

## EXPAND YOUR WITNESS

### *Acts 8:26–40*

#### OPENING QUESTION

Have you ever faced a situation where you had to stand up for something you believed in, even when it was difficult or unpopular? How did you handle it, and what was the outcome?

#### CONTEXT

The Book of Acts shows how Jesus' followers, initially an insular group, were called to bring the Gospel to the whole world (Acts 1:8). Early Christians began to move outside their communities only when persecution drove them into non-Jewish areas (Acts 8:1). Among those scattered was Philip, a Greek-speaking Jew described as "full of the Spirit and wisdom" (Acts 6:3-5). In Samaria, Philip preached about Jesus, baptized new believers, cast out impure spirits, and healed people, bringing great joy to the city (Acts 8:4-7). Then, the Holy Spirit directed Philip to a less-traveled road leading to a deserted area, where a significant encounter was about to unfold.

#### READ ACTS 8:26–40

<sup>26</sup> Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." <sup>27</sup> So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of the Kandake (which means "queen of the Ethiopians"). This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, <sup>28</sup> and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the Book of Isaiah the prophet. <sup>29</sup> The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it." <sup>30</sup> Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. "Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked. <sup>31</sup> "How can I," he said, "unless someone explains it to me?" So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. <sup>32</sup> This is the passage of Scripture the eunuch was reading:

"He was led like a sheep to the slaughter,  
and as a lamb before its shearer is silent,  
so he did not open his mouth.

<sup>33</sup> In his humiliation he was deprived of justice.

Who can speak of his descendants?  
For his life was taken from the earth.”

<sup>34</sup> The eunuch asked Philip, “Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?” <sup>35</sup> Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. <sup>36</sup> As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptized?” <sup>38</sup> And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. <sup>39</sup> When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing. <sup>40</sup> Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and traveled about, preaching the Gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea.

## DISCUSS

1. Who initiated Philip's journey to the desert road, what kind of ministry was Philip sent out of in Samaria, and what does this suggest about God's guidance in evangelism?
2. What can we learn from Philip's approach when he meets the Ethiopian eunuch?
3. In ancient times, eunuchs often held significant roles in royal courts, serving as trusted advisors and administrators. Their inability to father children made them loyal and non-threatening to royal lineages, allowing them to achieve substantial power and status. Despite this, eunuchs were marginalized and excluded from many religious and social communities. For example, Jewish law barred them from entering the assembly of the Lord (Deut 23:1). Considering the eunuch's significant role yet simultaneous marginalization, how might these factors have affected his understanding of himself, others, and his openness to the message of the Gospel?
4. What is significant about the eunuch's question, “How can I understand unless someone explains it to me?”

## REFLECT

As we reflect on the story of the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8, we see a powerful example of how the Gospel transcends social and religious barriers, welcoming those who have been marginalized and excluded. This narrative challenges us to consider the

ways in which we can embody this radical inclusivity in our own lives. Just as Philip was guided by the Holy Spirit to reach out to the eunuch, we are called to extend the message of Jesus to those around us, regardless of their background or status.

1. How can we be more attentive to the Holy Spirit's guidance in our daily interactions, especially when it comes to sharing our faith?
2. What are some practical ways we can reach out to and include those who might feel marginalized or excluded in our community?
3. Reflect on a time when you felt like an outsider. How did someone's acceptance or inclusion impact you, and how can you offer that same acceptance to others?
4. In what areas of your life can you practice more radical inclusivity, and what steps will you take to make this a reality?

## **PRAY**

Lord, thank You for showing us the power of Your inclusive love through the story of the Ethiopian eunuch. Help us to be guided by Your Spirit, reaching out to those who feel marginalized and sharing the Gospel with boldness and compassion. Amen.