

Into the World: Becoming the Presence of Jesus in Our Community – Week Four

Reaching People Cross-culturally

Acts 8:25-40

Main Idea: God calls us to have eyes for the entire world, hoping and praying that people of every race, language and religion might hear the good news and respond to Christ. Luke tells us how to do this in the conversion of the Ethiopian Eunuch.

1. The cast of characters.

- A. The first person we see is God the Holy Spirit (See verses 26 and 29.)
 - 1. The Holy Spirit comes at Pentecost. The age of the church is the age of the Spirit.
 - 2. In the age of the Holy Spirit, God directs his people personally to those in need.
 - 3. This is consistent with God's missionary passion from the beginning of time.
- B. The second person we see is a seeking unbeliever: the Ethiopian court official (8:27-28)
 - 1. He was of a different race on a different continent. First recorded Gentile conversion.
 - 2. This man had an important position. He could afford to take time off.
 - 3. This man was intelligent and wealthy. He could read. He had transportation.
 - 4. This man had expended much in his spiritual search. He took time off from work.
 - 5. But he was frustrated in his spiritual search: limited in worship, limited in understanding.
- C. The third person we see is Philip the servant (6:5; 8:25, 26)
 - 1. Philip is listed as the second of seven deacons in Acts 6.
 - 2. Philip learned ministry through service...waiting tables for widows.
 - 3. Philip recognized the danger of being a Christian through Stephen.
 - 4. Philip became a pioneer: went from Samaria to Caesarea.

2. The story of a spiritual awakening.

- A. How Philip led the Ethiopian to Christ (8:30-38)
 - 1. He listens to the Holy Spirit.
 - 2. He asks a question and receives permission.
 - 3. He uses the Scriptures to explain Christ.
 - 4. He baptizes him.
- B. Contrast with other religions
 - 1. Some religions refuse to proselytize.
 - 2. Other religions force people to convert. *Quote: "Islam is the fastest growing enforced religion."*
 - 3. In Christianity there is a balance between truth and grace.
 - 4. In Christianity there is boldness in the face of fear.

3. Four lessons.

- A. God is sovereign over salvation.
 - 1. We see this in two ways: *Where* he comes to Christ and the *timing* of his reading.
 - 2. God's sovereignty should drive us to prayer.
- B. God loves all the races and is glorified with racial diversity in the body of Christ.
 - 1. At the Tower of Babel God splits the world into races, out of love.
 - 2. In Revelation 5:9 God unites all the races in Christ, out of love.
 - 3. We see this in practical experience. Christianity is growing fastest in 3rd world countries.
- C. God loves to reach "magnet-people" who will reach others.
 - 1. The Ethiopian is strategic because he will reach people within the culture.
 - 2. We see this in the book of Acts. The apostles would reach heads of households.
 - 3. This does not mean that others should be reached.
- D. God directs people in counter-intuitive ways. 8:25-26