

Acts 8:26-40

This is truly a remarkable man. Did I say *man*? He's a eunuch, having lost his manhood. Five times he is referred to as a eunuch. Not once is he called a man. But our text does use male pronouns in referring to him. He's from Ethiopia in Africa. A high official in the court of the queen. So high, so trusted is he, that the queen has put him in charge of all her possessions. He has great influence, superior intellect, great skills, and is highly respected. He is in charge of a queen's treasure. Soon he will be in charge of the treasure of a king.

This eunuch is not a Jew, but he has converted to Judaism. So he comes up to Jerusalem to worship. So wealthy is he that he is able to purchase a scroll of the prophet Isaiah. He reads this Holy Scripture, but he has no understanding, for Judaism rejects Jesus as the Christ. He has need of a guide.

Philip. This is the man God chooses. Philip is sent. He walks up to the chariot. "*Do you understand what you are reading?*" "*How can I,*" replies the eunuch, "*unless someone guides me?*" This is the work of God. No one ever stumbles into such a perfect scenario. These two are made for each other. The eunuch needing and desiring a guide into the Scriptures, and Philip being such a willing guide. You couldn't ask for a better evangelism call. How did it happen? God did it. No one is ever brought into the Holy Scriptures apart from the action of God, and apart from those He uses as His guides.

Do you understand the Scriptures? Then this is of God. And He used, and still uses, a guide to lead you into His Word; to clarify it, explain it, teach and preach it, and apply it to you. Who wouldn't want such a guide; a guide sent from God? Those who want to guide themselves. But that was not this eunuch. "*He invited Philip to come up and sit with him.*"

How do we know that Philip is a good guide? Because of what comes out of his mouth. He speaks of Jesus to him. He conveys the Christian faith. He teaches the eunuch concerning Jesus' sufferings, death, and resurrection. He not only tells about the Gospel; he gives the Gospel. *The Gospel is Jesus* is how the Greek puts it in our text. And Philip gives Jesus to the eunuch. And he speaks to him of Holy Baptism so that he desires it. The eunuch wants to be baptized. This desire is from God. After being baptized, Philip departs, but the eunuch goes on his way rejoicing.

End of story? Hardly. The book is just getting started. For we know what then happens in Ethiopia. We have it on record. This eunuch, who is in need of a guide, now becomes a guide to others. He who is baptized by Philip now baptizes others. He who is given the Gospel now becomes the one God uses to give the Gospel, to give Jesus to others. Ethiopia, in time and for a while, becomes a nation having many Christians. And it all begins with Philip and the eunuch.

This eunuch had left his country as the one in charge of a queen's treasure. A great responsibility. He now goes back to his country as the one in charge of the King's treasure. The King of kings, Jesus Christ, has opened up His treasure house gifting all His treasures to the eunuch. And now it is his great responsibility to distribute the treasure he is given, gladly and freely, to those in his home country.

What great things are accomplished through just one person being brought to Christ! And this took place, we're told, on a lonely stretch of desert road. We need to hear this because we think that unless we are in our comfort zone, our safe zone, we would rather keep our faith to ourself. In our day, in this

culture which is increasingly hostile to Christians, we would just as soon not speak of Christ unless it's, say, here in church with other Christians.

What if Philip had had this attitude? "Thanks, but no thanks God. I don't know that person up in the chariot. I'm just not comfortable speaking to him about Jesus." Philip's palms may have been sweaty. His heart pounding. His mouth dry. The eunuch would have been guarded by soldiers. It was a deserted place, not a safe place of comforts. The sun was hot. But God opened Philip's mouth and the eunuch's heart. And today many precious souls are in heaven.

Dear fathers, dear men of the congregation...it is your responsibility to be guides. This charge God has given to you. And mothers, you are to share in this responsibility. You are given the treasure of the King. You are baptized. You have been brought into a Christian congregation. The Scriptures have been placed into your hands. You have the privilege of prayer. All these are for you, and for those under your care in your home country.

Do you not know the Scriptures well enough to teach them to your family? Then are you in Bible study? God has called a guide for you. One who himself needs the guidance of others so that he is able to guide you as your Philip. We speak of wanting our church to grow. Does this not begin with you? Be guided into the Holy Scriptures, and then be guides to those in your care.

Already you are in charge of a queen's treasure. You are in charge of all the earthly possessions God has given to you. You are to distribute these to your family; to those in your care. But a queen's treasure is nothing compared to the King's treasure. Why is it that we find it easy to feed our families daily bread, but so difficult to feed them the bread of the Word of God? This should not be. Oh how we would grow if we had the heart of the eunuch. *"How can I (understand the Scriptures) unless someone guides me? And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him."*

This eunuch had lost his manhood, but he was more of a man than are most men, for he was willing to admit his ignorance of the Scriptures, and he was hungry to learn, and he then desired to guide others. The manhood he had lost was given back to him in Christ. The man, Jesus, now lived within him. And this is the man who goes back with the eunuch and does great things through him.

This same man does great things through you. He has already done great things for you. He shows us what it means to be a real man. He gives Himself up for others. He is willing to be shamed; to hang on a cross. He does not seek to retaliate. He seeks to suffer and die for you and me, and for all sinners.

This man is your God and your King. He pours out His treasures to you because He treasures you in His heart. His treasure He freely gives to you - the forgiveness of your sins. A treasure so great that only the King of kings could win it for you. A treasure so incredible that because your sins are forgiven, you have also life and salvation.

The eunuch was given the same treasure and he went on his way rejoicing. Is this how you and I go on our way each day? We can. We should. The treasures of your King are yours forever. And when you give them to others, they remain yours. It's like giving love. You do not lose love when you give your love to others. God, in love, gives all things to you in Jesus your King. Now you will be His vessels and guides as He gives, through you to others, the treasures of your King. Amen.