

His Story, My Story - Session 9

Philip Tells an Ethiopian About Jesus (Acts 8:26-39)

Sharing

This is the final session for this series. Let's pray, asking the Lord to be with us. *(Pray.)*

For our opening this time, we are going to do something different. I want you to close your eyes. *(Leader: Go slowly.)*

Relax.

Slow down.

Be still.

Do you remember the story in which Jesus forgave and then healed the paralysed man? Imagine you are there in the house. *(Leader, try to do this too.)*

Imagine everybody leaves the house. Only you and Jesus remain.

You are in the room with Jesus.

For a moment, think about your own life story.

(Leader: allow a moment.)

Now, is there something you would like to say to Jesus? What will you say to him? *(Allow time to think.)*

Say it to him now as a silent prayer. *(Leader: allow time.)*

Listen to see if he has anything to say to you. *(Allow time.)*

Now let's open our eyes.

Are you OK with telling us what you said to Jesus? If not, that is fine.

Facilitator

I am going to tell you a story from the Bible three times. The first time, I want us to imagine the story. The second time, I want us to remember the story. And the third time, you are going to help me tell the story. Listen carefully because you are going to have to help me retell it, and we'll also talk some more about the story afterwards.

First time

In the early days of the Christian movement, a man named Philip who was chosen as an elder of the Jerusalem church. Philip was gifted at telling people about the risen Jesus.

One day an angel appeared to Philip. The angel said, 'At noon today, go south to the road that goes from Jerusalem to Gaza.' The road ran south for about 100 km towards the Mediterranean coast. People walked it on their way to Egypt, and further south to Africa.

Philip went. Coming down that road was the Treasurer of Ethiopia. He had been up in Jerusalem worshipping. He was a eunuch. Most of the men who

worked in the royal courts at that time were eunuchs. A eunuch was a man whose genitals had been removed. This man had great authority under Candace the queen mother of Ethiopia.

He was riding in a chariot. And he was reading aloud from a scroll. This scroll had part of the Old Testament writings. It contained the book of the prophet Isaiah. The eunuch was reading the section we know as Isaiah chapter 53.

The Holy Spirit said to Philip, 'Go over and walk beside the chariot.' Philip ran over and heard what the Ethiopian was reading. He asked, 'Do you understand it?'

The Ethiopian said, 'How can I unless I have someone to explain it to me?' He invited Philip to get in the chariot with him. Here's the passage he was reading:

Like a sheep, He was led to be slaughtered.
Like a lamb about to be shorn of its wool,
He was completely silent.
He was humiliated, and He received no justice.
Who can describe His peers? *Who would treat Him this way?*
For they snuffed out His life.

It also says:

But he was pierced for our rebellion,
crushed for our sins.
He was beaten so we could be whole.
He was whipped so we could be healed.

The eunuch asked Philip, 'Was Isaiah talking about himself or someone else?'

Philip explained. He started with that part of Isaiah. Then he mentioned many other parts of the Scriptures. And he showed how they were talking about Jesus. He told the Ethiopian how Jesus had been crucified. And how Isaiah was saying why Jesus was crucified.

As they rode along, they came to a small body of water, and the eunuch said, 'Look! Water! Why can't I be baptized?'

'You can,' Philip answered, 'if you believe with all your heart.'

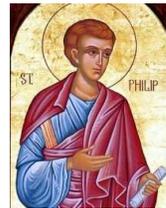
And the eunuch replied, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.'

He stopped the chariot, and they went down into the water and Philip baptized him. (The water was a visible sign that God had washed away his sins and immersed him in the Holy Spirit.)

Then the Holy Spirit fell on the eunuch and filled him.

Second time

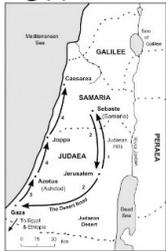
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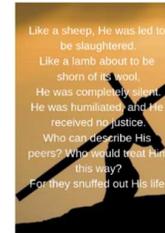


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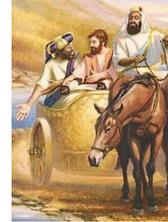
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Third time

OK this time you get to tell the story. Let's tell it together as a group.

Discussion

1. What do you like about this story? Why?

2. What questions might someone have about this story?
3. What can we learn about people from the characters in this story? (sometimes I ask, what choices did the person have? What do we learn about them from the choice they made?)
4. What can we learn about God/Jesus from this story?
5. This week, what do you want to change in your life because of this story? State your answer in the form "This week I want to..."
6. Who else needs to hear this story?



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