

LifeWay Bible Studies for Life Series for December 26: Go and tell

December 14, 2010

So here's an interesting event that happens with Philip, and there are several things that really seem to stick out and are there for us to apply to our own lives.

Did you notice what the angel says to Philip? Of course. But did you notice what the angel didn't say? Read it again. The angel doesn't say, "Philip! Wow, great job with being a disciple. The Lord God is pleased greatly with you and all your hard work and blah, blah, blah."

Does it seem like there's no encouragement there for Philip? But there is; it's in the fact that the angel came to him and has given him a very specific task. When you and I need encouragement in our lives—and we all do at times—we need to remember that it's already there, and sometimes what we need to do is remember that as Christians our God thinks so highly of us, he has given us the great privilege of telling others of his great love for them in Christ.

One of the characteristics we see in heroes of the faith is their obedience. In verse 26, the angel says "go," and verse 27 starts out with "so he got up and went." You've got to love that. There's nothing more important or pressing for Philip in his life at that moment that would make him say, "Not right now, give me an hour," or "I'm busy at the moment." It's his very reason for existing.

The glaring question for us then is, how many times do we do that very thing? Do you ever get the unexplainable urge to go to Wal-Mart or the

local convenience store for no apparent reason? Maybe, just maybe, God is trying to move you into a position for a divine appointment.

Oh sure, maybe you go but then get distracted with all the stuff and miss it. However, if you will move and pray along the way: “God, I have no idea why I’m going here, but you do. I’m moving in faith and out of obedience to your urging, you just show me where and what I’m supposed to do.” Watch how amazing things happen and how much easier it becomes to hear and respond to his call.

How many times do we also find ourselves praying for our coworkers and family members with prayers like, “Father, send someone to them that they would receive your salvation in Jesus.” And how many years have you prayed this very prayer? Did you ever stop to think God already has sent them someone, and that someone is you?

Be comforted and assured that the Holy Spirit already has gone before you and has already spoken to their hearts, just like the Ethiopian eunuch’s. Philip got to do the fun part in answering some questions and telling the story of Jesus. Remember that God is passionate about making his Son known; he goes before you, surrounds and lives within you, and comes behind you. Even after you leave, he still is at work in their hearts. Isn’t that comforting to know? It should take most, if not all, the fear out of telling and showing others Christ’s love.

But wait, there’s more the Holy Spirit didn’t say. Notice that Philip wasn’t told exactly what to do. Essentially, Philip was told to go to this particular road and go to that particular chariot. That’s it; nothing more. Why wasn’t Philip given any further instruction? Because he didn’t need any. And neither do you in most cases. Think about when you had your conversion conversation with someone about being a Christian. What did they say, and what did you need to hear?

Imagine not having any sort of church background and going to a Sunday morning worship service for the very first time. Now think about all the “churchy” language you would hear: praise, glory, redeem, “washed in the blood,” Gospel. It almost sounds like a whole new language from a different time period altogether.

Now how can those individuals understand those words if no one takes the time to explain them? As Christians, we need to take the time periodically to review their meanings ourselves. We assume everyone knows what those words mean. Just because they are part of our vocabulary as Christians, it doesn’t mean the rest of the world understands them. And how much more meaning do they now have for us as Christians. When Philip asks whether or not the eunuch understands, he replies, “How can I know unless someone explains it to me?”

What a beautiful picture baptism is. It’s the opportunity to make your statement of faith in the very same fashion Jesus himself was affirmed by his Father and started his ministry. It was the eunuch’s declaration of faith before others after he had heard and understood.

Having been in ministry for a number of years now with the opportunity to talk with so many about how they were growing, or not growing in their faith, I have seen numerous believers hindered in their growth because they didn’t make a public declaration of their faith. Was baptism what saved them? No, but it gave them the confidence and accountability before others to get on with living out their faith.