

Philip Preaches to the Ethiopian Man

(Acts 8:26-40)

Introduction

[Teacher, bring a boxed cake mix to class.]

This cake mix has important instructions on it. Why is it important to follow instructions? What do you think could happen if you didn't do what it tells you to do? What if you forgot to turn on the oven? Or, if you used motor oil instead of cooking oil?

When some people cook, they don't always follow a recipe. They think they know what they are doing and go off and do their own thing. That doesn't always work out for them.

One time I made a cake and forgot to put the eggs in. Boy, was I shocked when I took the cake out of the oven and not only was it flat as a pancake, but it weighed a ton! It was a complete failure!

God has important instructions for us, as well. Where do you find out what they are? The Bible is His instruction manual. This is where we can find out what our purpose in life is and what we are supposed to do to please Him. As we read His word, we learn to recognize His voice so we'll know when He is speaking to us. Reading your Bible should be very important to you.

Opening Prayer

Father, In the Bible, You say that Your followers are like sheep who know their shepherd's voice and follow him. Just like those little lambs, I want to recognize Your voice so that when you speak to me as I read my Bible, I will know it is You who is calling me and directing me and guiding me. Then, I pray, You will give me a desire to follow Your instructions. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Memory Verse

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, (Matthew 28:19)

Lesson

As believers, we belong to God and He has work for each one of us to do. In order to do God's work, we need to listen for His voice and obey His directions every day.

Last week we learned about a man named Philip who heard God tell him to go to Samaria and share the Good News about Jesus. When the people understood Philip's message that Jesus was God's Son who had come into this world to save sinners, many believed and were filled with great joy.

Today we will learn about another time Philip heard God's instructions and immediately obeyed.

Acts 8:26

As for Philip, an angel of the Lord said to him, "Go south down the desert road that runs from Jerusalem to Gaza."

Ask: What did the angel of the Lord tell Philip to do? (Leave Jerusalem and head down to the Gaza strip.) [Teacher, use a Bible map.]

He did not wait to obey the Lord. He didn't ask questions or argue with God. He didn't tell God he would do it later, he immediately did what God told him to do.

Ask: When your parents tell you to do something, do you obey immediately or do you make excuses? Perhaps you say you will obey, but then go off to do something else and forget to do what they told you to do? When you please your parents, you are pleasing God.

Now, if your parents tell you to do something that you know would not be pleasing to God, then what should you do? You should do your best not to offend God. He is the higher authority.

Philip obeyed God's instructions immediately and began walking down the desert road towards Gaza. Suddenly he heard the rumblings of horses and a chariot coming in his direction. Sitting in that chariot was a man all the way from Ethiopia, a country in Africa.

Acts 8:27-28

So he started out, and he met the treasurer of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under the Kandake, the queen of Ethiopia. The eunuch had gone to Jerusalem to worship, (28) and he was now returning. Seated in his carriage, he was reading aloud from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

[Teacher, a *eunuch* is a castrated man placed in a position of authority in a palace.]

The man was an important official in his country. He handled all the money for the Queen of Ethiopia. We think that this man was a convert to Judaism because he had traveled all the way from Africa to Jerusalem to worship God. Now he was heading back home.

He was not yet a believer in Jesus, but we know he was seeking to know God. To travel all the way from Africa to Jerusalem to worship God, shows he had a desire to know God. And, as we will see, he was studying the Bible and was eager to receive answers to his questions.

While the Ethiopian was traveling in his chariot, the Holy Spirit told Philip to catch up with him.

Acts 8:29-31

The Holy Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and walk along beside the carriage." (30) Philip ran over and heard the man reading from the prophet Isaiah. Philip asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" (31) The man replied, "How can I, unless someone instructs me?" And he urged Philip to come up into the carriage and sit with him.

Running alongside the chariot, Philip heard the Ethiopian reading from the book of Isaiah and asked him if he understood what he was

reading. The man told Philip that he did not and then invited Philip to sit in the chariot with him.

Acts 8:32-33

The passage of Scripture he had been reading was this: "He was led like a sheep to the slaughter. And as a lamb is silent before the shearers, he did not open his mouth. (33) He was humiliated and received no justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth."

Ask: Who do you think Isaiah was writing about? (Jesus)

The Ethiopian wanted to know who the Prophet Isaiah was writing about and this gave Philip the perfect opportunity to tell him about Jesus.

Acts 8:34-35

The eunuch asked Philip, "Tell me, was the prophet talking about himself or someone else?" (35) So beginning with this same Scripture, Philip told him the Good News about Jesus.

When the Ethiopian understood Philip's message that Jesus was God's Son who had come into this world to save sinners, he wanted to be baptized to show that he truly believed.

Acts 8:36-38

As they rode along, they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "Look! There's some water! Why can't I be baptized?" [(37) 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."] (38) He ordered the carriage to stop, and they went down into the water, and Philip baptized him.

[Teacher, some translations of the Bible omit verse 37.]

The Ethiopian gave orders for the chariot to stop. He and Philip climbed out and Philip took the man down to the water and baptized him.

When they came up out of the water, suddenly the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away.

Acts 8:39-40

When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away. The eunuch never saw him again but went on his way rejoicing. (40) Meanwhile, Philip found himself farther north at the town of Azotus. He preached the Good News there and in every town along the way until he came to Caesarea.

Because Philip was obedient to the Lord and immediately headed down to Gaza, this Ethiopian man's life was changed forever. Now he would go back to his country as a believer in Jesus Christ. We have no idea how many people's lives were changed in Ethiopia because of this man's faith in Jesus.

Ask: What do you think might have happened if Philip didn't immediately obey the Holy Spirit? What if he told the Lord, I'll do it later? He might have missed the chariot and the Ethiopian would have returned to his country never hearing the Good News about Jesus.

Ask: Can you see how important it is to obey God's voice immediately?

We must learn to listen carefully for God's instruction and be quick to obey what He tells us to do.

Since God wants you to learn to listen and obey Him, you might want to practice listening and obeying your parents. 😊

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, we do not want to miss any opportunities to tell people about You. Help us learn to listen for the voice of the Holy Spirit as He leads and directs our life. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Learning Centers

Game Center

Around the World

Have the students sit in a circle. The first two students pair off against each other and remain seated. You ask a question, and whoever runs up to a bell (or buzzer) and rings it first, attempts to answer the question. If the child answers correctly, he moves to the next contestant, at which point the losing student sits in the seat of the person who bested him. The goal is to move as many seats as possible before losing.

The game ideally continues until one student makes it "around the world" and gets all the way back to his own seat. Often, though, the game simply ends when time is up, and the person who traveled the farthest wins

Use the following questions in a game or discussion:

1. Where can a believer find God's instructions for life? (The Bible.)
2. What did the angel of the Lord tell Philip to do? (Leave Jerusalem and head down to the Gaza strip.)
3. How quickly did Philip obey the Lord? (He obeyed immediately.)
4. Who did Philip come across when he traveled on the desert road to Gaza? (An Ethiopian riding in a chariot.)
5. What do you know about this Ethiopian? (He was a man of great authority working for the Queen of Ethiopia as the treasurer. He had been to Jerusalem to worship and was now returning to his country. He drove a chariot. He was reading the Book of Isaiah.)
6. In this passage of Scripture that the Ethiopian was reading, who was Isaiah writing about? (Jesus)

7. How did Philip help the Ethiopian man? (He explained the Bible to him and how Jesus was the promised Savior that was written about in Isaiah.)
8. What did the Ethiopian want to do when they came to some water? (Be baptized.)
9. Why did the Ethiopian want to be baptized? (He wanted to show that he truly believed in Jesus.)
10. Who took Philip away so the Ethiopian didn't see him anymore? (The Spirit of the Lord.)
11. Why was it important that Philip immediately obeyed the Lord? (The man may not have heard the Good News and been saved.)
12. What would have happened if Philip hadn't followed the instructions the angel of the Lord gave him? How might the story have been different?

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