**“Arise and Go: The Joy of Obedience”**

Acts 8:26-39

(Notes based on the sermon by Pastor Steve Massey, Hayden Bible Church, 2/19/23)

 The Spirit of God often compels us to do costly, inconvenient things. He did so with Philip. Philip obeyed the Spirit’s leading. He didn’t delay, he wasn’t too busy or too fearful or too skeptical. What hinders your obedience to the Spirit’s call? What prevents me from doing what I know I am called to do? Philip obeyed and then experienced the JOY of obedience. And the African in the chariot experienced the JOY of new birth!

 After the young church had been expelled from Jerusalem, many in Samaria were turning to Christ as Savior and King. Then Philip was called by the Spirit to go elsewhere. God conveyed the message, and Philip recognized the message because it was congruent with the Word of God (see Matt. 28:18-20).

 Philip’s obedience is coupled with the obedience of the African. Note that the Holy Spirit had already been working on the African! This is a work of God. He intended to bring the Gospel to Cush (now called Sudan) and then to the whole continent. This African was wealthy enough to have his own hand-written scroll of Isaiah, AND he had the ability to read it in Hebrew. This Gospel erases the barrier that separates men from God, and it also erases the barrier that separates men from men. But the African didn’t understand; he needed someone to guide him. How many in our own country have heard of Jesus and know some Bible stories, yet they have no real understanding of how to be made right with God? How many feel that their lives are incomplete, but they don’t know what to do about it?

 There in the chariot, Philip spotted a “Gospel opening”. I’m sure he had prayed for wisdom and discernment. The Bible says that he started his Gospel presentation with scripture. Isn’t it amazing that God uses plain men and women to spread this all-important message of salvation? Once he had heard, the African believed with his whole heart that Jesus was the Christ, and that He had the power and the desire to save him. At that point, he said, “There’s the water… may I be baptized?”

 Baptism is a means of proclaiming saving faith in Christ. It is an outward expression of what has already taken place in one’s heart. Being emersed in water pictures the death and resurrection of Jesus. Obedience in sharing the Gospel leads to joy. Obedience in receiving the Gospel leads to joy. Have you noticed that obedience and joy seem to travel together?

 Our **sharing** the joy of salvation is how the Lord intends to reach Coeur d’Alene and Post Falls and Hayden for His Kingdom. **Sharing** the Gospel is how to take people from darkness into His marvelous light. It’s a simple message: 1) repent of your sin 2) put your faith in Jesus Christ 3) try to follow Him for the rest of your life. One who has experienced the new birth not only believes, but loves Jesus for saving him. He not only believes the truth that he is saved, but he loves the Savior who gave so much for him.

 So, what hinders us from talking to that neighbor who needs to know Jesus? Is there some besetting sin that is quenching communication with the Spirit? Is there someone you need to forgive before you can hear the Spirit’s call? May we all have ears to hear the Spirit’s call, and may we, like Philip, respond in joyful obedience to our Master’s command. Amen.

**QUESTIONS**:

1. Philip spotted a “Gospel opening”. Has this happened to you? If so, please share it with your group.
2. In Matt. 28:18-20, Jesus tells us to baptize disciples, then He tells us to teach “them all that I commanded you.” What else has He commanded us to do?
3. God conveyed the message to Philip, and Philip recognized the message. How do you get to the point where you recognize these messages from God?
4. What could keep you from hearing the Spirit’s call? What could keep you from obeying the Spirit’s call? Another Philip, Philip Yancey, said, “Tensions and anxieties flame within me the moment I forget I am living my life for the one-man audience of Christ…” Discuss.
5. Could God have saved the African without Philip? Of course. But He DID use Philip. What does this tell you about the means God uses to save His people?

“Take My Life and Let It Be” (Havergal)

1. Take my life and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee.
Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in endless praise.
2. Take my hands and let them move
At the impulse of Thy love.
Take my feet and let them be
Swift and beautiful for Thee.
3. Take my voice and let me sing,
Always, only for my King.
Take my lips and let them be
Filled with messages from Thee.
4. Take my will and make it Thine,
It shall be no longer mine.
Take my heart, it is Thine own,
It shall be Thy royal throne.
5. Take my love, my Lord, I pour
At Thy feet its treasure store.
Take myself and I will be
Ever, only, all for Thee.