can see them." They were organized chronologically according to the crusades: Los Angeles, Madison Square Garden, all types of places. They were organized by Scriptures and texts and such.

He was just mesmerized until it came time for him to have his appointment with Dr. Graham. They called him back up to the front and as he was leaving this area, he asked the young lady who was assigned to it, he said, "Ma'am, how many messages are in those file cabinets?" She kind of smirked and she said, "Sir, there's about 2,000 sermons in there. There's only one message." Think about that for just a moment. No matter where you start, you can start in Genesis, you can start in Revelation, you can even start in Nahum or Numbers, you can get to Jesus and that's what he did. Isaiah 53, that may have been a softball of a pitch but what did he do? He preached unto him Jesus.

Then finally we see the possibility. You say, "Well, the possibility?" The story that is laid out here, I want you to think about this Ethiopian eunuch for just a moment. He is lost. I mean, that's what the Bible calls us without Jesus. He is lost. He is spiritual blind. He is desiring to have the answers of life and he can't find them anywhere. He even has in our language, a copy of a Bible, the problem is 1 Corinthians 2 says that if we don't have the Holy Spirit, we're not spiritually discerning and we don't understand what we're reading. He's got a copy of the Bible, he is seeking, he is desiring, but he is lost. Somebody providentially led by the power of the Holy Spirit intersects his life, opens their mouth, tells him about Jesus. He claims that he believes and desires to follow in believer's baptism. Folks, that is the Gospel laid out in its most simplistic nature. Lost, seeking, hear the truth, respond appropriately, follow with believer's baptism.

That's the opportunity. That is what the story is about and yet on either side of this, you see people physically healed, you see people's eyes are blinded, and we forget that when the Lord heals a physical issue, is that power? Yes. When the Lord opens up the heavens, is that power? Absolutely. But I'm going to tell you the most powerful thing the Holy Spirit ever does is he takes a heart that is lost and tainted by sin and he regenerates it, he saves it, and he forgives it. That's the most powerful thing the Holy Spirit does.

So when we talk about the power of the Holy Spirit, it is a changed life for Jesus that is the ultimate demonstration thereof, whether the physical environment around us changes or not. The big question we have to ask ourselves is, "Well, who's eligible? I mean, do you have to work for some high government official like this guy did? Do you have to have an inner networking of folks that you get into contact with whomever?" No. In fact, the Bible says that the Lord seeks to save those that are lost. Plain and simple. And the great news about the story is that anybody who is willing, anybody who is desirous, anybody who calls out to the Lord to be forgiven and be saved can be and will be saved. The opportunity is for any of us and all of us to experience the power of the Holy Spirit taking our tainted, sinful, depraved heart and giving us a new life through Jesus Christ. The opportunity is that it is available to any and all. You don't have to have a special network and you don't have to be well connected, you just have to ask the Lord to save you and forgive you and you, my friends, have the privilege of seeing the power of the Holy Spirit.

Let's bow our heads, close our eyes. You know, today we've heard the testimony of Chip, we've heard the testimony of the Ethiopian eunuch, the question I have is, "What is your testimony?" Has there been that time, has there been that place, has there been that moment in your life where you realized that you were lost, you were in sin, and that the only hope for you was Jesus? Maybe today you realized that for the very first time. Maybe today the proverbial lightbulb turned on and you realized your need for Jesus. But I've got some great news for you, you don't have to take a journey in a chariot to the other side of town, you don't have to sign up for a series of course and hope you pass the midterm and the final, you don't have to check off boxes, cross t's or dot i's, the Bible says whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

You know, we talked about providence today, you realize it is by providence that you're here this morning listening to this story of this man in Acts 8, and maybe you're that person saying, "I'm just like him and I need to follow suit." I've got good news for you, that can take place today. His story can be your story. The power of the Holy Spirit can be within and in you as well. Like I said, you don't have to sign up for something, you don't have to check off boxes, just have a conversation with God. Now your conversation with God doesn't have to be out loud, in fact, you don't even have to say the same words I might say but maybe it would go a little something like this. "God, my life's a lot like Chip's. I spent years doing my own thing. I've spent years searching out my own paths and it's gotten me nowhere, but I understand today that Jesus Christ is who and what I've been looking for. So Lord, I just want to begin by stating I'm the problem. I'm the one that's messed up. I'm the one who has sinned. I'm the one who's gone down the wrong path but I believe that Jesus is the only answer to my sin problem. I believe that Jesus Christ loved me so much he was willing to be born on my behalf. I believe that Jesus Christ loved me so much that he was willing to live a sinless life on my behalf. I believe that Jesus Christ loved me so much he was willing to pay the price for my sins on the cross and three days later rose from the dead so I could be forgiven and I could be saved. God, today I don't have all the answers to all the world's problems but I do know that Jesus is the answer to my sin problem. In the best way I know how, I'm asking you to forgive me, I'm asking you to save me. I just want to turn my life over to you."

With our heads still bowed and our eyes still closed, maybe that's the conversation you had with the Lord today. We'd love the privilege of having a conversation with you, just celebrating what the Lord has been, is doing and desires to do in your life. Before I pray, let me remind us the most powerful act of the Holy Spirit is taking an unregenerate, depraved, sin-laden heart and making it new through the empty tomb.

Lord Jesus, thank you that you're still in the saving business. Thank you that you're still in the forgiveness business. Thank you that it doesn't determine by where we've been, what we've done or who we've been with, but it's determined on what you were willing to do on our behalf. God, I pray that today if not already in our lives, we would take advantage of this situation, we would cry out to you for forgiveness and salvation, and we thank you in advance for what you're doing and desiring to do in our lives. It is in the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

I'm going to ask you to stand with me as our team leads us. Whatever decision, I'll be right here at the front.