

The Ethiopian Eunuch

Acts 8:26-39

April 25 2021

The story of the Ethiopian Eunuch is truly about the universal appeal of Christianity. That it is very inclusive and certainly not exclusive. The early church struggled with that in Jerusalem and Peter lost. This story happens on many levels and is a testimony of how the Holy Spirit moves in and guides the church.

The Eunuch comes from a country to the south that has many Jews in it. There are still many Jews there today. They are called Falashas. There have been Jews in Ethiopia since the Babylonian Captivity. This gentleman seems to have made a trip to Israel on official business for his regent. While he is there he went to the temple to pray. He is certainly not a Galilean Jew and he is a man of wealth and means, being a court official.

Luke is illustrating that Christianity is appealing to many as an expression of faith. It is open and receptive not to just Galilean Jews, but Jews from many parts of the world. Not just Jews but Gentiles and even pagans also, who have been touched by Christ's message. Christianity is a religion that is not bound by personal means. It also appeals to the rich and poor alike.

On a more darker note, the Ethiopian Eunuch is in a unique class of his own. He is missing some bits and pieces that would consider him not

really a man. The Hebrew culture of the day is very strict about this. These restrictions would limit his access to some parts of the temple and its worship. He would be told where to stand and to pray because he is a eunuch. Thankfully this is a non- issue for Phillip. He baptizes him regardless of the social stigma attached to him by his religion. Similar to how Christianity welcomed the untouchables in India. Christianity is inclusive and not exclusive. That is how the Holy Spirit seems to move in the church and amongst us. We are reminded that the gospel is for all classes of people and open to all nations.

Luke takes this all even further. He highlights the point that there is no good reason why someone cannot be baptized. Impossible physical barriers can be overcome. Phillip and the Eunuch are on a road in the middle of a dry and barren place. Then when it is time to baptize this gentleman, water seems to appear to make it happen.

The eunuch puts it beautifully when he says, “See here is water. What hinders me from being baptized.” Verse 36. There is really no good reason not to baptize him. The barriers of social status, place of origin or even his wealth can prevent his being baptized. Well, actually there is one big one that does. You cannot baptize yourself.

This story has been an example of the apostolic pattern for conversion and baptism. The eunuch is reading from the prophet Isaiah 53:7-8. He is wanting clarity about the passage and who it is referring to. Then by the grace of the Holy Spirit, Phillip materializes and explains the passage to him. That it is referring to Jesus as the suffering servant. The eunuch has Christ preached to him by Phillip. The Old Testament and the New are all about Jesus Christ. Remember the road to Emmaus a few weeks ago. Luke 24:27, “And beginning at Moses and all the

prophets, He expounded to them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself.”

Luke continues to give a beautiful account of how the eunuch accepted Jesus into his heart and came to believe in Him. Verse 37, “Then Phillip said, If you believe with all your heart you may. The eunuch answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” He believed with all his heart and had no doubts that Jesus is the Christ. Sincere seekers of Jesus, like the Ethiopian eunuch, find Him. Jeremiah 29:13, “When you search for me; you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart.”

With the help of the Holy Spirit, the eunuch was able to make room in his heart for Jesus. He would return to Ethiopia a very changed person. His country would be one of the first nations to become Christian. Phillip who was one of the seven deacons we heard about last week, would be a driving force of Christianity. He was a prolific preacher and converted many to the faith. Paul would stay with him and his family when he was in the area.

The Ethiopian eunuch can teach us many things. Make as much room in your heart for Our Lord Jesus. Be humble regardless of your position in life. Believe in Christ and have no doubts in your heart. Work with the people the Holy Spirit puts on your path in life. Do not be afraid to ask for help or an explanation. If it is meant to be, the Holy Spirit will remove the physical barriers to make it happen. Where did that water come from? Remember that coincidence is not coincidental. God places you at the right time and in the right place. I am sure the eunuch did not think when he woke up that day, that he would become a Christian and have the scriptures explained to him by Phillip on a dessert road and be baptized. The Holy Spirit is still moving amongst us

and in our churches. Our role is to work with It. Sometimes we may not understand, but trust and have no doubts. The Holy Spirit got this. God bless and have a great week, Pastor D