

Title: Spirit Lead

Subtitle: Phillip Takes the Gospel Global

Series: The Empowered Church (PT. 15)

Scripture: Acts 8:26-40

Fill In the Blank: Be SENSITIVE to the GUIDANCE of the Holy Spirit

Speaker: Judah Sanders

If we haven't met before my name is Judah (*Self Intro + BYA Plug*).

Recently I learned a new word in the English language. I love words and I often use apps and play games that teach me new words and recently I learned the word [Logomisia](#). Anyone want to take a guess as to the definition? Don't cheat! Put those phones down. Those of you watching online can drop your guess in the chat. So Logomisia is the word that describes Word Aversion. Word Aversion is what some of you may feel when I say the word "Phlegm" or "Mucus" or "Ointment" or and someone is going to log off the broadcast when I say this one "Moist." Yeah that feeling is logomisia. logos, Greek word for "word," and "misia," Greek for "hatred" or "disgust."

And Word Aversion has to do with a couple of things, sometimes it's ~~the visceral reactions that we have to the sounds of a word, for example, certain consonant clusters or diphthongs when heard can invoke a strong dislike or even disgust in us.~~ the way a word sounds makes us uncomfortable. Other times Word Aversion can come from connotations, experiences and images that we associate with the word.

Peach Cobbler (*Personal Example*)

Everyone has a word or two that makes them uncomfortable, but for years I have had logomisia or word aversion to a word that considering my profession as full

time Pastor, might surprise you. I have an aversion to a word that really on paper should inspire joy and passion and fervor and instead for years I heard this word and just felt nauseous. What's the word Judah? I'm glad you asked.

Evangelism.

A word that simply means sharing the story of Jesus.

~~A word that embodies what I do for at least 40 hours of any given week.~~

A word whose definition embodies and encapsulates my whole life and yet when I hear it (*slight gag sound*)

And I think the reason why I have had such an aversion to the word "Evangelism" is because I associate it with some pretty terrible images. Images like this one ([*first picture*](#))

Images like this ([*second picture*](#)). ~~I was watching a TV show (TV Show Story)~~

I've seen Evangelism done exceptionally poorly and because of that, when I gave my life back to Jesus, I made a commitment that I was never going to be *that* christian (*joke-If you don't know who "that Christian" is, it might be you.*) And because I never wanted to be "that Christian" and the fact that I just have a more natural inclination and gifting for discipleship, I really pulled away from Evangelism, in fact I think I pulled too far away. And I'm in a season, currently, a right now season, where God is calling me back to my core purpose as a believer to evangelism. He is calling me back to boldly saying "This is what the Lord has done" and "This is who Jesus is" and "I want you to know him because to know is to be saved" and "To be saved is the best thing to be" no matter who you are or

where you come from or what you've done" to be "saved" to know Jesus is the best thing ever. He's calling me back to making sure people who don't know Him hear that.

And so, I've been unpacking this question: What does healthy evangelism look like? What does it look like to share Jesus in a way that doesn't make me nauseous; that doesn't harm people; that doesn't push people away from the church, but invites them in. What does evangelism look like when it's inclusive? And kind? And thoughtful? And authentic. And Ego Free. And effective. And I'm so glad that God gave us a manual for living as Jesus followers called the bible because it has helped answer my question. The way to do Evangelism well—and it's your **Fill in the Blank is to: Be Sensitive to the Guidance of the Holy Spirit**.

Now I know if you've journeyed with Jesus for a while, that sounds like something you already know. I saw you resist the urge to shout "Duh Judah" but in my own life and ministry, I lose track of that sometimes and I need to be reminded. Be Sensitive to the Holy Spirit. That's where Evangelism must start. It's got to start with the Holy Spirit, evangelism has to be grounded in your personal relationship with the Holy Spirit. Evangelism doesn't start with clever plans, or programming, it doesn't start with the song set list, it doesn't start with whose preaching in the pulpit, it doesn't start with invitation cards, it doesn't even start your passion and zeal, it must start with *your* relationship (somebody say 'MY relationship') to the Holy Spirit. And your willingness, to be sensitive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit and therefore your willingness to become desensitized, or less sensitive to self. To Self's desires, and wants and opinions, and comfort zones. Because you cannot serve two masters, you cannot serve both God and you. It is wholly incompatible.

Serving God comes at the expense of serving you. And you will destroy yourself trying to do both.

So today in Part 15 of our year long series through the book of Acts, called “The Empowered Church,” we are going to unpack a familiar story from the book of Acts, Chapter 8, beginning at verse 26, Page _____ Acts 8:26 while you turn there let me catch you up if you haven't been with us the whole series.

~~So if you've been with us through this series you know~~ The book of Acts is really the story of the launching and development of the first Christian Church. And in the life of this young fledgling church, we are entering into a really intense part of the story because as they are growing and expanding—it gets intense- growth is always intense. And one of the results of the growth of this church is they start experiencing persecution, the likes of which the modern American Christian has never experienced at the hands. Last week Pastor Lance walked us through some of what happened. He walked us through the stoning of one the church's central leaders. Stephen preaches about Jesus and the community murders him, and this murder launches this wave of persecution at the command of a man named Saul who will eventually become Paul the Apostle (just to say it's never too late to come back to Jesus—but that's another sermon for another time). For this new Church, things are intense. To give you an idea of how intense things were:

Acts 8:3 But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison.

And the catalyst for this is Stephen's preaching. It resulted in his own death, and in the persecution of the whole church in Jerusalem. Before this, apostles (leaders in

the church) might be arrested and beaten for preaching this controversial Gospel of Jesus, but now every believer, every man woman and child who professes Jesus as Lord is in trouble.

And the result of this new persecution is that the Believers scattered. They realized that it was not wise or safe to stay in Jerusalem but they also realized this was an opportunity to take the Gospel beyond Jerusalem. Side Note: Allow your crisis to speak to God's opportunity (but that's another sermon for another day)

One of these scattered believers was named Phillip, we met him last week and we learned that Phillip was one who had been tasked with practical care specifically of the Hellenist Jewish widows. These Hellenists were folks who were looked down on by some Jews because they had incorporated elements of Greek culture into their lives and that was seen as a betrayal to their Jewish culture. Phillip was charged with looking after them because often they had been neglected because they were Hellenists. ~~The Christian Jewish people at the time were divided into two groups. There were those who had remained near Jerusalem, who used the Hebrew language, and practiced Jewish customs and who were perceived as being more traditionally Jewish and who were appropriately called "Hebrews."~~ The other group consisted of those who were scattered among the Gentiles, who spoke the Greek language, and who used the Greek translation of the Old Testament, called the Septuagint. They were perceived as being people who were more willing to adopt Greek culture and ideas.

~~These were called "Hellenists," from a word meaning "Greek-speaking." And they were looked down upon by the Hebrews as being non loyal to the Jewish way of life. And the Hellenist widows had been overlooked by the Christian leaders because of this (we call that prejudice) and to rectify this inequitable treatment of~~

~~the Hellenist Widows, Phillip and others had been charged with caring and looking out for the Hellenist widows specifically. And what you're going to see is that this helps prepare Phillip for what God wants to use him for. Side Note: Your "Now" is preparation for your "Next." Take advantage of your current season because everything you're learning and experiencing and going through right now may be exactly what God wants to use in you later down the road--(but that's another sermon for another day).~~

So Phillip was forced to flee Jerusalem and he ended up in the city of Samaria. ~~And Pastor Lance taught us that about 750 years before this, the Assyrians conquered this area of northern Israel and deported all the wealthy and middle-class Jews from the area. Then the Assyrians moved into the area mixed pagan populations from other areas. These pagans intermarried with the lowest classes of remaining Jews in northern Israel, and from these people came the Samaritans. Generally speaking, the Jews of that day hated the Samaritans. They considered them compromising half-breeds, idolaters who corrupted the worship of the true God. This is why the story of the good Samaritan and Jesus' interaction with the Samaritan woman at the well are so striking.~~

~~And so Phillip ends up in Samaria,~~ An unlikely place for powerful ministry to occur because there was a very tense relationship between the Jewish people and the Samaritans. The Samaritans are unlikely to be very welcoming to Phillip. But he understands that no matter where he, as a believer ends up, Jesus ought to be proclaimed. And so he proclaims Jesus in Samaria and Jesus transforms the city. And so Phillip gets to witness the reaping of a huge harvest. Miracles are happening, Signs, Wonders, Revival. The Bible says the result of his ministry filled the city with Joy.

Now here is where I want to pick up the text **Acts 8:26**

26 Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” This is a desert place.

Now I want you to understand that this instruction was not necessarily an easy one for Phillip. Because Lord, “Good things are happening in Samaria (*EXPOUND*)
Not now, not me, not there (*EXPOUND*)

What could be more foolish than to leave a place of prospering ministry and go to a desolate desert road?

~~There were two roads from Jerusalem to Gaza, and the Spirit commanded Phillip to take the one that was seldom used. It just doesn't quite make sense.~~

And fortunately Phillip was sensitive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. I find too often I'm sensitive to guidance of what makes sense (*EXPOUND*). But healthy evangelism does not start with what makes sense, it starts with the Holy Spirit.

And when the Holy Spirit said go, I just imagine that before the words had fully left the Holy Spirit's lips, Phillip was packing (*EXPOUND*)
(*Candace and/or student illustration/Example*)- Phillip Knew and Trusted the Holy Spirit

I don't know about you but I want to be the kind of believer that moves to the tune of the Holy Spirit like that. And so we have to know God and trust God in order for

evangelism to be healthy. Because if you knew God, if you knew Christ, you'd know this ([first picture again](#)) isn't his heart or his way.

Let's read the next verse **27 And he rose and went. And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. He had come to Jerusalem to worship 28 and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah.**

So now we are introduced to a new character. And like so many powerful and important figures in this bible, he is introduced to us not by his name but by the loudest and most external factors of his identity. He is introduced to us by the things that people would immediately see about him, judge him by. And that's what we do don't we? I know I'm guilty of it. We see someone and we make some determinations about them. We easily reduce people to what we see and what we assume, it often gets us into trouble. And so in this text We learn that he is Ethiopian.

The Ethiopians are Nubians, living in Southern Egypt and Sudan. Modern day Ethiopia is a lot smaller than the territory being described of this time.

This man is Ethiopian, this means that he was Black. This is significant because it meant that he was obviously not ethnically Jewish, you couldn't accidentally mistake him for a Jewish person. This man is something different. And the author wants you to know that he was different, that he was perceived as different. He is Black, from the heart of Africa. He looks different, he speaks differently, he moves differently, he smells different. He comes from a thriving, flourishing Kingdom with a different set of values. I mean we have Israel where women at this time and in many ways experienced oppression , but this Ethiopian is from a place where a

woman is head of state. His politics are different, his worldview is different, his upbringing is different. He is different.

And not only is he Black, but he is also a eunuch. Now this gets a little fuzzy because the word we translate to eunuch could have two meanings. First, is the obvious meaning of eunuch meaning “emasculated.” Often male servants who had frequent interaction with female royalty experienced some form of castration, usually as young boys as a means of limiting the amount of risk of romance or sexual activity between that servant and the female royal person. It's a practice that many cultures and Kingdoms adopted. And when a boy or man was castrated, he was then called a “eunuch.” But also sometimes the word eunuch was used to describe a high official or cabinet member who managed money. Eunuchs were seen as particularly trustworthy and loyal, so much so that the word eunuch became a synonym for anyone managing finance of royalty. So sometimes the word eunuch was used to describe someone who had that job whether they were castrated or not. And so we are not certain if he was physically a eunuch or not, I tend to think he was a physical eunuch only because the author tells us in this same sentence that he is also the treasurer. He mentions that the Ethiopian is a eunuch and the treasurer and I think if he was using eunuch only to describe the fact that this man was a treasurer, he would have just said that the man was eunuch, and not been redundant by saying a eunuch and treasurer. But either way, again this man is different. He is ethnically and culturally different, he is potentially biologically different and he is socially different.

He has a prominent position in the court of a powerful Kingdom. He has not lived a traditional life. He has taken no wife, sired no children, he has not worked a blue collar job amongst your every day man and woman.

And clearly, He is interested in the God of Israel (which is probably not the God of his tradition). His interest in the God of Israel is why he had even come to Jerusalem. But as Black man, and a non Jewish person and as a eunuch-having a physical blemish-one of a sexual nature at that, all of this meant that full membership in the Jewish congregation of Israel was not even possible for him. He could visit the temple in Jerusalem, as he had done; but he could never enter it. For you had to be Jewish-at least a full convert and ceremonially clean

This man is neither. This man is ‘Other.’ And what you’ll find is that for some religious people, “Other” is a disqualifier. “Other” invalidates. “Other” marks you as dangerous, and inappropriate, and today just like then, for some believers, “Other” means ‘you cannot be here, you are not welcome here, you don't access here, you are not safe here.’

And Phillip sees that this man is everything that Phillip is not. If Phillip had even an inkling that maybe God was leading him to the desert to evangelize more people, this Ethiopian eunuch is certainly not who he would’ve had in mind.

For Phillip, one might imagine that this man’s difference is intimidating. Because this Ethiopia is the servant of The Queen, The Kandake. We translate it to Candace but it wasn’t her name. Kandake is a dynastic title, like Pharaoh, not a personal name. All Ethiopian queens have that Title. And it wasn't just a ceremonial title, she managed the matters of state because it was thought that the Nubian king was too holy to become involved with “profane” matters of state, [*Strabo, Geography 17.1.54; Pliny the Elder, Natural History 6.186.*]

So this Ethiopian is a highly successful man. You know sometimes when we think of missionary work, we envision taking our Western God to the poor brown people of whatever run down country in the east. But this man does not fit that stereotype. He is wealthy and powerful for whoever controls the purse strings controls the world. And if Phillip had reduced missionary work to being only for emaciated, impoverished foreign children (the way some of us do today), he would have missed what God was doing. Had Phillip not moved when God told him to move he might not have been on the road at just the moment when the Eunuch was passing by. Delayed obedience is expedited disobedience. Be sensitive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit that you don't miss what God is doing.

This Ethiopia is successful, wealthy, privileged and powerful. And yet he had the wisdom to know that all the success and all the wealth and all the privilege in the world is not an ample response to the fundamental question of why do we exist in the world and what we are supposed to be doing, so this Ethiopian Eunuch is searching and searching hard. A scroll of scripture in this time would've been expensive, but this man is hungry enough to use his own resources to try to find the answer. And One thing you should know is that ANY person you meet is also searching (*EXPOUND Optional*).

~~Often I'm in rooms with Pastors and Church leaders and there is this extreme anxiety because evangelical churches in America are declining in attendance and Christianity is not the dominant faith system in this country anymore (EXPOUND) but I'm not worried about it. Because while people may not come to church like they used to, people have not stopped searching and I believe that Christ followers we are the only ones who have the answer.~~

We must be sensitive to guidance of the Holy Spirit so that we may give that answer when opportunity shows her face. And Phillip is.

29 And the Spirit said to Philip, “Go over and join this chariot.” 30 So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” 31 And he said, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

It took real boldness for Philip to go right up to the Ethiopian’s chariot and speak to him. A man so different, a man so powerful, a foreign dignitary, someone Phillip didn't know at all. So much risk is involved (EXPOUND safety). I mean you go up to a random person's car and ask them what they are listening to? (Lady in Car at the gym?) There were real stakes involved here.

But this is what the spirit of God instructed him to do so he did it because Phillip knew at that moment that God had given him an open door, a prepared heart. Clearly, The Spirit had arranged this meeting between Philip and the Ethiopian; this is an incredible example of how God opens doors for evangelism. God directed Philip to this person and this place because God had already arranged an unlocked door. God is not going to send somewhere to do something that he hasn’t already prepared for you to do. He is not going to ask you to walk through a door he hasn't already unlocked. This is why we must be sensitive to the Spirit.

One of our greatest job as Believers is to simply pray for unlocked doors. Then, having prayed for unlocked doors, to keep alert to the opportunities God presents.

We pray all the time for revival and I worry that we walk right past revival every day because it looks like a wealthy Ethiopian eunuch. Because it looks and smells

and seems different. Because it's not what we pictured, or anticipated or expected. Because it seems risky and scary and it doesn't quite make sense to us and exists outside of our comfort zone. But Nothing is transformed in the context of comfort. Every analogy you could think of says this. The caterpillar isn't comfortable in the cocoon. The seed doesn't enjoy being split open so that the flower can grow. Nothing is transformed in the context of comfort. Transformation only comes in the context of stretch.

And Philip was effective as an evangelist because he knew how to stretch with the Holy Spirit even when it made him uncomfortable. He was truly led by the Spirit, not by his own whims and feelings. Write this down, “Your feelings are not inherently trustworthy, but your God is.”

Now what I want you to notice is Phillip’s evangelistic approach. What is the first thing Phillip says to the Ethiopian?

“Do you understand what you are reading?”

The very first thing that he does is he asks a question and It was a good question – inoffensive, yet a subtle but gracious offer to explain the passage if the Ethiopian official was interested in receiving one. Phillip begins evangelism by trying to discern where the Ethiopian is. He doesn't make any assumptions. He inquires. He is curious. He is searching for where there could possibly be barriers to the Ethiopian receiving the Gospel. This is a great way to approach sharing the Gospel. Start by discerning where the person you are engaging with is
(EXPOUND) (*Judah Sweden with the two girls story?*)

“Do you understand what you are reading?”

And how does the Ethiopian Eunuch respond?

How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he *invited* Philip to come up and sit *with* him. Not above him, not detached from him. But *with* him where he was. Phillip didn't say, well if you come to my church I'll explain the passage. Phillip enters into the Eunuch's space, his chariot, his territory, where he would feel safe and starts journeying with him.

Evangelism is the artform of gentlemen not soldiers. Because you cannot harass someone into salvation. You cannot oppress someone into salvation. You cannot coerce someone into salvation. You can coerce someone into religion, every cult leader in the world knows this. But as healthy believers what we are looking for is opportunity and invitation. And sometimes that invitation is not as explicit as the Eunuchs was. Sometimes it looks like someone just having a hard day and needing some encouragement (*EXPOUND*) but we are looking for opportunity and invitation.

And one of the ancient art forms and skills that we have lost sight of, not just in the church today but in the culture of our country (it's why our politics are so very divisive) is the artform of persuasion.

~~3 types of persuasion~~

~~Ethos- persuading someone based on your own credibility (EXPOUND)-For believers this is our Testimony & relationship~~

~~Pathos- appeal to emotions- For Christians this lives in the reality that people are desperate for something better- appeal to that~~

~~Logos- is the appeal to our logical side-For Christians (Historical data, witness accounts, the wide spread and belief in Jesus- the fact that the story of Jesus actually makes sense)~~

Evangelism is not about forcing them, or tricking them, it's about Persuading them. This exists even outside of the context of evangelism. This is a skill that needs to exist in your marriage, in your family, at work, at school, in politics and in ideologies.

(DRIVE) Don't fight them-Persuade them.

Don't insult them-Persuade them.

Don't throw them away-Persuade them. Don't avoid them and crawl into echo chambers where it's easy because everyone is already on your side—no do the hard work of persuading them!

~~Ethos, pathos, and logos are all interconnected making for a great possibility of persuading people that Jesus is real and he loves them and wants them to know Him.~~

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32 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 before its shearer is silent, so he opens not his mouth.

33 In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation?

For his life is taken away from the earth.”

The Ethiopian was reading the amazing and specific prophecy in Isaiah 53 describing the sacrificial, sin-bearing work of the Messiah to come. The passage is one of the most difficult texts to interpret, even more so in the Greek translation than the Hebrew. In general, however, it depicts the basic pattern of the suffering, humiliation, and exaltation of Christ. ~~The picture of the slaughtered lamb evokes the image of Jesus' crucifixion, the lamb before his shearers. And it talks about Jesus' silence before his accusers and this deprivation of justice reminds us of the false accusations of blasphemy leveled at Christ and the equivocation (hiding of the truth) of Pilate.~~ And so the Eunuch is reading this and he is struggling with understanding it.

34 And the eunuch said to Philip, “About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?”

Now you read this today and we know immediately it's about Jesus. But the Jews of that day had different ways they understood the identity of this suffering servant.

- Some thought the suffering servant was the nation of Israel itself, because Israel had suffered so much in wars, exile, and persecution.
- Some thought the suffering servant was Isaiah writing about himself.
- Some thought the suffering servant was the Messiah, but many found this hard to accept, because they didn't want to think of the Messiah suffering—a suffering messiah was not the warrior King they had been dreaming about.

And I love that the Ethiopian was humble enough to ask for clarity. Listen, Questions are good for Christianity (*EXPOUND*) and when you are being asked questions—don't be threatened or offended, get excited because where there is a question, there is an opportunity. And side note, when you don't know the answer, just say that (*EXPOUND*)

35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus

Here is what the text doesn't say:

“Then Phillip opened his mouth...and shamed this Ethiopian for his sins, his issues, his choices, his past, his brokenness and told him he was on a slow fall to Hell.”

Here is what the text ~~doesn't~~ say:

~~“Then Phillip opened his mouth and levied against the ethiopian every manner of intolerance and prejudice and told him why He Phillip was right and the Ethiopian was wrong”~~

Here is what it doesnt say:

“Then Phillip opened his mouth and told the Ethiopian all the things he had to change and do for God and that if he didnt stop this and start that, the Eunuch was not welcome in the family of God”

That is not what the text says.

It says, **Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture** (starting where the Ethiopian was at), **he told him the good news**, not about the church and its programs, not about ethics and morals and principles and politics, **he told him the good news about Jesus**

He told him that there is someone named Jesus and He is God. And He Loves you so much that he would die for you, so that in all your imperfection and brokenness, you could be in a relationship with him now and forever. So that all that all your

brokenness over time could be made whole, and all your issues could be redeemed and you could be absolved of all your mistakes. The good news about Jesus is He loves you beyond your comprehension and that the love he has for you, changes everything.

And that is good news.

And what we see is that the Gospel of Jesus works! Spirit led Evangelism works.

The Ethiopian hears this good news and was himself *ready* to respond to the gospel. He is not forced to respond, intimidated into responding, browbeaten or bullied into responding. He is ready to respond. And This was a work of the Holy Spirit, not a tribute to Philip's salesmanship.

36 And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?"

The verb indicates that all the barriers had removed all hindrances to the spread of the gospel to all people. In this case a double barrier of both physical and racial prejudice being removed. A eunuch, a Gentile, a Black man, was baptized and received into full membership of the family Jesus Christ.

~~Some translations say that Phillip responded and said to him "If you believe this in your heart, you can be baptized" —this isn't in our translation because it's not found in the earliest versions of the manuscript but its beautiful response if he said it.~~

38 And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him.

39 And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing.40 But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he preached the gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

So just as suddenly as the Spirit moved Phillip into this divine appointment, he moved him out of it and onto what was next. And whether Phillip knew it or not, we know that baptizing this Ethiopian Eunuch was a radical step for a Jew, even for a Hellenist Jew like Philip. It was radical. Philip was not the radical. The Holy Spirit was the radical. And Phillip was sensitive to the guidance of the radical Holy Spirit. Philip's openness to the Spirit's leading enabled this major progress toward fulfilling Christ's commission for a worldwide gospel because now, Africa has now been reached by the gospel in the person of the Ethiopian eunuch, the Gospel that had not reached Europe. The Gospel that had not yet reached the Americas, had infiltrated the heart of Africa. To put that into scope for you, within the continent of Africa could fit the entire United States, and Spain, France, Germany, Italy, the entirety of eastern Europe, India, China, Japan and the UK. It is a big deal that the Gospel had become global and hit the 2nd largest continent on the planet.

And here's what might surprise you. This directly impacts you and this church, because out of Africa come church fathers like

Augustine who helped shape western church doctrine that we still abide by today. Out Africa comes **Tertullian** who advocated for charismatic gifts and prophecy in the church.

Cyprian layed out ecumenical policy and protocol shaped the structure of church councils.

Athanasius-helped the church understand the Trinity.

Anthony the Great -The Father of Christian Monasticism

And because Phillip was sensitive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we exist as a church in this form today. By participating, in what the Spirit was doing, he helps fulfill the prophecy of **Psalm 68:31**“**Ethiopia [Cush] will quickly stretch out her hands to God**”

And so What became of the Ethiopian eunuch? We don't know. Later church fathers say that he became a missionary to Ethiopia. These traditions are often legendary and should not be accepted as fact and looked at uncritically, but what we do know is that the treasurer for one of the most powerful African dynasties, who had the ear of the sovereign and the cabinet, would not have kept his testimony to himself. And what we do know is that the Ethiopian Orthodox Church is one of the oldest churches in the world. And what we do know, is that this single conversion teaches us what can happen if we are sensitive enough to the Holy Spirit to do evangelism well.

So perhaps our question for the Holy Spirit today is who is our Ethiopian eunuch? What is our chariot moment? – It may not be a hesitancy to talk to a person but to engage in a scenario. Where is the chariot He'd have us climb in? Where is our opportunity and invitation to share the good news of Jesus?

And if you are not in a relationship with Jesus currently, I have some good news for you. He wants you to know him and know how much you're loved by him. And you're open to meeting him, our prayer team would love to introduce you right after this service up at the front or just to pray for you in general.

But if you are already a believer, be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's guidance whether its through

- The Bible-the clearest way to hear the voice of God today
- Life Situations – God is always talking to us through our life situations. God speaks in good times and bad, in victories and defeats.
- Impressions of the Heart or Mind – This is more intuitive and internal. It's the messiest, but unfortunately the most common form that God speaks today.
- “Sudden Wisdom” – When things just pop into your head that are super clear and it just seems ‘obvious.’
- Or through other Believers

And we did a series called Discovering the Supernatural in 2022 that you can find on Youtube to learn more about how to hear the voice of God.

Here are a couple of resources to help you hear and discern God's voice:

Hearing God: Dallas Willard

Discerning the Voice of God: Pricilla Shirer

However he is speaking to you, when he speaks, be obedient at all costs, approach your opportunities by discerning where people are and meeting them there, share the good news, and then go about your business. A continent could be blessed based on your willingness to be spirit led. And in 2000 years, a little church in a little suburban city somewhere could also be blessed.

(Prayer)

