

# The Church on the Move: The Gospel Moves Forward

Acts 8:26-40 || Pastor Bill Ingram || 14 August 2022

*To CARE for one another in truth and in love,  
To GROW together as followers of Jesus,  
To SERVE those God has placed in our path.  
– CG Mission Statement*

---

**Icebreaker:** What's your favorite song, movie, or book from the summer?

**Worship:** [Psalm 96:1-6](#) (*Remain a few moments in worship with this passage. What is God's invitation?*)

---

**Sermon Summary for [Acts 8:26-40](#)** (*Read aloud before reading the sermon summary.*)

By the events of Acts 8, the church in Jerusalem is flourishing. People are coming to faith; the church is becoming better organized as it continues to grow. But it's lacking something critical from the calling Christ gives in [Acts 1:8](#): it isn't looking outside its local community. But this all changes when Stephen is martyred. Persecution breaks out. The church is no longer safe in Jerusalem, and although the apostles remain, its people scatter. This persecution directly leads to the advancement of the Gospel as believers begin to witness throughout the region. It's a reminder that God can bring fruit and meaning to even the worst of circumstances, but also that the growth of His Kingdom depends on His will and movement, not on the apostles' leadership or what we bring to the table.

Philip is a prime example of this as he shares the Gospel with the people of Samaria, a group first century Jews would avoid. His ministry thrives. One day, when walking toward Gaza, he crosses paths with an Ethiopian eunuch who is riding a chariot and reading from the book of Isaiah ([53:7-8](#)). He was both a man of prestige (treasurer to a queen) and status (both wealthy and connected). But he was also an outcast culturally, physically and spiritually. In many ways, he embodies the reality that Jesus is for everyone. His story also shows how the Good News is moving forward so that salvation might come to those who are far off.

By Old Testament standards, the eunuch was in every way an outsider, forbidden from "the assembly of the Lord" ([Deut 23:1](#)). And yet, as God moves through the early church of the New Testament, he is baptized and welcomed into the faith. The outcast, the not-good-enough, and the marginalized are wholly welcomed into God's Kingdom. Our Father has already made these promises in the same book the eunuch was reading ([Is 56:3-5](#)), and we see their fulfillment here. He even asks Philip whether he will be prohibited from such a relationship with God (v36), or if could he receive baptism. It's the same question so many of us ask today: What is required of us to come before God – to be a part of His church and begin to have a relationship with Him? Are there things about us that will exclude us from the Good News of Christ? Or is the Gospel truly for everyone?

This man's encounter with God shows us definitively that yes, because of Christ, the barrier is removed from our access to God. Our Father's covenantal family is everlasting and truly for everyone. We also see that as soon as a person receives the Gospel, the Holy Spirit is with them and will work through them to share this Good News with the world (v39-40). Philip continues to witness for Jesus wherever he goes. The eunuch returns home, vocally rejoicing what God has done in him. We even hear through two early church fathers (Irenaeus and Eusebius) that this man became a missionary to his countrymen, just as had been prophesied ([Ps 68:31](#)). After being touched by the Gospel, these men could not help but share it with the world.

This is a call for all within the church to actively seek to care for our communities and learn how to share the Good News. Like Philip, we must meet people where they are – physically, spiritually, personally – and through that, explain and share who Jesus is. This can feel like scary, uncomfortable work. But God goes before us in all such situations. It's a good reason to acknowledge these fears and then prepare for where our Father might lead us. This

doesn't mean we'll get to a place of being "totally prepared", because ultimately it isn't us, but God working *through* us, that opens people's hearts to knowing Him. We can take confidence from this story that hardship can and will lead to opportunities to share the Gospel. God will bring fruit out of trying times. It also means that our Father will go to great lengths to reach the unreachable. This is true in our own stories, but it's also a call for boldness and confidence that our Lord will use us wherever He might lead us.

---

**Discussion Questions** *(You will not be able to discuss all the questions. Pick the ones you like. Some are personal perspective and application questions for life-transforming discussions.)*

**Context for Our Story**

- In what way did the death of Stephen change the way the church was operating?
- Think about the idea of being a witness in a legal sense. What does it mean to be a witness?
- Who was Phillip and what was he doing in the early church?

**The Lord uses Hardship to Share Jesus**

- How did God use the circumstances of the church at the time to bring Phillip and the eunuch together?
- What does the conversion and baptism represent for the church?
- What is the calling for believers in this story?

**God goes to great lengths to reach the unreachable**

- What were the barriers for the eunuch that prevented him from being a part of God's community?
- How has God gone to great lengths to meet you and to know you?
- What is your relationship with evangelism like? Is this a thing that scares you, excites you, other?
  - What experiences with evangelism have you had?

---

**Prayer**

This week's Prayer Guide for personal or group use is [HERE](#).

**Engage & Experience: Prayer**

CG Discussion Guides will be provided through November 20th, the last day of our sermon series on **Acts: The Church on the Move**. As we continue our 2022 Focus on Prayer, we suggest you and your CG read a book on prayer together for the end of the year. Here are our recommendations:

- [Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God](#)  
Timothy Keller
- [Prayer: Does it Make Any Difference?](#)  
Philip Yancy
- [If God Already Knows, Why Pray?](#)  
Douglas Kelly