

A Divine Appointment

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[0 : 00] Acts chapter 8, and we'll be reading verse 26 through verse 40. Acts chapter 8, verse 26.

! The Spirit told Philip, Go to that chariot and stay near it.

Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. Do you understand what you are reading? Philip asked. How can I, he said, unless someone explains it to me.

So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. The eunuch was reading this passage of scripture. He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before the shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

In his humiliation, he was deprived of justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth. The eunuch asked Philip, Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about?

[1 : 33] Himself or someone else? Then Philip began with that very passage of scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. As they traveled along the road, they came to some water, and the eunuch said, Look, here is water.

Why shouldn't I be baptized? And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and Philip baptized him.

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. Philip, however, appeared at Azostas and traveled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea.

Where do we read stories like that? That God weaves into history. These things happened, and yet amazing, isn't it?

The things that he did to save one poor sinner who needed to know the Lord Jesus. Well, when persecution broke out against the Christians in Jerusalem, it scattered the believers all throughout Samaria and Judea.

[2 : 52] Samaria is to the north. And what it did is it took gospel seed into new soil, didn't it? Because wherever they went, they spoke about the Lord Jesus. And Philip was one of those scattered believers, and he fled north to Samaria where he preached the good news of Jesus Christ with great success, amazing success.

A whole city of Samaritans, we're told, who had been under the spell of Satan and Simon the sorcerer, were turned from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to the power of God, from hell to heaven, from sadness to joy.

And they were baptized in Jesus' name. They were given the Holy Spirit to live in them. And then the apostles and Philip instructed them further in the word of the Lord.

What a Savior! To save a whole city through his one servant, Philip. But do you know that the Lord Jesus is equally concerned with one individual sinner?

It's not just the masses that he is concerned about. It's each individual person that needs to know him and be saved.

[4:11] That's you if you're without him. He is concerned about you personally. And that's why we see Jesus in the Gospels, not only preaching to the multitudes, but why we find him at night talking to one Pharisee, just one Pharisee, one-on-one with Nicodemus.

And we find him talking to the multitudes and preach, but then we also find him sitting on a well and talking with one immoral woman from Samaria. And then we find him in that parade through Jericho, lying city streets, lying with onlookers, stopping to call one sinner down out of a tree and say, I'm going home to your house.

And he brought salvation to that one man. You see, he cares about individual sinners. One of the lesser presidential candidates had scheduled a town hall meeting in Iowa, but I think it was a snowstorm that hit, and so hardly anybody showed up.

Just one grisly old weather-beaten farmer. And what do we do? We cancel? It was a photo op.

I don't mean to diminish the candidate, but it was an amazing thing. There you saw him, sitting down at a table with an old Iowa farmer, talking, one-on-one.

[5:37] Now that's our Savior, one-on-one. He's here to meet you today. One-on-one, as it were, to deal with the greatest needs that you have.

Jesus is the friend of sinners. We've just sung of, what a friend we have in Jesus, and he's the friend of individual sinners. You know he died to save individual sinners. He didn't die for some amorphous glob of a group of people.

No, he died for individual sinners. He gives his Holy Spirit to individual sinners. He seeks and saves individual sinners. And here in chapter 8, our Lord is pursuing one sinner with his salvation.

And what a pursuit it is. Now, he's an Ethiopian. Aren't you glad that we have an Ethiopian in our congregation?

So, he's probably a black man, this Ethiopian eunuch. He's from North Africa, Northern Africa.

[6:44] He's a Gentile. He's a eunuch, set apart for governmental work, a high-ranking official. We're told he's in charge of all the treasury of Candace, the queen of the Ethiopians.

He's riding in a chariot, and he's got wheels that only a queen could afford, and a attendant serving him. Oh, but don't get lost looking at the outward things.

If you see him as Jesus sees him, you'll look right past all of that, color, clout, cash, and you will see that the most important man, the most important thing about this Ethiopian man is that he is lost and without the Savior.

He's living in this world without hope, and he is going to an eternal hell. He's in need of the Savior. That's the most important thing about him.

So, here's this Ethiopian man perishing in his sins without Christ, and here's Christ's servant, Philip, and he has just the remedy that the Ethiopian needs.

[7:53] The gospel of Christ that is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first, and thank God it doesn't end there, but also to the Gentile, because he's a Gentile, and he's got the remedy for Gentile sinners.

Now, if Christ could just bring these two together, wouldn't that be wonderful? The sinner who needs the gospel and the saint who has it to give. But how will they ever meet?

Philip has fled north, out of Jerusalem, into the area of Samaria, to the north of Jerusalem. And the eunuch lives hundreds of miles to the south of Jerusalem in Ethiopia.

But these two are brought together by a divine appointment, and I want you to know that these divine appointments are happening all the time in your lives as well.

Even if they don't have all the same features that we see here, the same thing is happening with you, dear believers and unbelievers. So we're watching the Lord Jesus bring his messenger of the gospel up here in Samaria to this one sinner who lives hundreds of miles south of Jerusalem and needs this gospel, bringing the life-saving medicine to the dying patient.

[9:14] So we look first at the Lord's message to Philip. That's where it begins, that an angel of the Lord said to Philip, go south to the road, the desert road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.

Now from Gaza, it went on, the road didn't end at Gaza, it went on into the desert and led right eventually to Egypt and Ethiopia. Now consider this message that Philip receives.

The first thing you need to see is that it's from the Lord. That is the Lord Jesus, the head of the church. The book of Acts is talking about Jesus building his church.

So don't miss him in the book of Acts. He is the Lord and he's building his church. He's guiding her in this task of fulfilling the great commission that he left with them to be his witnesses in Jerusalem, in Judea, and all Samaria and to the ends of the earth.

And he's guiding them through this process. Though he is exalted in heaven, he is very involved with his church. It is ultimately his work.

[10:21] And indeed, we'll see him seeking and saving individual sinners. So it's from the Lord Jesus. And here the Lord Jesus sends one of his angels to Philip with a message from him.

Don't expect everything found in the book of Acts to be found in your life today. Remember we talked about that last week? You could wait all your life and never have an angel speak to you.

Remember, these are special foundational times for the church. We don't expect to have an angel talking to us, but we ought to expect the Lord Jesus to lead us by his word that we now had that Philip didn't have completed to be led by his spirit, his word, and his providence because Jesus is still building his church.

Now notice the Lord Jesus did not send an angel to go evangelize the Ethiopian. Now you and I might have done that. The Ethiopian needs the gospel. Okay, angel, you go tell him the gospel.

No, he sends the angel not to the Ethiopian but to Philip, the Christian, like you and me, who's got the gospel. And he's going to tell him to evangelize the Ethiopian.

[11:35] Well, in other words, Christ wants the gospel in the mouths of sinners who have tasted redeeming grace. Not an angel.

An angel's never been lost and saved by the blood of Jesus but you have, dear Christian. You've tasted that the Lord is gracious and Jesus wants you to go and stand by other sinners who need that grace and tell them how good Jesus is as a savior and what he'll do for them even as he did it for you.

Who better to stand by another sinner and tell him the way to be saved than a saved sinner? So it's a message from the Lord Jesus to one of his people and secondly, we need to see it's a command.

This message is in the imperative mood which means it's not a suggestion. It's not, Philip, if you ever get down to Ethiopia maybe you could do that.

No, it's go. It's a command. He's given something to do from the commander-in-chief. Remember who's talking? He's to go.

[12:42] Literally, arise and go. And church, we too have received a command from the Lord Jesus, haven't we? And it's very similar. It's go. Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

Go and make disciples and baptize and teach them to obey everything I've commanded you. His last command was go. And this nation is one of those all nations that we are to be making disciples in as well as every other one.

We, no less than Philip, are under this command to go. But this was a specific word to go to a specific place as we'll see. And that's the next point about this message from the Lord.

It was plain. I mean, clear. It was go and he was told exactly where to go. It would be like the Lord saying, okay, go south to the road, the Bremen Highway, 331, that goes down from Wyatt to Bremen.

You see how specific that is? That's how it was given to Philip. He describes it more than once to make absolutely plain where he wants him to go.

[13:50] It was unmistakable directions. Okay? It was very plain. But next, we need to see that it was as puzzling as it was plain. Yes, it was plain, but it was puzzling.

It was perplexing, wasn't it? Because no destination is given. That's different. Where am I going, Lord?

Go south on the road. So he's told the road to take and the direction to travel on it, south, not north, but not given the destination.

And no purpose is given. Why am I getting on that road? Why am I going to that area, that road that leads out in the desert? The fish aren't biting there, but they're sure biting up here in Samaria.

We're having revival. Oh, why would I go out into a deserted region? That's hardly where I would expect to meet multitudes.

[14:51] Oh, but remember, Jesus is the Savior of individual sinners. So let's imagine Philip going south to get on this road. He's up in Samaria, needs to go south to get on that road, going from Jerusalem down to Gaza and on into the desert.

So he's on the road and he meets a traveling man going the same direction who asks, hey there, traveler, where are you going? South. Well, I can see that.

I see that. But where? Where to? South. And seeing he's getting nowhere with this guy, he changes the question and what are you going to do when you get there?

I don't know where there is and I don't know what I'm doing when I get to wherever there is, would be Philip. Philip's answer. That man would not walk away from Philip thinking, now there's a man who knows where he's going in life.

He would rather look foolish, wouldn't he? And I say that to you that you can feel a bit of the command that came to Philip. Go south on the road from Jerusalem to Gaza.

[16:03] Full stop. No more information. just spells out the road and the direction to travel. Now you and I know what the Lord Jesus is doing, but let's remember Philip doesn't have a clue why he's doing this and where he's going and why.

We've read the rest of the story. We just heard it read, didn't we? But Philip didn't have the rest of the story. He just had a bare command. And the Lord's bare command becomes a test of our faith and our loyalty.

Will we go at his command? Will we bow before him as our maker, as our master, our commander-in-chief? Will we trust and obey him and take him at his naked word even when we don't have a clue why will we obey?

Well, the Lord's puzzling command is met secondly by Philip's unhesitating obedience. You see, Philip didn't even seem to question the Lord at all.

Those were my questions raised, not his. He didn't seem to be bothered by the command at all. It says he got up and went.

[17:25] And in the original, it's better than the NIV. Arise and go, he arose and went. There's such a beautiful parallel in the original.

Arise and go, he arose and went. In other words, he implicitly obeyed the command. Faith, that's faith.

It's implicit obedience. It does not put off obedience until all my questions are answered. faith doesn't need to know why. It's enough to know that the Lord has spoken. As Luther said, not knowing is the glory of faith.

You don't have to know to obey. Faith enables you to obey without knowing. It's content to obey and leave the rest to Christ. It was the same with Abram, wasn't it?

When the Lord came to him and said, leave your country, your people, your father's household, and go into a land that I will show you. It's a command with a lot of unknowns and with a lot of unexplains.

[18:35] But faith doesn't need to know and faith doesn't need to have it explained. It doesn't wait to know. The command is clear. Leave your place and go to a place that I will show you.

And by faith, he went, he obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. I wonder if it's enough for you, the bare command of Scripture.

Is that enough to get you going? Is that enough for your marching to the commander's word? How it pleases and glorifies God when we say, you know, I don't need to know because God's the one telling me.

He sends no one on a fool's mission. He's got a reason for everything and I don't need to have it explained to me. Does he say this? He rose and went. What a beautiful expression of faith's implicit obedience.

May I say that is no small part of the role of the church in your life. Jesus commands the church not only to make disciples and baptize them but to teach them to obey everything he has commanded.

[19:41] As part of our task as the church to be teaching you to obey everything, not picking and choosing but anything that Jesus has commanded. So here's Philip.

He's up and going. He's on the right road going the right direction. And just when further instruction was needed he's given it from headquarters.

This time we're told the Holy Spirit told Philip go to that chariot and stay near it. Join yourself is the word.

Join yourself to that chariot. Be united to it. Stick to it. Now notice again the command is both plain and yet puzzling.

It's plain isn't it? That chariot. No doubt the chariot was just then probably trotting on past him. There weren't a lot of chariots from Ethiopia.

[20:39] These chariots it wasn't the common way of travel. It'd be like meeting the presidential limousine. join yourself to that limousine. No question as to which one it was.

It was very plain. And yet it was still puzzling. Why am I to do this? And it presents new challenges to his faith.

Join myself to that chariot? It's not a taxi. It's not for hire. He looks awfully important. Not just anyone rides in these kinds of chariots and I'm just an ordinary guy.

Who am I? What will he think? Look, he's not stopping for me. I'm going to have to run to catch up and get on to that chariot and join it. It's a moving target. And why? Why am I even here?

Why should I go and join myself to that chariot? Again, let me emphasize, these are my questions. We don't hear him hesitating.

[21:37] Go and join yourself to that chariot. And he's off. He's off. Are we off that quick?

So, it's in this way that we see his faith tested with a bare command and again he obeys at once without delay. Now, all is about to be made clear to Philip as he just keeps moving one step after another in obedience.

It's in that way that he begins to understand why he's here. That God is bringing together the gospel and the sinner, the remedy and the diseased and dying patient.

And he's doing it here on a road that goes through the desert. That's where this sinner is found. You little know what is connected to your acts of obedience to Jesus Christ.

You obey him. You don't know what's connected to that obedience. You don't know what God is doing. Obey like Philip does here. So, we see the message to Philip.

[22:54] We see Philip's unhesitating obedience of faith and we find thirdly the meeting itself. So, Philip's running. Philip ran up, verse 30 says, he ran up to the chariot and he heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet.

And so, he's jogging alongside long enough to identify what he's reading. It's the words of scripture from the prophet Isaiah which tells me Philip knew the word of God that he had.

He could identify that place in scripture as from the prophet Isaiah and it begins to dawn on Philip why he's made this journey, why he's headed into the desert chasing down a chariot.

Do you understand what you're reading? he's running alongside it. He's asking him if he understands. How can I, he said, unless someone explains it to me.

Do you always understand what you read in the Bible? Here we have a man. He needs someone to come alongside. Would you come on up and sit here with me? I was afraid you'd never ask.

[23:58] Yes, and he's up in the chariot. He's with this man. And it's better than a taxi. It's got a scroll of Isaiah in it and an interested reader of it.

And Philip is saying, I get it now, Lord. I see now why when I was back in Samaria, you said, go down on that road from Jerusalem to Gaza and go south. And I understand now, Lord, why you said, join yourself to that chariot.

But folks, he didn't know that before. And it's seldom that we see all the ramifications behind the commands that God gives us in Scripture. Let's not wait till we understand.

Let's obey like Philip. And it will all become clear, the things that God intends. We're told that it was the passage of Isaiah that the Ethiopian was reading.

He was led like a lamb, like a sheep to the slaughter. As a lamb before his shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

[25:02] In his humiliation, he was deprived of justice. Who can speak of his descendants for his life was taken from the earth? Now, that's Isaiah 53 verses 7 and 8 about the suffering servant of the Lord that Isaiah talks about.

And we realize at once he could not be reading a better part of that scroll of Isaiah. We could not have picked a better text for him to learn the gospel of Jesus Christ dying as our substitute.

That's verses 7 and 8. Do you realize what he was reading while Philip was still chasing it down, chasing down the chair? He was reading 5 and 6.

He was bruised for our iniquities. He was crushed for our, he was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities.

The punishment that brought us peace was upon him and by his wounds we are healed because we all like sheep had gone astray. We had turned each one to his own way and the Lord has laid on him the iniquities of us all.

[26:23] Yes, he, he's the one that was led like a sheep to the slaughter. He's the one that didn't open his mouth and who was deprived of justice and whose life was snatched from this earth.

I say, we still go to that passage today to instruct people on the gospel and what Jesus did for sinners.

What a passage. In reading this, the Ethiopian wants to know, tell me please, who is it? Is the prophet talking about himself or about someone else?

Oh, my friend, is it ever someone else? And Philip took that very passage and began to preach to him Jesus.

My friend, this is about Jesus. Let me tell you about Jesus of Nazareth. Just recently, he was slain in Jerusalem. You've just come from there and he was slain there.

[27:33] But he wasn't dying just like any other human being dies. He was the Son of God become man. And because of our sins, we were all damned to eternal hell.

But God laid on him our iniquities. And then God bruised him. God pierced him for our transgressions.

He crushed him because of our iniquities. He punished him because of our need to be at peace with God. And it's by his wounds that we are healed.

This just happened. He was deprived of justice. They had a kangaroo court and they accused him of everything in the books. But I tell you, he was innocent. He didn't open his mouth so that even Pilate was amazed at his silence before his accusers.

And he was snatched from this life. He was slaughtered like a sheep. And oh, he was the Lamb of God. But unlike all the other sheeps slain in the temple, this Lamb of God actually takes away sin.

[28:45] And if you put your trust in him, he will save you from your sins, Mr. Eunuch. What is faith? What does it mean to trust in Jesus?

You lay the hands of your faith upon the head of this Lamb, and you confess your sins upon him, and you trust that he bore those sins to the cross at Calvary and received the full punishment of God's wrath forever right there on the cross, and you will be saved.

Who is it? The prophet himself or someone else? Oh, it's Jesus. And the death that he died, he died for poor sinners like me and you.

Trust in him. How difficult, F.F. Bruce says, how difficult it was to understand the prophecy before it was fulfilled. And you can read all the different Jewish commentary on what they thought this passage was talking about.

Who is this one? This suffering servant? Difficult to understand before it happened, but after it happened, so clear. Of course, it's Jesus.

[29:54] Jesus of Nazareth, the friend of sinners, the Savior of the world. Philip told him the good news about Jesus. Do you know, believers, you can walk up to any person in the world and say to them, friend, I have good news for you.

That's what Philip did. He never met this guy before in his life. Didn't know anything about his history, very little, other than what he could see by what he saw.

He's able to tell him, I have good news for you. It's Jesus Christ. No matter what the color of his skin, a rich, poor, educated, uneducated, social light, whatever.

His greatest need is Jesus and I have him to tell you and to offer you as the Savior of sinners. Let that give you confidence. Now that person that you meet might not know that his greatest need is the Savior and the greatest news he needs is what you're bringing him, but you know it.

So tell him, can I share some good news with you? Well, he not only heard the good news about Jesus, this Ethiopian by the grace of God believed on the Lord Jesus Christ and was saved in a chariot.

[31:14] And as they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, look, here is water, why shouldn't I be baptized? Now, you say it doesn't say he believed. How do you know he believed the gospel and was saved?

Well, I know it because only professing believers are baptized in the book of Acts. Who is baptized on the day of Pentecost?

It was those who accepted the message and repented and believed. Everywhere we've come up to chapter 8, we've seen it. They believed and were baptized. That's what happened up in Samaria.

And so, this man believed and they're traveling along and obviously Philip had told him and taught him as they traveled along that, you know, when a person trusts in Jesus as their Savior, they are to be baptized.

You know, it's the command of Jesus that everyone who trusts in him for eternal life be baptized. It's his chosen sign of discipleship. By going into the waters of baptism, you are identifying yourself as a disciple of this Savior, Jesus of Nazareth.

[32:24] He's mine. I'm no longer the world's. I'm no longer the devil's. I'm no longer myself. I'm his. And he knows that. There is no such thing in the New Testament as an unbaptized believer.

And he says, look, there's water. Why shouldn't I be baptized? And the two of them went down into the water and he was baptized. Is that your desire?

Have you trusted in the Lord to save you? You believe that he saved you and made you his child? Have you been baptized according to the command of Jesus?

If you're interested in pursuing that, and you must be if you're a true disciple, we would love to talk with you about that and plan for it. Well, the divine appointment's over.

Philip's mission is completed. So the Lord moves his servant on to the next assignment. Two of them went down into the water for baptism and when they came up out of the water suddenly and mysteriously and miraculously, the Spirit of the Lord took Philip away and he appeared down at Azotus and he traveled about the coastal region along the Mediterranean preaching the gospel in all the towns till he reached the important harbor city of Caesarea.

[33:43] It seems he settled there because 20 years later we'll find him in the book of Acts living there along with his four daughters and he's called Philip the evangelist.

No question as to why he gets that moniker is there because wherever he went it was Jesus Jesus Jesus well the eunuch did not see him again but went on his way rejoicing interesting that's the same result that the Lord's salvation had in that Samaritan city when the whole city was saved verse 8 concludes so there was great joy in that city and now when salvation has come to this Ethiopian and Philip vanishes from the scene he's not moaning that he lost his friend Philip he goes on his way rejoicing because he's got a better friend Jesus and he's been made glad by the forgiveness of his sins that God will never again bring up his sins against him in judgment well no wonder he went on his way rejoicing he'd been up to

Jerusalem where they slaughtered the lambs you know sacrifices he did not leave with his sin and his guilt atoned for but by one look of faith to the son of God his sins were washed away his guilt taken away no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus he went on his way rejoicing and Ethiopia received back into the palace a light that had now been lit up with the joy of the Lord's salvation oh fortunate Ethiopia to have this eunuch returning with the gospel of Jesus Christ a few lessons and we're done first admire the divine appointment brought about by our sovereign savior you know he knows how to bring about the meeting of the cure and the disease

Philip with his life-saving gospel and the eunuch who's dying to hear it Jesus brings them together from very different points of origin and it just demonstrates so clearly to us the sovereignty of Jesus Christ in salvation he rules over everything think of his control over all the variables and timing to bring about this meeting on this road and just to get these two together over hundreds of miles apart the Ethiopian plans a visit to Jerusalem and now he's going back home on this desert road it wasn't by chance that he he planned the trip and that he's he planned it then and now the Lord was involved in all of that we don't know what all lie behind that but we know the Lord was involved in it and we've seen how he moved Philip into place for the meeting but what if Philip had stalled in unbelief a while and not left right away maybe just waited an hour what if he'd slept in too long as he made his way down on this journey a couple days what if he had stopped too long over lunch and he only got to the road going from Jerusalem to Gaza five minutes after the chariot had already headed out well he never would have met him but the savior who set the divine appointment is sovereign over all the variables and he's able to bring the appointment to pass this one had been given to

Jesus Christ by God the father who chose him before the beginning of the age before he was born chosen this Ethiopian given to Jesus Christ to purchase by his blood and now to receive the Holy Spirit and conversion and Jesus is bringing it to pass think about Jesus control over the passage being read when Philip approached the chariot I mean think about the fact that he's even got a scroll of Isaiah this is pre Gutenberg press time if you've got a scroll of Isaiah some some scribe wrote it out word by word by hand and he's got one an Ethiopian how did that happen and he's reading chapter 53 and when did he start reading did he start with chapter 1 verse 1 then when did he begin reading and how far along his journey has he been reading and if one of his attendants had entered into distracting conversation with him he might have still been back in chapters 15 to 24 that talk about the judgments of the nations hardly the unique passage about Christ dying for sinners we see the Lord bringing this together

[39 : 01] Christ sovereign over all the variables he's beginning to read at just the right time on the journey and at just the right speed of his reading and the speed of the chariot it's going just the right pace and the speed of Philip's walking it's all just right everything so that when Philip runs up alongside the chariot he finds him reading Isaiah 53 verses 7 and 8 but sadly having the scripture was not enough was it he didn't understand it but the Lord Jesus brings a man to ride in the chariot with him and to answer his all important question who is this one not every scroll of Isaiah comes along with an answer man does it Jesus in control of all the variables none of this just happened this is like that archer in the Old

Testament that shot his bow at a random and it just happened that that arrow went flying he wasn't aiming at any one particular person he was just letting it fly at the Israelites and it just happened that it that it caught the king Ahab and it caught him right between the chink in his armor and you say oh what what a happenstance no the wind the angle where Ahab was in his chariot on the battle how he had put on his armor that day where that chink was it was down to the milli inch and God almighty had spoken a word of judgment to Ahab and he guided that missile right to his heart that's the kind of thing we have here Jesus is sovereign in salvation and he brings the diseased one the dying one the life saving medicine just at the right time at the right place such as his seeking and saving of the individual sinner and the same sovereign

Lord is ordering your steps Christians to cross paths with people who do not know the Lord maybe that neighbor that moved in next door to you why did they buy it and not someone else well there's a reason I can't tell you but there is I don't know it but he does he's got that neighbor now planted beside a light make sure you don't hide it under a bushel give light to all that are in the house he's got you in a family an extended family and why are you there maybe it's the person working next to you in the same class at you as you at school the same sports team there they are it's not just chance you've been brought together by divine appointment by the sovereign Lord to bring light in contact with darkness let's learn from Philip to be always ready to obey the

Lord and to be ready to speak of him as he's commanded us to be his witnesses and then secondly let's learn that Philip was just one part in the whole process of the eunuch's conversion he was just one part in the whole process of the eunuch's conversion we can read a passage like this and get disappointed can't we you know when I went up to that guy and shared the gospel with him he didn't believe and asked me if he could be baptized never had that happen to you didn't happen on the first time maybe the second third fourth fifth time tenth time I had a brother here remind me of Alan Beardmore's confession when he was here a month or two ago when he confessed that he had heard the gospel some four thousand times before he was converted and the brother said why is it that when we witness and maybe we share the gospel people walk away we're so disappointed and ready to quit maybe we shared the gospel ten times with them they still don't they have no interest well that may just be the three thousand nine hundred and ninety th time or you may need that many more times before they come to

Christ how many times did you hear the gospel and walk away you see this was just one part in the whole process of the eunuch's conversion it looks like wow one time conversion it may have been the first time he heard about Jesus but there had been a whole lot of work before this chariot ride a whole lot of work on this Ethiopian eunuch and we need to remember that there's a whole lot of plowing and sowing and watering that often goes before the reaping and we don't know which God is doing through us am I just plowing up the ground am I the first one to plant the seed or am I the tenth one the three thousandth one we don't know or am I just here to water it to fertilize it to weed it to pull out some wrong ideas about the gospel but it's

[44 : 49] God who gives the increase and that's his business so Lord make me faithful whatever this is plowing planting watering weeding please use it to bring this man woman boy girl to salvation what had God done in the way of plowing and and sowing and working with the Ethiopian eunuch before the the chariot ride with with Philip well somehow God had brought the Jewish religion that's the Old Testament religion to this man way down in Ethiopia some say it went back a thousand years earlier well that's that's working on a person ahead of time isn't it what happened a thousand years earlier well there was this king on the throne of Egypt or the throne of Israel named Solomon and God had given him wisdom like no other king on the earth and there was a queen of

Sheba which is in the area known as Ethiopia and she heard about his fame and his wisdom and she said I want to go and see if it's true and she went and she heard and she saw and she said half has not been told she heard about the God of Israel could be that for a thousand years God had kept alive something of that light from Solomon's era here's an Ethiopian somehow he had got an interest in Judaism and enough interest to take him to Jerusalem the center of Judaism and he had just been there to worship that's not a small amount of interest that's hundreds of miles and he's there to worship this God of the Old Testament but it is now a Christless Judaism they're slaughtering their lambs and they're shedding their blood but they're not believing on the Messiah and he's a part of that you see but that's all part of the plowing and part of the sowing and he's there and now he's got a scroll and of all books it's Isaiah the most evangelical prophet of the

Old Testament and he's reading chapter 50 all of this you see it's part of God working with him leading him up to this divine appointment and so I say not only admire this divine appointment and the sovereignty of Christ and bringing it together but realize that Philip was just one part of the whole process of the eunuch's conversion and realize that with the people you meet that you're called perhaps just to have one role and sometimes it's the planting sometimes you may reap where others sowed and reaped but be in the game be in the work and be about the Lord's business as one sows in another waters and the Lord gives the increase you don't know what's been going through that man's mind beside you at work this week maybe he's been bothered maybe he's maybe he's sinned maybe he's feeling guilty maybe he's going through a trial he doesn't have the

Lord to go and talk to about it and to draw strength from he's weighed down with the burden and there you are you don't know how God's prepared him go and speak to him the good news tell him that you've got some good news for him well what's the Lord Jesus doing in this event well he's stretching the church isn't he beyond Jerusalem we've seen the gospel go up to Samaria and now we see the gospel reaching all the way to Ethiopia now it's not going there by the church yet it's not that they send someone to Ethiopia but this we have just a sign of the Lord's intention he actually brings the Ethiopian to Israel where Philip can witness to him and he is saved by the Lord Jesus and he goes back to Ethiopia we'll see the church in Jerusalem scattering all out to the ends of the age but this is at least a forerunner an indication a sign of the Lord's intent that he means for

Ethiopians to be joined with Jerusalem Jews who believe in Jesus as one in the body of Christ wonderful thing don't miss the people from other lands that God is bringing to us tremendous days of opportunity as they come among us to bring them the gospel and they can take it back home and share it as well as us sending and going ourselves so Jesus is preparing his church for the day when they will understand that Gentiles are equal with Jews who believe in Jesus whoever they are Jew Gentile they're one well this is our savior he seeks and saves individual sinners and we've seen the divine appointment of this sinner and I want to tell you if you're saved God had a divine appointment for you too didn't he and you can ponder that today and talk about it as a family of all the ways God was working and preparing you and bringing you to that moment of conversion and thank him for the way that he pursues sinners sometimes he goes through all seven seas to land his fish oh we run from him we think he's our enemy we think he's come to destroy our joy and he just keeps chasing us he's got people everywhere he's got resources everywhere and at last he lands us and we go on our way rejoicing and kicking ourselves why did we ever wait so long to come to this savior and to know this forgiveness and to know this God in Jesus

[51:09] Christ don't reject him if he's brought you here this morning this is part of the Lord's call end your running from him right now embrace him by faith ask him to have mercy on you and save you trusting in what he has done for sinners let's pray together shall we Lord Jesus Christ we thank you for what you did 2,000 years ago in the life of this Ethiopian and even what you did a thousand years before him taking the gospel down to that region of the earth to creatures that you had made for yourself that had turned and gone astray each one to their own way Lord Jesus you came to each one of us and you let us hear the gospel and you took our sins and our iniquities upon yourself and as a lamb you were slaughtered and received the punishment that we deserve as individuals for our sins and we are amazed at your love for individual sinners and we thank you and praise you for it we will never stop praising you for all eternity and help us to begin the song day by day here and then make us your instruments

Lord to bring this life-saving remedy that people all around us are dying without make us your witnesses make us faithful like Philip just to march at the command of our commander and to trust you and to open our mouths and to share the good news that we have for every man woman boy and girl add to your church today go into all the nations and gather a people for your praise and thank you for what you have done and will do as we praise you in Jesus name amen amen