

SERMON REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Sermon Title: More Ready than You Know
Sermon Series: Refresh: Sharing Christ in Everyday Conversations
Preacher: Rev. Glyn Norman
Acts 8:26-39
September 10, 2023

Description:

In the story of Philip and the Ethiopian we see the following: 1) Philip was listening to God and open to his promptings; 2) He reacted with instant obedience and took a risk; 3) God was already working in this man's life; 4) Philip was willing to initiate a spiritual conversation; 5) He was relevant in his speech; 6) He invited the man to a lifestyle not just a belief system.

Icebreaker (for groups):

Have you ever had a “divine appointment,” when it seemed clear to you that only God could have orchestrated the circumstances of a significant event, or, perhaps, your own conversion experience?

Reflections on the Sermon:

What point(s) in Glyn’s sermon did you find most helpful for taking the initiative in a spiritual conversation with an unbeliever?

Scripture Passage: Acts 8:26–39 (NIV)

²⁶ Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” ²⁷ So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of the Kandake (which means “queen of the Ethiopians”). This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, ²⁸ and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the Book of Isaiah the prophet. ²⁹ The Spirit told Philip, “Go to that chariot and stay near it.”

³⁰ Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. “Do you understand what you are reading?” Philip asked.

³¹ “How can I,” he said, “unless someone explains it to me?” So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

³² This is the passage of Scripture the eunuch was reading:

“He was led like a sheep to the slaughter,
and as a lamb before its shearer is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.

³³ In his humiliation he was deprived of justice.
Who can speak of his descendants?
For his life was taken from the earth.”

³⁴ The eunuch asked Philip, “Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?” ³⁵ Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.

³⁶ As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptized?” ^[37] ³⁸ And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. ³⁹ When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing.

Reviewing the Scripture:

1. Whom did Philip meet on the road, why was that person there, and what was he doing when Philip first saw him?
2. What fearful thoughts as well as encouraging ones might Philip have had as he approached the chariot? What negative and positive thoughts do believers have about sharing Christ?
3. What does the official's invitation to Philip tell you about where his heart was at this time?
4. What had prepared the official to listen to Philip? What prepared Philip to tell him the Good News? How might God be using your experiences to prepare you to tell others the Good News?
5. What was the official's response to hearing the gospel? To being baptized? What was your response when you became a believer? How did others respond when you told them about it?
6. Which aspects of Philip's encounter with the official do you think were coincidental, and which ones were God's work? How does this encourage you?
7. What might have been the long-term outcomes of the official's conversion when he returned to Ethiopia? What have been some outcomes of your conversion experience?

Going Deeper:

1. What was Philip's strategy, if any, to evangelize the official? What was the most significant factor in his fruitful encounter? What factor(s) is important to you in a spiritual conversation?
2. What cues helped Philip find a natural opening for the conversation? What circumstances might we seek today which could provide a natural opening for a spiritual conversation?
3. What is your first response when you sense someone might be open to a spiritual conversation? Are you comfortable with having a plan, or would you rather "wing it" and see what happens?
4. How can we be more relevant to someone who may be open to hearing the gospel?
5. How would you describe your Christian walk as a lifestyle? Would you consider using this approach in a natural conversation?
6. What kind of fisher are you: a smiler, a brick thrower, or a bait dropper? If you are a bait dropper, what kind of bait has worked for you.

Prayer:

God of heaven, we praise You for the Good News which changes everything for those who choose to believe. Thank You for being the One who brings people to faith through Your word and through The Word. Holy Spirit, help us recognize when someone might be more ready than we know. May we boldly serve as Christ's humble ambassadors, reaching out as though the Father is making His appeal through us. It is astounding that You call us to do Your perfect work despite all our imperfections. May we be obedient to Your commands and give You all the glory. For it is in Your name we pray, Amen!

