

# WITNESSES

## “Unstoppable”

### WITNESSES

#### Acts 8

#### Small Group Plan

Salvation is always God’s work, both in the life of the Christian partner He chooses to work through and in the life of the person responding to His offer of salvation. This is particularly obvious in the story of Philip and the Ethiopian.

There were two roads from Jerusalem to Gaza and God led Philip to take the one that was seldom used. It is also possible to translate the phrase “Go south” (NIV) or “towards the south” (ESV) as “go at about noon.” (Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 161). This would place Philip on the least traveled road, during the least traveled part of the day because of the heat. In other words, this is not a meeting that we would have planned. It is clearly a meeting that God planned.

#### **OPEN IT / INTRODUCE IT ...**

- Share a life experience where you clearly saw God’s hand at work.

#### **LOOK AT IT / STUDY IT ...**

#### — THE PREPARATION —

##### Acts 8:25-29

<sup>26</sup> Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Go south to the road — the desert road — that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” <sup>27</sup> So he started out, and on his way, he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, <sup>28</sup> and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the book of Isaiah the prophet. <sup>29</sup> The Spirit told Philip, “Go to that chariot and stay near it.”

- **THE WORK OF GOD** (vs. 25-26) - What happens when we begin to think that we are the architects of ministry?
- **THE WILL OF PHILIP** (v. 27a, 29) - Describe how Philip gave himself as a willing partner in the hands of God?

- **THE SEARCH OF THE ETHIOPIAN** (v. 27b) - How would you describe the humble search of the Ethiopian? Why was he searching? What was he looking for?
- **THE WORD OF TRUTH** (v. 28) - What is the role of scripture in the journey to faith?

### — THE PRESENTATION —

#### Acts 8:30-35

<sup>30</sup> Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. “Do you understand what you are reading?” Philip asked. <sup>31</sup> “How can I” he said, “unless someone explains it to me?” So, he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. <sup>32</sup> The eunuch was reading this passage of Scripture: “He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before the shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth. <sup>33</sup> In his humiliation he was deprived of justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth.” <sup>34</sup> The eunuch asked Philip, “Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?” <sup>35</sup> Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.

- **IT CAME FROM SCRIPTURE** (vs. 30-34) - Philip “heard” him reading to himself. Describe the power of carefully reading scripture aloud to yourself.
- **IT CENTERED ON JESUS** (vs. 35) - Why did Philip shift their conversation to Jesus?
- How is this passage from Isaiah 53:7-8 a doorway to a discussion about Jesus?
- What other loyalties compete with Jesus as the foundation of our faith?
- What happens to a faith that is built upon something other than Jesus, such as an issue, a doctrine, a movement or a tradition)?

### — THE RESPONSE —

#### Acts 8:36-40

<sup>36</sup> As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water. Why shouldn’t I be baptized?” <sup>38</sup> And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. <sup>39</sup> When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing. <sup>40</sup> Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and traveled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea.

- **PERSONAL FAITH** (v. 36) - Faith, belief, loyalty, trust – they are all synonyms and describe what is growing in the heart of the Ethiopian. Which term is the most meaningful to you? Explain why.
- **COURAGEOUS CONFESSION** (v. 36) – The eunuch says, “Why shouldn’t I ...” which is another way of saying “I should” “I will” “I want to do this.” Why is important for personal faith to express itself, to make itself known?

- **OBEDIENT BAPTISM** (vs. 37-38) - Remembering that salvation is always the work of God, what did baptism mean for the Ethiopian? What was happening in his life?
- **THANKFUL JOY** (vs. 39-40) - How is joy one of the clear marks of a growing believer (cf. Jn. 15:11, 17:13, Acts 13:52)?

### **USE IT / APPLY IT ...**

- God brought these two men together.
- How can we be more sensitive to God's leading?
- Would you say that your greater need is for God to lead you into ministry or to lead you to Himself? Explain.
- Some will arrogantly congratulate themselves on their insightful strategy while others will humbly praise God for his guidance. Describe the difference, the danger, and the appeal of each.
- Philip was able to explain scripture to the Ethiopian. How capable are we (you) to open a Bible and discuss scripture with an interested person?
- How can we (you) become better prepared for this kind of opportunity?
- What does it mean for Jesus to be the heart, core and center of our faith?
- Close by asking God to take us deeper into His word in order to strengthen our personal faith and to use us in ministry to others.