

Cell Notes – CPC 11 July 9:15 and 11am Services

Acts 8 v26-40: Philip and the Ethiopian

The Story So Far ...

- The church is being persecuted in Jerusalem and Christians are fleeing
- Others start spreading the message (partly as a result)
- Philip had (boldly) preached to large Samaritan crowds
- In Acts 1:8 Jesus' words were "... you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem (Acts 6-8), and in all Judea and Samaria (Acts 8:4), and to the ends of the earth. (Acts 8:26-40)"

Listen & Respond

- Philip is obedient to the call even though it may have seemed strange at the time (Obedience that comes through faith – Romans 1:5)
- We are sometimes called to make steps in faith
 - Philip didn't know what was going to happen next. Sometimes we don't know what's going to happen next! So we're called to make a step forward in faith - knowing that God is with us.
- We are God's agents on earth - things can HAPPEN if, when God speaks, we RESPOND
- Are we always ready to hear?
 - It can sometimes be easy to brush aside God's call (as we get along with our 'busy' lives)

Walk Alongside Others

- There are different styles of sharing the message
 - We've gone from the huge mission rally at the beginning of Acts 8 to a single conversation. God's goal is not only quantity. He cares about individuals and he cares about all people from every nation. (Rev 5:9)
- "What page are they on?"
 - Ever heard the expression "Are we on the same page?" or "What page are you on?" Quite literally appropriate in this case. By Philip walking alongside the chariot, Philip is able to hear that the Ethiopian is reading allowed from Isaiah 53
 - With our friends and work colleagues and the people we meet 'walking alongside them' will often be about being with someone, listening first, working with them, serving them – helping them where they're at and allowing there to be a time when if they've got questions we're there to help. By walking alongside someone,

for example, you would know whether they're ready for an Alpha course.

- Echoes of Jesus (after the resurrection) on the Emmaus road (see Luke 24:13-35)

It's OK to ask for help

- We have the amazing resource of God's word
- Reading is different to understanding
 - It's OK to admit (like the Ethiopian) that we sometimes find it difficult to understand
- Help is available – Cell Groups, Bible reading notes, Books, Teaching in Church

Jesus is for all

- The Ethiopian was probably not fully included in Jerusalem
 - This conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch demonstrates the inclusiveness of the gospel.
 - Luke says there are no barriers of age (Luke 18:16), religious tradition, old or new (Luke 9:49-50; 11:52), race or ethnic origin (Acts 10:47; 11:17), or physical condition (8:36, if the eunuch were one physically) to people from hearing and applying the gospel to themselves
- The early church reaching out to the Gentiles was not an accident
- We must never be the ones to place limits on God's love

The Story Continues ...

- The fully-fledged Gentile mission was to come (Acts 13 to 28)
- The story is still being written, and we are part of it.
- Who can we share the good news with?

Questions

- How can we make time to listen to God's call?
 - What stops us from being obedient?
- How can we practically walk alongside others?
 - Are there examples where doing this has led to conversations about the Christian faith
- Do you struggle to understand the Bible sometimes?
 - What practical ways have you found useful for getting help?
- Do you know of examples where the church seems to have placed limits on God's love
 - How can we show that Jesus' love is for all?