

JUNE 23, 2021

AGAPE FROM AFAR

Adjusting to life amidst Coronavirus

A WORD
FROM
PASTOR
JILL

As a way to remain connected during this time apart, I will be putting together a weekly newsletter with a reflection based on the upcoming Sunday scripture passage. I hope that by taking a few moments to reflect on the Word of God and pray, we can feel grounded and connected to God and to one another during this uncertain time. *-Pastor Jill*



The passage for this Sunday is from Acts 8:26-40. In this passage Philip is told to travel on a dangerous road. While he is traveling he encounters a man we are told is an Ethiopian eunuch. Philip is invited into the man's carriage to share about the scripture he is reading. Philip makes a connection between the scripture from Isaiah and Jesus' life, death and resurrection. The encounter ends with the Ethiopian man being baptized and Philip disappearing. Both the Ethiopian man and Philip go and share with others the good news of what happened that day.

Reflect more on this passage on the following pages.



Read the passage:

Acts 8:26-40

Then an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Get up and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a wilderness road.) So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over to this chariot and join it." So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" He replied, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this: "Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter, and like a lamb silent before its shearer, so he does not open his mouth. In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth." The eunuch asked Philip, "About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?" He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region, he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.



Reflect:

1. Why do you think the passage from Isaiah was so provocative for the Ethiopian man? (Acts 8:32-33)
2. Philip was willing to put his agenda on hold in order to spend time with someone very different from him- the Ethiopian eunuch. When have you seized opportunities to cross cultural barriers? When have you avoided those opportunities?
3. Do you identify more with Philip or the Ethiopian man in this passage? Why?
4. What is this passage calling you to do today? This week?

Pray:

God, thank you for sending us down wilderness roads. May we have the courage of Philip when we encounter someone/something new. May we also be like the Ethiopian and invite people into our lives who can tell us more about you. Amen.