

AN EARNEST SEEKER AND A FAITHFUL PREACHER

ACTS 8:26-40 • TV-044A

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By

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Acts 8:26-40

“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. 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, Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet. Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, understandest thou what thou readest? 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. 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: In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. 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? 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. 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. 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. But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea.”

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I'd like for you to take your Bible and open it please to the book of **Acts chapter 8** and we will be reading several verses beginning with **verse 26**.

Now I'm speaking today on this subject and I think it is a vital subject and one that will be of interest to all who are listening to the broadcast. I'm speaking on the subject: "**AN EARNEST SEEKER AND A FAITHFUL PREACHER.**"

Now Phillip had been down in Samaria preaching the Gospel and the Holy Spirit came to him and told him to go down into the desert in a place called Gaza between Jerusalem and Ethiopia. And Phillip arose and went.

In the meantime, an Ethiopian Eunuch who was in charge of the treasury for the country of Ethiopia had been to Jerusalem to worship. And the Scripture says in **verse 28 of Acts chapter 8**; "*That he was returning from Jerusalem where he had been to worship, sitting in his chariot, reading Isaiah the prophet.*"

And the Spirit of God said to Phillip, "*Go join yourself to that chariot.*" Phillip ran to him and heard him read the prophet Isaiah. The place where he was reading was **Isaiah 53**: "*He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him and by His stripes we are healed.*"

And Phillip asked him, "*Do you understand what you're reading?*" In **verse 31** the Eunuch said, "*How can I understand except some man should guide me? And he desired Phillip that he would come up and sit with him in the chariot. And Phillip began at the same Scripture and preached unto him the Lord Jesus Christ.*"

And then the Ethiopian asked him; "*Here's water; what doth hinder me from being baptized?*" And Phillip said, "*If you believe with all your heart, you may.*" And he answered him and said, "*I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.*"

Now, I don't know how this Ethiopian Eunuch came to be a seeker of the Lord. I do not know how this Ethiopian Eunuch secured a copy of the writings of Isaiah the prophet. But I do know three things about him, the first of which is this:

First of all: He had become a proselyte to the faith of Israel.

Secondly: He had made a long, perilous, and difficult journey from Ethiopia all the way to Jerusalem to worship God.

Thirdly: I do know this; he was returning home from Jerusalem, sitting in his chariot, with a hungry mind, with a sincere interest in the things of God because he was reading the Word of God.

He was a proselyte to the faith of Israel. He had been to Jerusalem to worship God and he was returning home reading the Word of God.

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Now, two things impress me, and I want you to think about these two things:

First of all: This man was walking in the light that God had given him.

Now, it was just candlelight; it wasn't the full sun of revelation. It wasn't the full revelation of Christ in His beauty and His glory, in His substitution. It was just the candlelight of types and shadows and feasts and special days and so-forth. But he was walking in the light God had given him. He was willing to walk in the light that God had given him.

Now my friend; you and I complain sometimes because of our inability and our insufficiency and our weaknesses and our ignorance and we groan about these things, but is this right when we're not walking in the light that God's given us?

This man went hundreds and hundreds of miles over deserts, mountains, a perilous journey, all the way to Jerusalem from Ethiopia, walking in the light God had given him, seeking more understandings, seeking more light. He was walking in the light God gave him.

And isn't it hypocrisy when you and I complain about our inability and our ignorance and our insufficiency and our lack of knowledge of the Word of God when we're not walking in the light that God has given us? Are you availing yourself of all of the light that God almighty has been pleased to send your way?

I'll tell you another thing about this man; I noticed this, not only was he walking in the light that God had given him, but he was reading the Word of God. He was reading God's Word.

Now, don't tell me that a person is a sincere seeker of Christ and has a sincere interest in the things of God if he is not reading God's Word. I just do not believe that a man is a sincere seeker of Christ and has a sincere interest in the things of God if he is not reading the Word of God. I think it's mocking God to talk about an interest in God and not search the Scriptures.

Here was a man I know that was an earnest seeker of the Lord. I do know this about this man. He was a sincere, earnest, seeker of righteousness, and of a relationship with God and of an interest in the kingdom of God because he was walking in the light God had given him and he was reading the Word of God.

Now, notice the next thing, God sent him a faithful preacher. You have here an earnest seeker walking in the light of God's revelation, seeking a knowledge of Christ, and seeking a knowledge of God. And you have a faithful preacher sent his way by God almighty.

Now, I want to make a few comments right here that I think are applicable especially to this day. We're living in a sad day. The pulpit use to be the center of worship. The pulpit use to be the center of the church.

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It was the glory of the church. It was the center of fellowship. It was the center of worship. It was the center of revival. It was the very heart of the church because there God disciplined His church and there God spoke to His people and there the message was brought from the throne and given to the people.

But today, the pulpit is a worn out, old piece of furniture. No longer does the pulpit vibrate with the glory of God. No longer do the people come and sit and wait to hear from God from the pulpit.

This is the day of organized religion. This is the day of Sunday school. This is the day of retreats. This is a day of ball teams. This is a day of church suppers. This is the day of Gospel singing. This is a day of choirs and testimonies. This is the day of everything but old-time, Holy Spirit, God-anointed, Gospel preaching. It's a thing of the past.

How long has it been since you've heard from the pulpit a message that glorified God, a message that lifted up the Lord Jesus Christ, a message that you felt came directly from God to your heart, not to your head, but to your heart, that God has spoken to you?

Preachers today have become counselors. Preachers today have become ministers of education. Preachers today have become ministers of music and youth directors and promoters and after-dinner-speakers. Preachers today have become everything in the world but preachers and prophets of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The study has been disserted. The door to the prayer-closet has been closed and this has brought upon our churches the wrath and judgment of almighty God. There is very little real preaching, heart preaching, Holy Spirit anointed preaching, Gospel preaching, preaching that pricks men in the heart like Peter did at Pentecost, preaching like John the Baptist who came crying, "*Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*"

Even our Lord was a preacher. The Scripture says that, "*Christ began to preach.*" And one time He said to His disciples in **Mark chapter 1:38**, I believe it is: "*Let's go to these other towns for there I must preach. That's what I came to do, to preach the Gospel to the poor.*"

And then in **Mark 15:16** before He ascended back to heaven He said to His disciples; "*Go into all the world (and do what, promote religion, entertain people?) No sir! "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature."*

Paul said to young Timothy; "*Preach the Word. Be instant in season and out of season. Rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering, but preach the Word.*" In **1 Corinthians 1:21** the Scripture says; "*It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.*"

And even the apostle Paul who was a student of the Scriptures, having had that tremendous experience on the road to Damascus; when God Himself spoke to him and cried; "*Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?*"

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He lifted his eyes to heaven, into the face of that brilliant light and said; *“Who art thou Lord?”* The Lord said, *“I am Jesus of Nazareth whom thou persecutest.”* Saul said, *“Lord what will you have me to do?”* He said, *“You go to a certain place and wait, and it’ll be told you what to do.”* And God sent him a preacher, a preacher. God sent this man a preacher.

And Charles Spurgeon said; “In that great day of the coming of our Lord, in that great day of judgment, in that great day when the sheep shall be separated from the goats, in that great day when some will hear Him say; *‘Depart from me I never knew you.’* And others will hear Him say; *‘Come ye blessed of my Father; enter into the joys prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’* In that great day when the roll is called in glory, it will be found that the preachers of the Gospel with all their imperfections have been the great instruments in the hands of the Holy Spirit in bringing God’s people to eternal life.”

Preaching, how little we hear today. How hungry we are for it. Oh that God almighty would raise up some soul-refreshing, church-reviving, heart-lifting, experimental preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the hands and in the power of the Spirit of God.

Listen to Paul in **Romans chapter 10:13**: *“Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. But how shall they call on Him in whom they’ve not believed and how shall they believe in Him of whom they’ve not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent?”*

You know, the Scripture says; *“Of His own will begat He us through the Word of truth.”* The Scripture says that; *“We are born again, not of corruptible seed, but of the incorruptible seed, the Word of God.”*

But how does this Word come to us? It comes to us through the preaching of the Gospel. Here was an earnest seeker. Here was a sincere seeker, a man who had an interest in the things of God, who was seeking to know God. And almighty God sent him a preacher. And that preacher preached unto him Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

Now I want to point out about three or four things. If you’ll take your Bible and turn with me to **Acts chapter 8** and look at it with me; I want to point out several things that I believe are of an interest from this particular story.

Here’s an earnest seeker, a man walking in the light God gave him, a man diligently searching the Scriptures. Here’s a man to whom God sent a faithful preacher. Now what took place between this seeker and this faithful preacher?

What took place between this man who had a sincere desire to know God and this faithful preacher? There was a question presented first. The preacher asked the first question. He said to the Ethiopian Eunuch; *“Do you understand what you’re reading?”*

What was he reading? He was reading **Isaiah 53**: *“Who hath believed our report? To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, as a root out of*

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dry ground. He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief. He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him and by His stripes we are healed: All we like sheep have gone astray. We've turned everyone to his own way and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

And He goes on talking about an offering for sin and being numbered with the transgressors and making intercession for the transgressors and justifying many by His death. "Do you understand what you're reading?" That's what Phillip asked him. That's what the faithful preacher asked the earnest seeker; "Do you understand what you're reading?"

Do you understand what Isaiah is saying about you and about me? Do you understand that? "*All we like sheep have gone astray. We've turned everyone to his own way.*" Do you understand what that means?

When He talks about, "*Our griefs and our sorrows and our transgressions and our iniquities;*" do you understand what that means? Now there's no need for me to talk to you about an offering for sin if you do not understand that you are a sinner.

There's no need for me to talk to you about justifying many if you do not see your need for justification and your guilt before God almighty. There's no need for me to talk to you about identification with transgressors if you're not a transgressor.

There's no need for me to talk to you about intercession if you have no need for a Mediator. This is where we start. We start where the sinner is. Do you understand what Isaiah's saying about you and me, "*That the Lord God looked down from heaven to see if there were any that did do good, any that did understand.*"

And He found "*They're altogether become unprofitable. There's none that doeth good, no not one.*" *All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned, everyone, to his own way.*"

I'm not talking about the drunkard. I'm not talking about the harlot. I'm not talking about the profane swearer only. I'm not talking about the criminal in prison; I'm talking to you and talking to myself.

I'm talking to preachers, deacons, elders, Sunday school teachers, and church members and people in the pews, and in the world, in the pulpit, and all over the world. "*There's none that doeth good, no not one. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.*"

And sin is not just an act; it's an attitude. Sin is not just my manners but my motive. Sin is not just something I do outwardly; it's something that's within. Sin is not just a word but it is a thought, not just a deed, but it's an imagination.

Sin has to do with my being, with myself and with my soul. "*All have sinned.*" Do you understand that? Do you understand what you're reading? Everyone who came to Christ in the New Testament came to Christ as a sinner.

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He said, *“The well don’t need a physician; it’s those that are sick. I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.”* Christ died for sinners. And the only way that a person is going to come to God for mercy is to feel his need of mercy. The only way a man is going to come to God for grace is when he’s convinced of his guilt. Do you understand that?

Do you understand? Phillip is talking to this sincere seeker. Here’s this faithful preacher talking to a sincere, earnest, seeker. He says; *“Do you understand what you’re reading?”*

Do you understand what Isaiah is saying about you and about me and about all of Adam’s seed, and about all of mankind, about all flesh? *“All flesh is grass. And the goodness of man is as the flower of the field. The flower withereth and the grass fadeth and it dieth.”*

Secondly: Do you understand that salvation is an act and a gift of divine mercy?

Look at **verse 10** in **Isaiah 53**; it says, *“It pleased the Lord to bruise Him. Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin. The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand.”*

There’s no way for a man to find anything unless he goes where it is. Do you see what I am saying? There’s no way for you to find anything that you’re interested in unless you go where it is.

And if you’re interested in salvation, if you’re interested in eternal life, if you’re interested in a right relationship with God you’ve got to go where it can be found. Where is that? That’s to Christ; that’s where it is.

Just listen if you will to **1 John chapter 5:11**; *“This is eternal life. God hath given us eternal life and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son of God hath life and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.”*

Listen to the Word of God; *“Salvation is of the Lord. The salvation of the righteous is of God and of Him only. The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. I will have mercy upon whom I will have mercy. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious.”*

This thing of salvation, eternal life, is not something I do for God. It’s not something I do for myself; it’s something God does for me, it’s something God does for me. *“It pleased the Lord to bruise Him. Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin. The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand.”*

Peter was trying to walk on the water. Christ had bid him come to Him. And Peter was trying to walk on the water. He became conscience of the waves and conscience of the wind and conscience of his danger and he began to sink.

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And then he cried these words; *“Lord, save me or I perish.”* And that’s it. That’s where every sinner must be brought by the Holy Spirit who truly finds mercy. It’s *“Lord; you save me or I perish.”*

Isn’t that what the Publican said in the temple? *“Lord be merciful to me a sinner.”* Isn’t that what the thief on the cross said? *“Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.”*

Isn’t that what the leper said who came and fell on his knees and worshipped Christ? *“Lord, if you will you can make me clean.”* Isn’t that what blind Bartimaeus said sitting by the wayside when Christ came by? *“Lord that I might see.”*

Divine grace is just that; it’s divine grace. Divine mercy is just that; it’s divine mercy. It’s God’s gift to men through Jesus Christ.

Listen to this old-time song; it’s one of my favorites:

**“I’ll go to Jesus
Though my sin like mountains
Round me rolls
I know His courts; I’ll enter in
Whatever may oppose,**

**For prostrate I’ll lie before His throne
And there my sins confess
I’ll tell Him I’m a wretch undone
Without His sovereign grace,**

**Perhaps He will hear my plea
Perhaps He will hear my prayer
But if I perish I will pray
And I will perish only there,**

**I can but perish if I go
I am resolved to try
For if I stay away I know
I must forever die.”**

Do you understand what you read? This earnest seeker sitting there in his chariot reading **Isaiah 53**, this faithful preacher got up beside him and sat down under the leadership and direction of the Holy Spirit.

And if God’s Spirit is not in this we’re all wasting our time. If my voice is the only voice you hear today it will be of no eternal value to you or to me or to anybody else; we must hear Him speak who speaks through His Word, the Holy Spirit.

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He must anoint the Word. He must anoint the preaching. He must anoint your ears and your eyes that you might hear Him and see Christ. And here this faithful preacher sat down beside this earnest seeker and the first thing he asked him was; *“Do you understand what you read?”*

Do you understand your condition? Do you understand your need? Do you understand your guilt? Do you understand your transgressions? Do you understand your iniquity? Do you understand that in the sight of a Holy God you’re a sinner and you deserve His wrath and His judgment? Do you understand that, *“In your flesh dwelleth no good thing?”* Do you understand that?

And then do you understand this that salvation is not something you do for God; it’s something that God does for you. It’s an eternal work. It’s a gracious work. It’s a divine work. It’s a heart work. It’s not just walking an aisle with my feet; it’s coming to Christ in my heart.

Christ said, *“These people worship me with their lips but their hearts are far from me.”* This thing of salvation is not just being alphabetically recorded in a church roll book; it’s having the living God come within your heart and live. *“If any man be in Christ he’s a new creature.”* Do you understand that?

All right; now notice the question that the seeker asked the preacher. He said in **verse 34 of Acts 8**: *“Of whom does the prophet speak, of himself, or some other man?”* Who is this tender plant, this ancient of days, born of a virgin, lying in a manger, wrapped in swaddling clothes, surrounded by shepherds, shepherds and common people?

“Who is this tender plant? Who is this root out of a dry ground,” born to a lost nation, a nation whose glory had faded, a nation like the parched, broken, desert sands, glory gone, all hope gone, the little Jewish nation of Israel, all faded under the heel of the Roman Empire?

Who is this root out of dry ground? Who is this despised, rejected, man, this man upon whom everybody who is anybody turned thumbs down? Who is this man? Who is this man of sorrows acquainted with grief?

Who is this silent sufferer, *“Who is led as a lamb before her shearers is dumb, led before the slaughter, opened not his mouth?”* Who is this man on Calvary, this mutilated, beaten, mass of flesh, that doesn’t even look like a human being?

Who is this man, who is this one whom they take down from the cross and put in a borrowed tomb? Who is this man who arose from the grave and ascended to the right hand of the Father where He sits waiting till His enemies become His footstool? Who is this man?

First of all: He’s the arm of the Lord.

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“To whom is the arm?” And that’s the power of God. Jesus Christ is the power of God. He is the person of God. He is the very image of God. He’s the brightness of God’s glory. He said, *“I and my Father are one.”* God was in Christ.

Secondly: He’s our representative.

Yes, He was sinless, *“No deceit in His mouth. He was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin.”* He’s our representative. He walked this earth in human flesh as our representative.

Thirdly: He’s our substitute.

“He was wounded for our transgressions, (not for His; He had none). “He was bruised for our iniquities,” (not His; He had none). “The chastisement of our peace was upon Him and by His stripes we are healed.”

He is our Mediator. *“He maketh intercession for us.”* And He’s the successful Saviour. Look down there in **Isaiah 53** if you will, at **verses 10, 11, and 12**. It says: *“The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. By His knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many for He shall bear their iniquities.”*

Fourthly: *“And He ever liveth to make intercession for us.”*

If He bore our sins, we don’t bear them. If He died our death we die not. If He redeemed our souls, we are redeemed.

And then this seeker said, “Well what doth hinder me from being baptized, confessing Christ, claiming Christ, and embracing Christ?” Nothing, if you believe. *“For He that believeth on the Son hath life. He that believeth not hath not life!”*