



God's Witnesses
Acts 8:1-40

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Lessons from Philip

- ❖ We are God's witnesses
- ❖ We must believe the right things
- ❖ All believers have the Holy Spirit
- ❖ The meaning of repentance

Acts 6:1-8:3

- ❖ A case study in problem-solving.
- ❖ A model for church government.
- ❖ Mercy ministry should not be neglected.
- ❖ Word ministry must have priority.
- ❖ Faithfulness will bring opposition.
- ❖ Applause of Heaven > scorn of humanity.



Priests:

❖ Sacrifice

❖ Pray

❖ Bless

❖ Heal

❖ Judge

❖ Teach

Acts 8:1-2

On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him.

Acts 8:3-4

But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off both men and women and put them in prison. Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.

Acts 1:8

[Jesus]: “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”



John Stott

“There can be no evangelism without an evangel, and Christian evangelism presupposes the good news of Jesus Christ.”

Romans 10:14

How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?

Witnessing Progression

- ❖ Jerusalem
- ❖ Judea
- ❖ Samaria
- ❖ Ends of the earth

Acts 8:5-8

Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah there. When the crowds heard Philip and saw the signs he performed, they all paid close attention to what he said. For with shrieks, impure spirits came out of many, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. So there was great joy in that city.

Acts 8:9-10

Now for some time a man named Simon had practiced sorcery in the city and amazed all the people of Samaria. He boasted that he was someone great, and all the people, both high and low, gave him their attention and exclaimed, "This man is rightly called the Great Power of God."

Acts 8:11-12

They followed him because he had amazed them for a long time with his sorcery. But when they believed Philip as he proclaimed the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

Acts 8:13

**Simon himself believed and was baptized.
And he followed Philip everywhere,
astonished by the great signs
and miracles he saw.**

Reasons for magic

- ❖ Heal diseases
- ❖ Encourage prosperity
- ❖ Curse enemies
- ❖ Guard against demons and curses
- ❖ Tell the future

Extra-biblical records of Simon

- ❖ Justin Martyr
- ❖ Irenaeus



James 2:19

**You believe that there is one God.
Good! Even the demons believe that —
and shudder.**

Romans 10:9

If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.



John 14:6

[Jesus]: “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

Acts 4:12

[Peter]: “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.”



John Stott

“New Testament language does not always distinguish between believing and professing to believe.”

Acts 8:14-15

When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to Samaria. When they arrived, they prayed for the new believers there that they might receive the Holy Spirit,

Acts 8:16-17

because the Holy Spirit had not yet come on any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.



Professor Howard Marshall

“perhaps the most extraordinary
statement in Acts”

Two Step Salvation?

- ❖ First, believe and be baptized
- ❖ Later, receive the Holy Spirit

Traditions

- ❖ Catholic (also Episcopal and Anglican)
- ❖ Pentecostal (also Charismatic)
- ❖ Others

Acts 2:38

Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 8:9

You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ.

1 Peter 1:1-2

To God's elect ... who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance.

Titus 3:4-5

But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,

Titus 3:6-7

whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

Other Passages

- ❖ Romans 8:14-16
- ❖ 1 Corinthians 6:19
- ❖ Galatians 3:2, 14, 27
- ❖ Galatians 4:6

The Holy Spirit's Arrival

- ❖ Acts 2:4
- ❖ Acts 4:31
- ❖ Acts 7:55

Acts 8:18-19

When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money and said, "Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit."



John Calvin

“The gifts of the Spirit are not gotten with money, but they are given of the free and mere goodness of God, and that for the edifying of the Church.”

Acts 8:20-21

Peter answered: “May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money! You have no part or share in this ministry, because your heart is not right before God.

Acts 8:22-23

“Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord in the hope that he may forgive you for having such a thought in your heart. For I see that you are full of bitterness and captive to sin.”

Acts 8:24

Then Simon answered, "Pray to the Lord for me so that nothing you have said may happen to me."

Peter's assessment of Simon

- ❖ Completely excluded from God's ministry
- ❖ Heart not right before God
- ❖ Full of bitterness
- ❖ Captive to sin

2 Chronicles 7:14

[The LORD]: "... if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land."

Repentance

- ❖ Humble yourself
- ❖ Pray and seek God
- ❖ Turn from your wicked ways

Acts 8:25

After they had further proclaimed the word of the Lord and testified about Jesus, Peter and John returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many Samaritan villages.

Acts 8:26-27

Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip,
“Go south to the road — the desert road —
that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.”
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”).

Acts 8:27-29

This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the Book of Isaiah the prophet. The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it."

Acts 8:30-31

Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. “Do you understand what you are reading?” Philip asked. “How can I,” he said, “unless someone explains it to me?” So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

Acts 8:32-33

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.

In his humiliation he was deprived of justice.

Who can speak of his descendants?

For his life was taken from the earth.”

Acts 8:34-35

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

Acts 8:36-38

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?” And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him.

Acts 8:39-40

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. Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and traveled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea.

Lessons from Philip

- ❖ We are God's witnesses
- ❖ We must believe the right things
- ❖ All believers have the Holy Spirit
- ❖ The meaning of repentance



Are you being called?

- ❖ To receive Christ
- ❖ To become a member of Melbourne Community Church
- ❖ To pray / to receive prayer
- ❖ To affirm or reaffirm a commitment
- ❖ To receive the LORD's Supper