

Calvary Chapel of Philadelphia



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY TEACHER'S PACKET

4 Year Olds

Sunday Morning

Study 5

God Wants Me to Believe

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The Objective is the key concept for this week's 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 verses 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 present the Gospel to the students and give them an opportunity to put their faith in Jesus.

Key Verses

Acts 8:26-40—Main Teaching Passage

Memory Verse - Galatians 5:16 (December Memory Verse)

Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the desires of the flesh.

Hook

Have one of the teachers in your classroom misbehave. Tell the class that this teacher must be punished for their sin, and put the teacher in a time-out, separated from the rest of the class. Then ask the students if any of them would be willing to sit in time-out in the teacher's place.

Tell the kids that this is a picture of what Jesus did for us. We all deserve a punishment for the bad things we have done, but Jesus took that punishment for us. Believing in this message is the most important thing anyone can do.

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

Today's story is about a man named Phillip. Phillip was preaching in a city called Samaria when the Lord told him to go down to the desert. Phillip obeyed, and when he got there, he saw a chariot. In the chariot was an important royal official from Ethiopia. He was reading the book of Isaiah on a scroll. The Holy Spirit told Phillip to run to the chariot and catch up to it. Again Phillip obeyed, and when he got there he asked the man if he understood what he was reading. The man did not, and he invited Phillip into his chariot to explain it to him.

The man was reading Isaiah 53:7-8, which is a prophecy about Jesus' death on the cross. He asked Phillip what this passage meant, and Phillip explained to him about Jesus. He told the man about Christ's sinless life, His death on the cross, and His resurrection. As they continued to travel and talk, they came by some water and the man asked Phillip if he could be baptized (which is when a new Christian is dunked under water and then brought back up to symbolize Jesus' death and resurrection). Phillip asked him if he believed, and the man replied that he believed that Jesus is the Son of God. So Phillip brought him down to the water and he was baptized. When the man came up, Phillip had disappeared. The Holy Spirit brought him somewhere else to preach. Meanwhile, the man returned to Ethiopia praising God.

LOOK

The last couple of weeks, we looked at some of the things God wants us to do. It is important to God that we love, obey, forgive, and pray, but what we are studying today is perhaps the most important thing anyone can do. In today's story, we see that God wants us to believe in His Son, Jesus Christ.

God wants to live with us, His most special creations, forever. The problem is that we disobey God and sin. Sin is anything we think, say, or do that displeases God and goes against His commands, and our sin separates us from God. If God didn't do something to save us, we would be separated from Him forever. But that's not what God wants. God wants us to be with Him forever.

To fix the problem of our sin, God sent His Son Jesus into the world. He lived a perfect death, but He was punished for something He didn't do and died on the cross. By dying on the cross, He took the punishment for sin that you and I deserve. Then He rose again on the third day and now is alive with His Father in heaven. If we believe in Him, we can have eternal life and live with Jesus forever in heaven.

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

LOOK (Continued)

So what does it mean to “believe in Jesus”? Believing in Jesus means trusting that the story the Bible tells us about His birth, life, death, and resurrection is true. It means accepting that you are a sinner and that your sin separates you from God and asking Jesus to forgive your sin. It also means making Jesus your Lord (Master) and Savior. When you do that, Jesus forgives your sins, and you can know that you have everlasting life with Him.

If you have never made the choice to believe in what Jesus did for you, you can do that today! When you do that, your Christian life has just begun. For all of us, it’s important to remember that God wants not only you and me to believe, but everyone we know as well. So tell your friends and family the good news about Jesus. Let them know that He can be their Lord and Savior too.

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

Present the Gospel and give the students a chance to respond.

Pray: Thank the Lord for sending His Son to save us from our sins. Ask Him to help us to tell everyone we know about Jesus.

Parent Question: What does it mean to believe in Jesus? Have you made that decision?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on Acts 8:26-40 by David Guzik

C. Philip preaches to the Ethiopian.

1. ([Act 8:26-28](#)) 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.

a. **Arise, and go toward the south:** We might have thought that Philip would object 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 submitted to God’s plan.

i. “Philip was the front-line man. He seemed to be utterly indispensable. Yet it was at precisely this moment when God called him to leave the area.” (Boice)

ii. If one heard the call to leave such a blessed, fruitful ministry, one likely would think it was the devil speaking and not the Lord. One might think, “Not now” or “Not me” or “Not there.”

b. **This is desert:** Leaving fruitful ministry to go to a **desert** is foolish from man’s perspective, but wise if directed by 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)

iii. “We have seen him, from the day of Pentecost on, moving on *multitudes*; we now trace his motions in the *individual*, and see him in his individual dealing and leading – observing how he guides *one believer* and leads *one inquirer*.” (Pierson) Philip wasn’t the only one being led by the Spirit. The man of Ethiopia was also, though he didn’t yet know it.

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. This **Ethiopia** – much larger than modern-day Ethiopia – was the land where the Queen of Sheba came from, who saw the glory of Solomon’s kingdom and professed faith in the God of Israel. It’s possible that pieces of the Jewish faith were passed on through the centuries to men like this servant of the queen.

ii. “He was a noble man on a noble search.” (Hughes) We can’t say if the Ethiopian found God in his visit to Jerusalem, but he certainly found the Word of God – and reading the Word of God would lead him to God.

d. **Of great authority...who had charge of all her treasury:** The Ethiopian was 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.

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

e. **He was reading Isaiah the prophet:** The Ethiopian was hungry for God's Word. Typically, the scroll would cost him a lot of money, so it showed that he really wanted to read and know God's word.

2. ([Act 8:29-31](#)) The Ethiopian invites Philip to explain the Bible.

Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go near and overtake this chariot." 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.

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. We should never fear speaking to those who are considered to be 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 the world does not hesitate to impose its own message on us. We should be just as bold to the world about Jesus as the world is bold to us about sin.

b. **Heard him reading:** It was common in the ancient world to read aloud. Philip knew what the Ethiopian was reading by listening as he read.

c. **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 wonderful example of how God opens doors for evangelism. God directed Philip because 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.

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

i. "It was a good question – inoffensive, yet a subtle but gracious offer to explain the passage if the Ethiopian official was interested in receiving one." (Boice)

ii. **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.

iii. It is wonderful when we come to understand the great truths of Bible on our own, but God also has a place and a purpose for teachers among the followers of Jesus.

iv. To get more understanding 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.

3. ([Act 8:32-35](#)) Starting at the Isaiah passage, Philip preaches Jesus to the Ethiopian.

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. **He was led as sheep to the slaughter:** In God’s wonderful planning, the Ethiopian was reading the amazing and specific prophecies in [Isaiah 53](#) describing the sacrificial, sin-bearing work of the Messiah to come.

b. **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 understood 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 found this hard to accept, because they didn’t want to think of the Messiah suffering.

c. **Beginning at this Scripture:** Philip talked about more than this passage from Isaiah, but he started there. He began 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**.

i. Because the whole Bible points to Jesus in one way or another, we really can begin at any passage and find where it leads to Jesus.

d. **Preached Jesus to him:** 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. Too many preachers today focus on what we must do for God, but the gospel begins with and is founded upon what God has done for us in Jesus Christ.

ii. Philip preached Christ in Samaria ([Acts 8:5](#)) and he **preached Jesus to** this Ethiopian. We can be sure it was the same Jesus he preached in Jerusalem. He didn’t need a different Jesus or a different message for different audiences.

4. ([Act 8:36-38](#)) The Ethiopian believes and is baptized.

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.

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. **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. He saw the truth of God and knew that it was *for him*.

i. “Maybe Philip even ended his explanation of the gospel with an appeal for baptism like Peter did at Pentecost.” (Hughes)

c. **If you believe with all your heart, you may:** 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?

d. **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.

i. When the Ethiopian said “**Jesus Christ**,” he confessed that Jesus is the Messiah (**Christ**). He agreed with his mind and heart that Jesus is the sin-bearing servant that Isaiah described and Jesus fulfilled.

e. **Went down into the water:** Clearly, Philip immersed the Ethiopian in baptism. This was not sprinkling, but immersion.

5. ([Act 8:39-40](#)) Philip’s mysterious departure.

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. **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 as he and the Ethiopian came out of the water. He was then transported supernaturally in some way 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](#)).

b. **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.

i. The Coptic Christians – greatly persecuted today in Egypt – trace their spiritual heritage back to this Ethiopian official.

c. **Passing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea:** This shows that Philip started preaching not only to Samaritan cities, but also the Gentile cities – such as Caesarea. This is the very beginning of the gospel’s spread to the end of the earth – as Jesus commanded in [Acts 1:8](#).

i. No wonder Philip is the only one in the New Testament specifically given the title, “The Evangelist” ([Acts 21:8](#)). [Acts 21:8](#) finds him still in **Caesarea**, doing his work of evangelism there.