

Calvary Chapel  Philadelphia



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY TEACHER'S PACKET

1st Grade

Sunday Morning

Study 38

Ministry of Philip

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The Objective is the key concept for this weeks lesson. It should be the main focus of the study

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The “Main passage” is the basis of the study, where the other verse support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the “reward box” found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God’s Word.

Objective This lesson will show how believers can and should preach the Gospel wherever we go using Philip’s example in Acts 8.

Key Verses

Acts 8:1-13, 26-40—Main Teaching Passage

Memory Verse - 2 Timothy 4:2

“Preach the word! Be ready in season *and* out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.”

Hook

Review last week’s memory verse, Matthew 16:25.

Stand at the light switch and tell the students to stand up to play a game. When the lights are on, they are free to dance around, but when you turn off the lights, they have to freeze or they are out. The last student left wins the game.

In this game, you have to be ready to stop at any time. However, in 2 Timothy 4:2, Paul tells us we need to be ready to go at all times. Specifically, Paul says we need to be ready to tell others about Jesus at any time.

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

BOOK

After Stephen's death (last week's study), the religious leaders began persecuting the Church, and so many fled Jerusalem to some of the nearby regions. One of the men who fled was named Philip. Philip went to Samaria and began preaching there, with large crowds coming to hear him teach about Jesus. This teaching was accompanied by miracles, so that the people were amazed. In those days, there was a man in Samaria named Simon who had practiced magic to try to make himself look great, and for a long time he had deceived the people of Samaria into thinking that he had great power from God. But as the multitudes believed Philip's teaching and were baptized, Simon believed and was baptized as well.

While Philip was in the midst of this ministry, the Holy Spirit told him to go down to Gaza. While he was there, he saw a man who was the servant of a queen. The servant was sitting in a chariot and reading Isaiah. The Holy Spirit told Philip to go to that chariot, and he did. When he asked the servant if he understood what he was reading, the servant said he needed it explained. Philip then sat with him and they read from Isaiah 53. The servant asked who this passage was referring to, and Philip explained that these verses, along with the rest of Scripture, pointed to Jesus. After that, they arrived at some water, and the servant asked to be baptized. Once Philip baptized him, Philip was taken away by the Holy Spirit, and the servant stood there rejoicing.

The interpretation/exegesis of the passage. What does this passage mean? How does this passage apply to my life?

LOOK

The last 2 weeks, we saw some of the religious leaders persecuting the leaders of the Church, such as Peter, John, and Stephen. However, at the beginning of today's story, the persecution was affecting not just the leadership, but the whole Church. This may have looked like a setback for them, but the Lord used it to spread the Gospel beyond Jerusalem into Judea and Samaria. These Christians did not just run and hide. They told others about Jesus wherever they went. Today's chapter highlights how one of those believers, Philip, ministered to those he encountered.

Philip's story takes place in two contrasting scenes. In one, he is ministering in great power with miracles to large crowds. In the other, he was focused on just one man and only his exit was miraculous. Yet in both of these accounts, there are two common features. First, both times Philip preached the Gospel to anyone he encountered. Second, both stories make clear that Philip was ministering by the power of the Holy Spirit. It didn't matter if he was teaching great crowds or one person, he was going to show them Jesus by the Spirit's power.

LOOK (Continued)

Philip was willing to go wherever God wanted him to go and do whatever God wanted him to do, no matter what he thought. It might not have made sense to Philip that God sent persecution to drive the Church out of Jerusalem, but Philip preached the Gospel in Samaria, and many were saved as a result. He may have been confused as to why God took him from a thriving ministry to great crowds in Samaria to preach to one man in the desert, but he obeyed and God used that as well. Philip went wherever the Spirit led him and then preached the Gospel when he got there.

Like Philip, we have been called to preach the Gospel wherever we may go. Wherever God brings us is our mission field to tell others about him. Our home, neighborhood, school, sports teams, clubs, and any other activity or community we are involved in are places where we can tell others about Jesus. 2 Timothy 4:2 tells us to preach the Word in season and out of season. In other words, we should be ready to preach the Gospel anywhere, at any time, to anyone. We don't need to learn a foreign language or travel to a distant country to be a missionary and preach the Gospel. All we need to do is be filled with the Holy Spirit and willing to obey in whatever He calls us to do. Then we can preach the Gospel wherever we go.

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

TOOK

As a class, memorize 2 Timothy 4:2.

Have the students think of all the places they go on a normal week. Have them think of people they share the Gospel with at each of these places.

Pray: Thank the Lord for giving us His Spirit and allowing us the opportunity to preach the Gospel. Ask Him to fill us with His Spirit and enable us to tell others about Him wherever we go.

Parent Question: Where can I tell others about Jesus this week?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on Acts 8:1-13, 26-40 by David Guzik

Philip and the Samaritans

A. Saul persecutes the church.

1. ([Act 8:1](#)) The church is persecuted and scatters.

Now Saul was consenting to his death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.

a. **Now Saul was consenting to his death:** In [Philippians 3:6](#), Paul says of his life before Jesus that he was so zealous in his religious faith that he persecuted the church. Saul's "supervision" of the execution of Stephen was just one example of this persecution.

i. What kind of attitude did Paul persecute Christians with? **Consenting** probably isn't strong enough. The idea behind the Greek word *suneudokeo* is "to approve, to be pleased with." Some people are reluctant persecutors, but Saul wasn't one of these; he took *pleasure* in attacking Christians.

b. **A great persecution arose against the church:** Stephen's death is only the beginning. The floodgates of persecution have now been opened against the Christians.

i. On Sunday, January 8, 1956, on the shores of a lonely river deep in the jungles of Ecuador, five missionaries were murdered by the natives they wanted to tell about Jesus. To many, this death seemed like a senseless tragedy. Many could only see five young missionaries who had their careers cut short or the five widows and fatherless children. But God did an amazing work through those five men, even in their deaths, and the blessing still reverberates through people like Elisabeth Elliot - one of the five women whose husband was murdered.

ii. In the same way, Stephen's death might seem sort of meaningless at first glance. His young ministry of power and eloquence was cut abruptly short. His ministry also seemed to end in failure - no one was immediately saved, and all that came forth was more persecution against the church. But as always has been the case, the blood of the martyrs became the seed of the church.

c. **They were scattered throughout the regions:** Now the church is forced to do what it had been reluctant to do - get the gospel out to the surrounding **regions**.

i. In [Acts 1:8](#) Jesus clearly told His followers to look beyond Jerusalem and bring the gospel to Judea, Samaria, and the whole world. But to this point, Jesus' followers hadn't done this.

ii. Was this persecution the will of God? God can and will use pressing circumstances to guide us into His will. When everything is fine, we may have never considered going a certain course; then a crisis opens our eyes to that course. Sometimes we have to be shaken out of our comfortable state before we do what God wants us to!

2. ([Act 8:2](#)) The burial of Stephen.

And devout men carried Stephen *to his burial*, and made great lamentation over him.

- a. Seemingly, these **devout men** were Jews who were horrified at what had been done to Stephen. Perhaps this is Luke's way of showing that not *all* Jews were enemies of Christianity.
 - b. Since Jewish law prohibited open mourning for someone that had been executed, Luke's account that these **devout men ... made great lamentation over him** may suggest their repentance towards God as well as their sorrow over Stephen.
3. ([Act 8:3-4](#)) Saul continues his persecution.

As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing *them* to prison. Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word.

- a. What did Saul do? **Made havoc** uses an ancient word that could refer to an army destroying a city or a wild animal tearing at its meat. He viciously attacked Christians, including **women**.
 - i. "Not only did he not spare the women, but he did not stop short of seeking - and securing - his victims' death ([9:1](#); [22:4](#); [26:10](#))." (Stott)
 - b. **Those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word:** The end result is for the glory of God, because the persecution simply serves to spread the message. We shouldn't think that those who left Jerusalem left as formal preachers. Most were "accidental missionaries" who talked about Jesus wherever they went.
 - i. "The statement that they *preached the word* is misleading; the Greek expression does not necessarily mean more than *shared the good news*." (Stott)
 - ii. We can be just like these early Christians! We can share the good news of what Jesus has done in our lives. Most people don't come to Jesus through a professional preacher or an evangelist; they come to Jesus through people just like us.

B. Philip preaches to the Samaritans.

1. ([Act 8:5-8](#)) Philip brings the gospel to the Samaritans.

Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. And there was great joy in that city.

- a. **Philip**, like Stephen, was one of the men chosen to serve the church family in practical ways when the dispute regarding Hellenist widows arose ([Acts 6:5](#)). He was one of those forced to flee persecution ([Acts 8:1](#)), ending up in Samaria.
- b. **Preached Christ to them:** After the Jews had rejected the gospel again, we see God extending the offer of salvation in Jesus out to other peoples, beginning with the Samaritans.
- c. Who were the Samaritans? Six hundred years before this, the Assyrians conquered this area of northern Israel and they deported all the wealthy and middle-class Jews from the area. Then they moved in a pagan population from afar. These pagans intermarried with the lowest classes of remaining Jews in northern Israel, and from these people came the Samaritans.

- i. Jews hated the Samaritans. They considered them compromising half-breeds who corrupted the worship of the true God. "There was deep-seated prejudice, amounting almost to hatred, standing between the Jews and the Samaritans." (LaSor)
 - ii. James and John (and the other disciples as well) once thought that the Samaritans were only good for being torched by God's judgment ([Luke 9:51-56](#)).
 - iii. Jesus' experience with the Samaritan woman at the well ([John 4](#)) and His story about the kindness of a Samaritan ([Luke 10:25-37](#)) illustrate this point.
 - iv. Why did Philip preach Christ to them? Because Jesus had touched Philip, there was no room for this kind of prejudice in his heart. He wasn't a racist towards the Samaritans.
- d. Philip comes presenting the gospel, with signs and wonders following as an impressive confirmation: When the people found Jesus, **there was great joy in that city!**
- i. Undoubtedly, one reason there was such fruit was that Jesus had sown the seed in Samaria during His ministry ([John 4:1-26](#)). Now Philip is reaping the harvest.
2. ([Act 8:9-13](#)) Simon the Sorcerer believes.

But there was a certain man called Simon, who previously practiced sorcery in the city and astonished the people of Samaria, claiming that he was someone great, to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, "This man is the great power of God." And they heeded him because he had astonished them with his sorceries for a long time. But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized. Then Simon himself also believed; and when he was baptized he continued with Philip, and was amazed, seeing the miracles and signs which were done.

a. **A certain man called Simon:** This Simon had a fair degree of local fame. He was honored as one who didn't only *have* the power of God; they said of him "**This man is the great power of God.**"

b. **Previously practiced sorcery:** Remember that **sorcery** in the Bible always has the connection with the occult and with drug taking. Whatever real power Simon had, it was from Satan, not God.

- i. The specific wording indicates that Simon was a *magi*. In the ancient world there was a class of astronomers and scientists known as magi ([Matthew 2:1](#)), but local wizards and sorcerers also took the title. They used it to prey on the ignorance and superstitions of the common people.

- ii. "Ramsay describes the magi (esp. the lower sort who appealed to the widespread superstition of the ancient world) as the strongest influence that existed in that world and one that must either destroy or be destroyed by Christianity." (Williams)

c. **And they heeded him because he had astonished them with his sorceries:** The Samaritans wrongly assumed that because Simon had *real* spiritual power, it was from God; but that simply wasn't the case.

d. **Amazed, seeing the miracles and signs which were done:** Simon is convinced by Philip's preaching and amazing miracles, to the point where he declares belief, is baptized, and **continued with Philip**. Simon became a follower of Philip and his ministry.

C. Philip preaches to the Ethiopian.

1. ([Act 8:26-29](#)) Philip, led by the Holy Spirit, is directed to an Ethiopian government official.

Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, "Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is desert. So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship, was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet. Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go near and overtake this chariot."

a. We might have thought that Philip would have objected to leaving the great success of the work in Samaria to go out to the desolate desert, but God had a plan in it all. Philip was submissive to God's plan.

b. **This is desert** means that Philip's errand was foolish from man's perspective, but wise in God. What could be more foolish than to leave a place of prospering ministry and go to a desert road?

i. "There were two roads from Jerusalem to Gaza, and the Spirit commands Philip to take the one that was seldom used." (MacArthur)

ii. "If Christ is hindered, it is because some Philip is not willing to go!" (Morgan)

c. **A man of Ethiopia ... had come to Jerusalem to worship:** On the desert road, Philip encountered an Ethiopian proselyte to Judaism returning from Jerusalem - reading the Bible!

i. **Of great authority:** The Ethiopian was undoubtedly a successful man. Yet his success obviously didn't answer all the questions in his life. He knew he needed some real spiritual answers in his life, and he was seeking God.

ii. **Candace** was the title for certain female royalty in Ethiopia.

d. **He was reading Isaiah the prophet:** The Ethiopian was hungry for God's Word. Typically, the scroll would have cost him a lot of money, so he would have had to really want it!

2. ([Act 8:30-35](#)) Philip preaches Jesus to the Ethiopian.

So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?" And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him. The place in the Scripture which he read was this: "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and as a lamb before its shearer *is* silent, so He opened not His mouth. In His humiliation His justice was taken away, and who will declare His generation? For His life is taken from the earth." So the eunuch answered Philip and said, "I ask you, of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?" Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him.

a. **The Spirit said to Philip:** It took real boldness for Philip to go right up to the Ethiopian's chariot and speak to him, but that is what the Holy Spirit told him to do.

i. The Ethiopian was a rich man, a man of power, and at least in some way a celebrity. Yet Philip knew he needed Jesus just as much as anyone else. Why do we fear telling "important" people about Jesus?

ii. We often shrink back from speaking boldly about Jesus, and the world lets us know we shouldn't talk about such things. But does the world shrink back from cramming its gospel down our throats? How many people are upset when all sorts of immorality and lies are forced upon believers? We should be just as bold to the world about Jesus as the world is bold to us about sin!

b. **Heard him reading the prophet Isaiah:** Philip knew at that moment that God had given him an open door, a prepared heart. Plainly, God had arranged this meeting between Philip and the Ethiopian; this is a glorious example of how God opens doors for evangelism. God wouldn't have directed Philip unless God had already arranged an open door.

i. One of our greatest jobs in preaching the gospel is to simply pray for open doors. Then, having prayed for open doors, we must keep alert to the opportunities God presents.

ii. Philip was effective as an evangelist because he knew how to flow with what the Holy Spirit wanted to do. He was truly led by the Spirit, not by his own whims and feelings.

c. **Heard him reading:** In the ancient world, it was common to read aloud. Philip knew what the Ethiopian was reading by listening as he read.

d. **Do you understand what you are reading?** It was good for the Ethiopian to be reading the Bible, but unless **understanding** was brought to him, there would be little benefit from his reading. But God had brought someone (Philip) to bring understanding.

i. **How can I, unless someone guides me?** This is the proper question of anyone who wants to understand the Bible. We should never feel bad if we need to be taught before we can understand many things.

ii. It is glorious when we come to understand the great truths of Scripture on our own, but God always has a place and a purpose for teachers in the body of Christ.

iii. How can we get more understanding from our own time in the Bible? To get anything from our Bibles, we must plunge in. Butterflies wander over the flowers in the garden and accomplish nothing, but bees plunge right down into the flower, and carry away essential food. We won't get anything if we just hover over our Bibles; we have to dive right in.

e. **I ask you, of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?** Regarding this passage from [Isaiah 53:7-8](#), the Jews of that day had different ways they interpreted the identity of this suffering servant. Some thought the suffering servant was the nation of Israel itself, as Israel had suffered greatly in wars, exile, and persecution. Some thought the suffering servant was Isaiah writing about himself. Some thought the suffering servant was the Messiah, but they thought this hard to accept, because they didn't want to think of the Messiah suffering.

f. **Beginning at this Scripture:** Philip talked about more than this passage from Isaiah, but this is where he started. He started at common ground with the Ethiopian, but made his way to talking about Jesus. It was easy to talk about Jesus **beginning at this Scripture!**

g. Philip's effective preaching consisted in explaining *who Jesus was* (**like a lamb ... preached Jesus**) and *what He has done for us* (**He was led as a sheep to the slaughter**). Explaining who Jesus is and what He has done for us is the essence of the gospel.

i. Today, too many preachers focus on what we must do for God, but the gospel begins with what God has done for us in Jesus Christ.

3. ([Act 8:36-40](#)) The Ethiopian's response to the gospel and Philip's mysterious departure.

Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "See, *here is* water. What hinders me from being baptized?" Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." So he commanded the chariot to stand still.

And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so 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.

a. **And the Eunuch said:** The Ethiopian himself was ready to respond to the gospel. This was a work of the Holy Spirit, not a tribute to Philip's "salesmanship."

b. Philip insisted that the Ethiopian **believe with all his heart** before being baptized. In a nutshell, this describes how we should respond to the gospel: **Believe with all [your] heart.**

i. The devil himself has the faith of the head, but he hates the truth in his heart. God wants His truth not only in our heads, but also in our hearts. We may intellectually know that Jesus died for the sins of the world, but do we know in our hearts that He died to cleanse *our* sins?

c. **I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God:** This confession of faith, taken in all that it means, is the essential belief for anyone who will come to God. We must believe in the *person* of **Jesus**, in all that He is and has done as **Christ**. We must believe that He is the Divine **Son**, and that He is the **Son of God** sent from the Father to accomplish the salvation of all those who will believe with all their hearts.

d. **See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?** This shows that the Ethiopian did in fact believe, and that he wanted to be baptized to declare his belief.

i. **Went down into the water ... when they came up out of the water:** Clearly, Philip immersed the Ethiopian in baptism. This was not sprinkling, but immersion.

e. **The Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more ... Philip was found at Azotus:** Suddenly, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, while the Ethiopian was still in the water where he was baptized! He was then "transported" supernaturally to the former Philistine city of **Azotus** (also known as Ashdod).

i. This is a strange, perhaps unprecedented event in the Scriptures. But a similar thing happened when the disciples' boat came immediately to its destination ([John 6:15-21](#)), and a similar thing will also happen when the church is *caught up together with Him* at the rapture ([1 Thessalonians 4:15-18](#)).

f. **He went on his way rejoicing:** The joy of the Ethiopian, even after Philip's strange departure, shows that his faith was firmly rooted in God, not in Philip.