"SAVING FAITH"

("A Faith That Saves")
ACTS 8:26-40
6-7-2026

*** It is vitally important for all of us to see today --<u>The journey to Saving Faith</u>**

3 steps:

You need to:

I. <u>DESIRE</u> THE TRUTH (v. 26-29)
(I must <u>want</u> it; the eunich was an <u>earnest seeker</u>)

You need to:

II. <u>UNDERSTAND</u> THE TRUTH (v. 30-35)
(I must <u>know</u> it; the eunich was a <u>humble listener</u>)

You need to:

III. <u>BELIEVE</u> THE TRUTH (V. 36-39)
(I must <u>take</u> it; the eunich was a <u>sincere believer</u>)

v. 37
True belief always results in your:

A. <u>Testifying</u> Of What God Did For You (v. 36, 38)

B. <u>Rejoicing</u> In What God Did For You (v. 39)

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INTRODUCTION: Philip, one of the 7 deacons chosen to serve the poor widows of the Jerusalem church also did the work of an Evangelist as Stephen had done. He preached and witnessed great results.

Phillip had been involved in a great Revival up in Samaria with multitudes believing the Gospel and many healed of their incurable diseases and ailments (8:5-25). Phillip is now sent by God to reach one man on the Gaza Road. This fact emphasizes the point that people matter to God. Each individual person matters.

V. 26

"Arise" - stand up again. Apparently Philip was relaxing a bit after the revival at Samaria. God's work was not done yet!

NOTE: The angel could have told this Ethiopian official how to be saved, but God has not given the Great Commission to angels, but to saved people! "Angels have never personally experienced God's grace; therefore, they can never bear witness of what it means to be saved" (Wiersbe, p. 104).

V. 27

Philip <u>obeyed immediately</u> (v. 27)

You might say: I would, too, if an angel appeared to me and commanded me. Well, the <u>God</u> of the universe is commanding you in the Bible!

NOTE: "Went" = passive; God helped him go. We need God's help.

Philip <u>obeyed eagerly</u> (v. 29-30)

He "<u>ran</u>" up to him. (v. 30)

In fulfilling the theme of Acts 1:8 - the Gospel is going out to all groups, all nationalities.

Interesting note: The world was populated by Shem, Ham, & Japheth (Gen. 10:1). The Ethiopian in Acts 8 was a descendent of <u>Ham</u> (Gen. 10:6ff); Paul in Acts 9 was of <u>Shem</u> (Gen. 10:21ff); and Cornelius in Acts 10 of <u>Japheth</u> (Gen. 10:2-5) (See Wiersbe, p. 107)

In Acts 8 we see a contrast between two men (Simon the Sorcerer and the Ethiopian Eunich). A Contrast of faith. It is evident that although Simon professed to “believe” and was even baptized that he was never truly saved. Reason: He came to the Lord as his personal vending machine or his personal genie to grant his wishes and lust for power and notoriety. (Acts 8:21-23).

Simon (8:9-24) who had a phony faith.

Wrong view of self, salvation, Spirit, and sin. Now God contrasts Simon with a man with a sincere heart.

Whenever you give the Gospel out, don't be surprised that most will reject it. (Jesus said the majority of mankind were on their way to destruction. - Mt. 7:13, 14)

But there will always be those who will want it; those who will listen to you and accept it.

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3 steps:

You need to:

I. <u>DESIRE</u> THE TRUTH (v. 27b-29)
(I must <u>want</u> it; the eunich was an <u>earnest seeker</u>)

In these days the world was full of people who wee sick of the many "gods" and loose morals of the world, so they came to Judaism and found one God and strict standards that gave life some meaning (cp. Barclay, p. 68).

The eunich no doubt was weary of what the religions down in Africa offered him. Like many in NYC today. They are searching!

V. 27b-28
The Eunich came all the way from south of Egypt, traveled about 200 miles to go to worship God at Jerusalem.

Being a eunich (maybe castrated, maybe not - see Gen. 39:1), he could not be a full Jewish proselyte (Dt. 23:1); and yet he was still interested enough in his spiritual life to go all the way to Jerusalem (seeking but not satisfied with the ritualistic, dead, liberal Sadducean worship at the Temple).

V. 28
He went to Jerusalem to worship at the Temple, but left without finding the answer to what he was looking for. He wanted to know the truth. He was a sincere man. A man dedicated to finding the true God.

V. 28ff
Proofs of his sincere searching heart:

1.He was <u>devout</u> - He had traveled a long distance to worship the true God.

2.he was <u>searching</u> - he was reading the Bible and trying to understand it.
"Read" - imperfect tense indicating <u>continual</u> action

3.He was <u>open</u> - He was willing to have a believer explain the Scriptures to him
(a man he never met before)
When witnessing - if they don't want to hear, don't waste your breath. Go as far as the Spirit leads.

V. 29
This account is an example of three important truths:

1.God rewards those who diligently seek Him (Heb. 11:6) (EX: Cornelius' searching heart was rewarded - Acts 10)
ILLUS: People ask, "What about the pigmies in Africa? Who will go?" Answer - If they respond correctly to the revelation God has already given (creation and conscience - Ro. 1 and 2:14), God will send them a missionary!

2.God leads specifically - he used a specific man, for a specific need, in a specific place, at a specific time, to satisfy the spiritual hunger of a specific man! God is sovereign!

3.God is interested in each individual. He was interested in using Philip to reach one man. Philip left a revival in Samaria to go out into the desert to reach one lost man (EX: how Jesus left the multitudes to win one woman - the Samaritan - Jn. 4)

No one gets saved without coming to the point in their life when they really want to be saved. There must be a hunger!

"Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness."

SEE Is. 55:1-3 - 3 steps: "thirsteth" (v. 1) ..."incline ear"..."come" (v. 3).

NOTE: This desire comes from God! None of us seek after God on our own (Rom. 3). He must draw us.

EX: Hymn - "Before I loved him, He loved me.
Before I found Him, he found me.
Before I sought Him, He sought for me"
(Ron Hamilton)

One must see his need! Most never really see their need because they have a religion; they are "good"; they have "never done anything that bad", etc. The eunich saw his need.

You need to:

II. UNDERSTAND THE TRUTH (v. 30-35)

(I must know it; the eunich was a humble listener)

V. 30

It is not enough for the lost sinner to merely desire salvation; he must also understand it.

Note how Philip dealt with this man. he asked questions - as did Christ. Questions are thought-provoking and open opportunities for witness.

V. 31

The words: "How can I except some man should guide me?" express a tone of discontent and futility. Like that of someone who tries and tries something but can't get it to work.

A man must see his ignorance before he comes to Christ! The Pharisees thought they saw; therefore, Jesus said they were blind.

"How can I?" = lit. How could I be able

The eunich was admitting his inability to comprehend the Scriptures. All unsaved men (without the Spirit) have no ability to understand God's Word. This is a task beyond their reach, above their powers. They need a teacher!

"Guide me" = lead or show the way.

Unsaved man (no matter how devout, and religious) is lost and blind as far as understanding spiritual truth (EX: Nicodemus - Jn. 3). They will not get saved without someone to explain it!

To us who are saved, the Gospel is so simple; but to a lost man, he is "light years" apart from comprehending its message.

In the Bible, no one ever got saved without a preacher or teacher.

God used Peter to win Cornelius; He used Paul to win Lydia and the Philippian jailer; and now He is using Philip.

V. 32

It says in verse 35 that Philip "began" at the same text (Is. 53:7-8) and then explained to him the verses that followed in context in Is. 53:9ff.

He also no doubt quoted and explained other passages and relayed to him the recent fulfillment of Christ's death and resurrection.

--V. 32 speaks of Christ's submissiveness

a. "He was led" - (speaks of humble submissiveness). Who led Him? The Spirit, the will of the Father, the Roman soldiers.

Philip no doubt explained the nature of God being a trinity, and then showed how the Father led the Son to the cross - READ Isaiah 53:10-12.

Sheep are very compliant. They don't run away. Sheep, however, are ignorant of what lies ahead. Christ fully knew what was ahead.

b. "Like a lamb dumb..." - (speaks of silent submissiveness). Christ did not rebel.

Other than the groans which He no doubt uttered from the pain of the spikes being driven into his hands and feet, He did not open his mouth.

I Pet. 2:22-23 - "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously."

Christ was accomplishing the will of His Father!

--V. 33 speaks of Christ's innocence.

God is saying "in his humbling (the mocking, and opposition He underwent), He was deprived of justice."

Jesus was kept from having a righteous trial which would have proven him innocent.

They took away his right to a fair hearing (the testimony of the false witnesses did not agree).

The following context of Isaiah's prophecy (53:8b & 9) reveals that Christ was innocent! - "for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth."

"His judgment was taken away" = "taken away" - Gk. = swiftly take away. Cp. Jn. 19:15 - "Away with him, away with him, crucify him..."

The Hebrew is which means that Christ was snatched or hurried away (cp. Keil and D. p. 323) from a legal, legitimate, thorough trial.

"Generation" = the time in which He lived. His contemporaries (disciples).

Who will speak of who Jesus was and what He did among his generation? Philip is the one who would!

Christ was innocent! - He never sinned one time!

Because He was innocent, because He was sinless, He could suffer in your place - as your substitute (I Pet. 2:24; I Pet. 3:18)

The idea of substitution is all through the Bible. Animal killed for Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:21); ram for Isaac (Gen. 22:13); at Passover, lambs for Israel (Ex. 12); the whole O.T. law describes the shedding of blood (Lev. 17:11).

Christ, God's perfect Lamb, fulfilled O.T. (Jn. 1:29; Rev. 5)

V. 34
The eunich meditating on the text, no doubt saw "glimpses of light and heard strains of music." He knew something very significant was in this text, but he couldn't put his finger on it.

"Who was Isaiah speaking about?" he pondered. He knew that the Person described was unique, special, and important; but who was he? (Salv. is in a person - not a religion! And the person is Christ!)

V. 35
How to lead a soul to Christ:

1. Open your mouth (our only method! You need to speak; your life will provide an attractive setting for the Gospel, but it will never convert anyone. They need to hear.)

2. Explain the Scripture (our only authority). The eunich is quoting a translation - the LXX (Septuagint).

   ILLUS: a man was given a Bible in his mailbox by his neighbor who had previously witnessed to him several times, but to no avail. The man opened his mail and saw the Bible and furiously threw it into the burning fireplace. A week later when cleaning out the ashes of the fireplace, he found a little piece of the Scripture which read, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but" But what?? He then went and asked his neighbor and was saved!

3. Proclaim Jesus (our only message!)
   No one gets saved who doesn't understand the person and work of Christ!

   Don't base your salvation upon some experience (Ex. speaking in tongues, warm feelings, dramatic event in your life, etc.)
   You must understand Christ!
   Salvation is more than "asking Jesus into your heart." You must know what He did for you. You must know who this Jesus is that you are trusting.

You need to:

III. BELIEVE THE TRUTH (V. 36-39)

(I must take it; the eunich was a sincere believer)

V. 37

The difference between heaven and hell is about twelve inches (the distance from your head/brain and your heart/will).

One must believe from the heart (the core of your being). "...If thou shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him..." (Ro. 10:9).

God's plan of salvation is so simple.

Philip preached only Jesus!

The eunich believed only in Jesus. He testified, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

In that one sentence, the eunich confessed four facts:

1. His salvation is personal ("I" believe)
2. Jesus is the Messiah ("Christ" = anointed one, the King)
3. Jesus is alive ("Christ is..." - not was)
4. Jesus is divine ("Son of God")

True belief always results in your:

A. TESTIFYING OF WHAT GOD DID FOR YOU (V. 36, 38)

Paul said, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus..." (Ro. 10:9).

The eunich confessed his faith by word and by baptism.

V. 36

The eunich wanted the chariot stopped immediately to get baptized. He was no "closet Christian"; he eagerly wanted everyone to know what the Lord did for him.

How did he know believers were to be baptized?

1. Philip no doubt told him
2. He probably saw Christians get immersed up at Jerusalem.

V. 38

"Went down into the water... came up out of the water" = describes immersion

Baptism pictures your union (identification) with Christ.

1) Therefore, it symbolizes the cleansing you received by Christ upon believing.

2) And it marks a clean break from your old life and old religions unto your new life in Christ.

B. REJOICING IN WHAT GOD DID FOR YOU (V. 39)

V. 39
"Caught away" - snatched away or carried off - a supernatural miracle (like Elijah - I Ki. 18:12; and Ezekiel - Ez. 3:12)

Everyone who truly gets saved will "go away rejoicing"

The eunich left with a new shine in his eye; a new life in his spirit, a new joy in his heart, a new bounce in his step, a new smile on his face, a new song in his heart.

Cp. II Cor. 5:17 - When we get saved we have a new faith, food, family and a new future.

I'm sure the eunich went back to Africa never to return to Jerusalem. He now could worship God in spirit and truth.

Can you?

How Real is your faith?

INVIT. HYMN - Praises II #57
"Before I Loved Him" (Ron Hamilton)