

GOSPEL / THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH

A Gospel Message by George Bates. The Meeting House. Randalstown. Co., Antrim. Northern Ireland. UK.

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READING:- ACTS 8 : 2-8 + 26-35

*Nearly 2,000 years ago, on the day of Pentecost, **at the dawn (or the commencement,) of the Church of Jesus Christ Our Lord, ..thousands of souls were saved in one day!***

In quick succession, THOUSANDS of others came in repentance to the Saviour, in great gatherings, in and around Jerusalem,

***But here in our reading, we have
the very first recorded instance in church history,
of the Holy Spirit's dealing with a single, individual soul.***

This is a remarkable example of the experience of a poor, lost, sinner, that the Holy Spirit has been speaking to and striving with.

*Someone just like **YOU**, dear unsaved one listening to God's Word right now!*

The great Creator, and Ruler, and Sustainer, of the entire universe, has you personally upon His mind tonight.

*From the moment that we are born, until the second that we die, each of us are on a journey.
THE JOURNEY OF LIFE!*

*For some it is a long journey, and for others **it is far too short.***

*This man's life, has been a journey with **many unexpected twists** in the winding road that he has trod.*

*Almighty God has singled **THIS LONER** out from the crowd, that He might bring him to the Saviour, and save his never dying soul from hell.*

*He doesn't realise it yet, but **it is The Lord** Himself, Who is bringing him "**out of darkness and into His marvellous light.**"*

ARE YOU A LONER, unsaved one?

*It may well surprise you to know that **the Eternal God has a definite input, into the everyday events of your life.***

*You may **feel** that you are only **an earthly life form, in a world of random circumstance.***

*You may think that your life is **controlled by mere chance, or by some haphazard impersonal forces!** but not so!*

*Please don't allow your earthly circumstances, and **your everyday life on a human level**, to blind you to the fact, ...*

*that **God's Hand** is constantly reaching out of eternity into time, and is controlling the thermostat!*

There really is AN ETERNAL DIMENSION, to that experience that you are going through.

You are not just some animal that has developed from the apes, no matter how much you are being conditioned to believe that rubbish.

*Almighty God is aware of everything that concerns you, and He only permits that which will eventually open your mind to realize **your own Ruin**, ...
and **His wonderful Remedy** in Jesus Christ His only begotten Son, our precious Saviour.*

*Now as we consider this Ethiopian traveller in our reading, have no doubt about **his loneliness of heart and his aloneness of life**, no matter about the crowds that surrounded him, day in and day out.*

*There is **no loving partner in life**, to hold in his arms.
He has **no happy family** calling him daddy, and **there is no chance of it ever happening**, although his desires and emotions are as strong and as real as the next man's are.*

***I want you to notice HIS REPROACH ...
FOR HE IS A EUNUCH!***

***He has probably been castrated**, although the word used can also refer to a government official.*

*But I believe that he is a Eunuch in both senses of the word, for in vs 27 we are told he was "a Eunuch," who had "**great authority under Can-da-se Queen of the Ethiopians**," and "**had the charge of all her treasure**."*

*He could have been **born this way**,
or **he could have been deliberately emasculated** by his parents, to secure him a good "Palace guard job."*

*He is a man who has **everything that the world and its materialism can provide**, yet his, is an **unsatisfied and unfulfilled life**.*

***He probably longs for a normality that he can never attain.**
He may well feel that no one really cares, and that he has nothing to offer to anyone, but **the emptiness that has probably been inflicted upon him**, by the well meaning cruelty of others.*

*He has great authority, (verse 27.)
He has great responsibilities.
He has **the admiration and respect of everyone**, in his **trusted position**.*

***Yet** he has been denied the opportunity of ever becoming, that which God intended him to be.*

*I can't help wondering if his physical condition, **has actually spurred him on** in a greater way, to seek **true fulfilment** in his soul.*

He is definitely seeking after God with all his heart.

That's for sure!

Can you identify with any of this, dear unsaved friend ?

*Although he was born in darkness, **yet he has heard, and has become convinced**, that ALMIGHTY GOD THE GREAT CREATOR, has revealed Himself to Israel!*

I wonder if he had heard the story of THE QUEEN OF SHEBA!

*Another celebrated seeker, who **also** made a 1200 mile journey to Jerusalem from her land, centuries beforehand?*

*(Their lands are situated **exactly opposite one another**, on either side of The Red Sea.)*

*She had **a million and one HARD QUESTIONS** that had plagued her mind, and she hoped that **King Solomon with all his wisdom**, would know the answers.*

Maybe there is a man or a woman like that, listening tonight!

*You have **a mountain of responsibility** heaped upon those **weary shoulders** of yours, and you are feeling the weight of it!*

You know all about the HARD QUESTIONS of life, don't you, and you are determined to get answers.

Why did this affliction have to come to me?

Why did my loved one have to die?

Why does my heart ache over someone who doesn't even care?

Why did my marriage have to break up?

LIFE IS FULL OF HARD QUESTIONS!

*Listen friend, "**a greater than Solomon is here**" with us in this very building just now!*

*We have THE SAVIOUR'S PROMISED PRESENCE in **Matthew Chapter 18 verse 20** that "**Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them.**"*

*Our Lord Jesus doesn't only **know** the answer.*

*Christ **is** the answer to your every need! **and I mean that sincerely!***

He satisfies the longing soul!

*This dark skinned African, may well feel that **every conceivable obstacle has been hurled in his path**, to stop him getting to God, ...*

***But the truth is** that he is being DIVINELY GUIDED, like a heat seeking missile, straight to his target!*

***The providential hand of the Almighty** is moving him about, like a pawn on a chessboard, **to bring him to exactly where He wants him to be.** (Is that what He is doing with you?)*

IS YOUR CONCEPT OF GOD TOO SMALL?

I think that it is a good thing, to get a birds-eye view of the wider panorama of events, that were all taking place, at the same time as his arrival in Jerusalem.

*By doing this we will learn that **THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD ALWAYS WORKS AT BOTH ENDS OF THE LINE.***

*Try to picture this very important
"Minister of Finance",
... **Making all the necessary arrangements for travelling
over 1200 miles of hazardous countryside,
with wild animals and
bands of robbers**, to reach Jerusalem and to worship God.*

***WE ARE NOT LOOKING AT A FOOL HERE**, but
A key man in the Ethiopian affairs of state.*

*He already understood the importance of **resting his simple faith in the Holy Scriptures**, in his search for God's Will for his life.*

He believed the Holy Scriptures, and though he doesn't always grasp them, he keeps on reading them anyway, and he was perfectly right to do so.

Whenever he eventually arrived in Jerusalem, he doesn't even meet one christian who can tell him freely, what he desperately needs to know!

***For while he has been travelling day and night through months of weary expedition, COINCIDING WITH ALL THIS, ...
in Jerusalem, false witnesses have accused a great church leader called Stephen, of blasphemous words against Moses and against God and against the Law and the Jewish Temple.
Its all lies of course, but they killed him anyway.***

*The death of the first martyr Stephen, was **the trigger that activated a tidal wave of persecution against the Church in its infancy, around Jerusalem and beyond.***

*SAUL OF TARSUS MADE HAVOC OF THE CHURCH.
IMPRISONING AND KILLING GOD'S PEOPLE.*

*Acts chapter 8 and verse 4 says,
"Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word".*

So by the time that the eunuch arrived in Jerusalem, the streets were suddenly empty, and devoid of the previous activities of thousands of living witnesses for Christ.

Surely we can understand something of the incredible odds, that are stacked against him humanly speaking, of ever hearing of THE CRUCIFIED, RISEN EXALTED, LORD JESUS, Who Alone can save him.

Can we not sense something of the yearning of his heart to be saved?

*Never underestimate that which God can accomplish in a human life by the power of His gracious Holy Spirit, **through just one brief encounter.***

You can be saved from God's everlasting judgement upon your sins and from Hell tonight, even if this is the very first time you have ever heard the gospel!

WHAT DO YOU THINK IT WAS
*that compelled this soul, to undertake
such a perilous journey?*

I WILL TELL YOU!

*He was driven by a need to find **PEACE WITH GOD**, his own Creator and Judge.*

*He knew the great weight of the burden of sin in his life.
He alone knew the wickedness of his own heart.*

*He knew that there was a **HEAVEN** to gain and **A HELL** to shun.*

Oppression was a constant visitor to his mind and thoughts.

*This poor soul had **an inner awareness that he needed God's forgiveness**, and he longed to be saved.*

*He wanted to be **set free from the bondage** that had enslaved him.*

*He longed to have his **broken heart** healed.*

*I believe **that this** was the realisation that motivated him, to finance and set out on this journey of faith.*

Have you come to this meeting on a journey of faith tonight?

Do you want to know God's wonderful Salvation in your life?

Remember that I said thatTHE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD ALWAYS WORKS AT BOTH ENDS OF THE LINE.

For this is also the amazing but true story, of a busy believer called Philip the Evangelist.

The Spirit of God was

using Philip's ministry to demonstrate The Power of The Lord to save, and to heal, and to deliver souls, in Samaria!

*He was a man of God who went **over** every wall, and **through** every barrier, with the glorious gospel of Christ!*

*He ignored **THE RELIGIOUS BIGOTRY BARRIER**, by going to the Samaritans, ...
and remember, "**the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans**" we read in **John chapter 4**.*

*He didn't recognise any **RACIAL OR COLOUR BARRIER**.*

*He was "at home" with **AN AFRICAN**, just as much as anyone else. (and why not?)*

*He was not concerned about any **SOCIAL BARRIER**, for the fact that this gentleman, just happened to be **THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER FOR THE KINGDOM OF ETHIOPIA**, didn't stop Philip speaking to him.*

He wasn't hindered by **THE PHYSICAL BARRIER** either, though Deuteronomy Chapter 23 verse 1 made it absolutely clear, that under the Ceremonial Law, a eunuch could go no further than THE GATE of THE TEMPLE.

A Eunuch could never enter in to the temple congregation, because of his physical condition, ...

YET THE UNLEASHED **GRACE OF GOD**, THAT RENT THE VEIL FROM TOP TO BOTTOM IN THE TEMPLE, as the Saviour on the cross cried "**finished**," went clean through **THE BARRIER OF THE LAW**, using Philip!

God's messenger goes straight to this Gentile, and points him directly to Christ!

Romans chapter 10 verse 12 says, "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all, is rich unto all that call upon Him."

Romans 3/23 states, "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God"

And THE GREAT COMMISSION OF THE RISEN LORD JESUS is, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel, to every creature."

Philip is doing just that.

**HE WENT WHERE GOD SENT HIM,
HE DID WHAT GOD TOLD HIM,
HE LEFT WHEN GOD TOOK HIM,
LEAVING THE RESULTS WITH GOD.**

We have already seen
THE EUNUCHS REPROACH,
HIS RACE, HIS RANK,
HIS RELIGION.

Let us think for a moment about

HIS RETURNING (VS 28)

He "Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet."

He is on his way back now, to the same old situation as before.

It has all been a bit of an anticlimax.

He is feeling disillusioned and disappointed and "let down," for he had so many great religious expectations of making contact with God and they are all dashed!

He was compelled to remain outside the Gate, with no hope of ever being permitted the satisfaction of entering in.

I believe it was a sorrowful returning!

For he had undertaken a journey of a least 2,400 miles there and back, only to find that he was "despised & rejected of men"

Was he sad and disillusioned with the emptiness of the keeping of religious observances.

The need in his heart, that had brought him so far, was as great as ever, and he was returning the very same way as he came!

Oh the heartbreak of an undeveloped life! Has your life been shattered by sin?

Dear unsaved friend! Was there a time whenever you made a real effort to clean up your life and get right with God, and you thought that you were now "good enough"?

You sought for God's fellowship, through religious observances and ceremony?

But you soon found that you were born with something that disqualified you?

AN OLD ADAMIC NATURE.

You have been "born in sin and shapen in iniquity."

You have been confused by religion, and yet you love God, and you read His Word The Bible!

Are you a man, or woman, or young person, in the wilderness of life, puzzling over the Scriptures?

Although this gentleman didn't understand what he was reading, God saw him seeking!

And He sent someone, to instruct him concerning Salvation!

"So then Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God." Romans 10/17

I think that it is lovely, the way that God dovetails things,

and under the direction of The Holy Spirit of God, synchronises Philips steps, to simultaneously coincide with the eunuch reading the very scriptures that Philip will preach from!

Just when there is a little pool of water up ahead, for the eunuch to be baptised in after conversion!

Acts 8:29 - 35 says "Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.

And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, ..."

(He was reading aloud,)

"and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?

And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him."

There is a refreshing humility here!

He wasn't too big in his own eyes to ask the servant of God to come and teach him.

"The place of the scripture which he read was this, ...

He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth:

In his humiliation his judgement was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.

And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?

Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus."

This man's life was completely changed, because THE STILL SMALL VOICE OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD, SPOKE TO HIS HEART THROUGH THE SCRIPTURES!

DO YOU THINK IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR GOD'S SPIRIT TO SPEAK TO YOU TONIGHT?

Is it the wrong place? The wilderness? It was a meeting arranged by God!

Is it the wrong time?

It was God's perfect time!

*So perfectly planned, that the man of God arrived, just when he was reading **Isaiah chapter 53** so that Philip could preach Jesus unto him*

It's not your time, but God's time for Salvation that counts!

"Behold now is the accepted time behold now is the day of Salvation"

*Philip needed this word, just when it came, because he could have been **afraid of the crowd!***

*Just picture this great company of
camels, servants, chariots, soldiers, swords and spears!*

HE IS "IN TOUCH."

HE IS "IN TIME"

AND HE IS TRUSTING GOD.

*vrs30 says "**he ran**"*

DON'T HESITATE, ONCE GOD HAS SPOKEN, HE CAN BE FULLY TRUSTED!

*But notice how Philip continued to look for The Spirits guidance! Vrs36 "**Then Philip opened his mouth and began at the same scripture and preached unto him Jesus**"*

He had his mouth shut, and was listening up until the Eunuch had finished speaking.

He was listening, for the guidance, of The Spirit of God.

*He didn't preach unto him **Deuteronomy chapter 23 verse 1.***

WHY IS THAT?

"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, to everyone that believeth"(Romans Ch 10 vs 4.)

*He didn't preach unto him RELIGION, or POLITICS!
or DENOMINATIONALISM, or CHRISTENING!*

HE PREACHED UNTO HIM "JESUS"

*That's who the Ethiopian Eunuch was reading about after all, in **Isaiah chapter 53.***

Philip believed that Isaiah chapter 53 was all about

"THE SUFFERING SAVIOUR"

and he was right!

Written over 700 years before the birth of Christ!

verse 3 - 6 says,

" He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief:

and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not. Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

And then we have the words referred to here by the Eunuch in verse 7 - 8,

"He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

He was taken from prison and from judgement: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

The eunuch was travelling a lonely road. He has an enquiring mind.

And there is something about this particular passage of scripture that has caught his attention.

He feels that there is something for him in these verses.

THE HOLY SPIRIT HAS A WAY OF TALKING TO US THROUGH THE SCRIPTURES IF WE WOULD ONLY LISTEN.

*Are you "despised and rejected" by others in some way? **-(He was!)***

*Have you been greatly wronged by those who were close to you?
-(He was!)*

Are you childless for some reason?

*Without a family to love and care for you? **-(He was!)***

Or was your childhood taken away from you in some way?

*Have you been "Cut off"? in some way. **-(He was!)***

*Did you go like a lamb to the slaughter? **-(He did!)***

Were you dumb, speechless, as you were stripped naked?

Does all this mean something to you ?

Philip preached that "Jesus" was THE LAMB LED

out of Gethsemane's garden,

not "driven" like Adam & Eve, out of the garden of Eden,

*but "led" as He **willingly**, and **voluntarily**, went with them.*

First to Annas the high priest, (John Chapter 18 verse 13

as he took exactly the same Journey as THE PASSOVER LAMB did!

Even going through THE SHEEP GATE on his way to be slain!

What does it mean when it says "and like a lamb dumb before his shearers so opened he not his mouth"?

What do the shearers do to the sheep?

They strip them naked!

He was **"THE SOVEREIGN STRIPPED"**

As they MOCKED HIS MAJESTY and played "THE KING GAME" with him.

They played the fool with Christ!

Isaiah 50:6 prophecies, "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting."

Ah but whenever Philip preached

"CHRIST CRUCIFIED"

and

"THE REDEEMER RISEN"

He never hesitated even though he had only heard it for the very first time!

There was no holding back!

He made a complete surrender to the man of Calvary, and there in the wilderness, he yields his life completely and the wilderness became a paradise!

I think that this is wonderful!

Here is a man coming from a state of absolute ignorance of **Jesus Christ, or the Cross, or all that Almighty God has just recently done at Calvary**, and by the resurrection of the Saviour's Body out from among the dead.

Yet he is being **born again** of God's spirit, .. saved by the sovereign Grace of God.

Indeed he is becoming **a key man** for the Lord, a baptised believer taking the gospel to foreign land.

NOW ALLOW ME TO ASK YOU A QUESTION PLEASE.

WHAT EARTHLY PROPS WERE NECESSARY FOR THIS GLORIOUS CONVERSION TO TAKE PLACE?

There was no ornate building.

There was no chanting congregation.

No choir singing,

no pipe organ playing,

no preachers appeals to put up his hand, or make his way up to the front of the hall, or sign decision cards, ... nothing!

He was surrounded by a rocky barren wilderness.

A deserted area, and lizards with heads as big as your fists.

WHAT IS THE LESSON HERE?

Simply this, **IT'S THE LORD AND ONLY THE LORD YOU NEED.**

"He preached unto him Jesus"

JUST JESUS!

Here is **THE GOOD NEWS** that a perishing humanity needs to hear and receive. ...**IT'S JESUS!**

No trimmings! No clutter!

No fudging!

ALL THIS MAN NEEDED WAS JESUS.

*There is power in **JESUS** name!*

*There is power in **JESUS** Blood!*

*There is power in **JESUS** Cross!*

*There is power in the Resurrection of **JESUS**!*

*Here we are cutting right through the centuries of **men's additions and corruption of the gospel , to the original belief of the first generation Christians, ...***

who lived, and preached, and knew the full orb'd truth of the gospel preached by our Lord Jesus Christ and His apostles.

*It is a person called "**JESUS.**"*

He is the way. He is the truth.

He is the life.

He is the marrow, and He is the flesh and bones.

He is the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth!

Praise God for the coming of Jesus into this wicked, warped, old world of ours, to make men and women brand new, and straighten us out, when "The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world".

Praise God for His old blood stained rugged Cross and Calvary.

That He worn the cruel Crown of Thorns.

For His vicarious sufferings and death.

For His atoning blood that redeemed us from the curse of the broken law.

For His bodily resurrection ...

Jesus is alive!

For His ascension into Heaven.

His exaltation and glorification as He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on High.

Praise the Lord, He is coming back again very, very soon.

HIS NAME IS "JESUS."

VS 39 WHY IS HE REJOICING? Because he had been forgiven!

His burden of sin was gone!

He had found at last the true peace that he had been longing for.

He would never be alone again!

He would never be unloved again!

Does it hurt inside, whenever you look back on your life?

Do you believe that you are destined to spend the rest of your life in misery and bitterness, because of what has fallen your lot?

IS THERE NO JOY? PURPOSE? SATISFACTION?

*Repent of your sins before God and embrace **JESUS CHRIST THE BONDAGE BREAKER** by faith as your Saviour, and*

He will heal your broken heart!

Acts 8:37 "And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

There had to be a personal acceptance of Jesus Christ the son of God in the heart.

It's not "If you have eaten the wafer"

If you have joined a church"

*If you paid in your envelopes" **Romans chapter 10 verse 9** says*

"If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and shalt believe in thine heart, that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved!"

*The early evangelist was "up to his eyes" with work, for he is experiencing **a tremendous out pouring of God's blessing** upon his ministry just now!*

The demands were great, and the responsibilities were overpowering, yet **he never lost touch with God!**

*The Lord changes his servant's plans, by sending **an Angel** who spoke to Philip and said*

"Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert."

*And **vs27** says "**he arose**"*

*Like "**Mary of Bethany**"*

He was down at the feet of Jesus.

*He is **a man of prayer.***

*He is **a man with God's message**, because*

HIS MINISTRY, WAS BEING MANAGED BY THE MASTER!

He didn't complain

"Lord, have you seen my diary?"

*... **no!** **vs27** tells us immediately that "**he arose and went**"*

INSTANT OBEDIENCE!

Philip had

A CONCERN FOR SOULS.

Philip had

A CONSISTENT LIFE

Acts 6:3 teaches us that he was a man " **full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, ...** "

He had

A COMMUNING HEART

that was sensitive to the slightest whisper of The Holy Spirit of God, so that he was able to receive guidance with split second timing.

A CONTENTED SPIRIT

*If God wanted to take him away
from **THE PROMINENCE OF CONDUCTING A GREAT CRUSADE**,
to **THE OBSCURITY OF COUNSELLING IN A TINY CHARIOT**, then there was no problem
with him.*