

Reaching The Lost
Commissioned for Greatness
Sunday, November 25, 2012

Acts 8:26-40, NIV

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The church was formed for one primary task: **Sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ.**

The church often misses the one important task that Jesus gave to the church. This task was not just given to the pastors and teachers, but to the entire body of believers. We come together on Sunday to fellowship, worship, and encourage one another. The whole point of this is to teach, equip and strengthen the body to go out of the church and increase God's kingdom.

The Great Commission – Matthew 28:18-20 (NIV)

18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Today, I want to challenge every believer to accept that not only have you been given the Great Commission from the Lord Jesus Christ, but the Lord Jesus Christ has also commissioned you for Greatness.

Jesus Said

12 Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. (John 14:12, NIV)

Jesus Himself, God incarnate, tells you "You will do even greater things". His Word is authoritative and applies to you!

After His resurrection, Jesus appeared to the disciples...

Acts 1:6-8 (NIV)

6 Then they gathered around him and asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

7 He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Jesus declared that YOU, the body of Christ, the Church will be His witness. This was not just given to the apostles, but to all believers. In fact, it wasn't the Apostles that could carry this message to the "ends of the earth". It was meant for all who believe to carry this good news to the ends of the earth. You are to be His witnesses through your personal testimony of how Christ has changed your life.

The notorious church researcher, George Barna, wrote the following in a report about evangelism.

Perspectives on the Conversion Process

George Barna underscored some significant insights from this research. "Just as our nation's culture has changed dramatically in the last 30 years, so has the way in which people come to Christ," he explained. "The weekend church service is no longer the primary mechanism for salvation decisions; only one out of every ten believers who makes a decision to follow Christ does so in a church setting or service. On the other hand, personal relationships have become even more important in evangelism, with a majority of salvation decisions coming in direct response to an **invitation given by a family member or friend.**"

"Evangelism Is Most Effective Among Kids"

(The Barna Group of Ventura, California www.barna.org)

Let's look at how one witnesses....

Acts 8:26-40, NIV

Philip and the Ethiopian

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

30 Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. "Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked.

31 "How can I," he said, "unless someone explains it to me?" So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

32 This is the passage of Scripture the eunuch was reading:

"He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth. 33 In his humiliation he was deprived of justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth."

34 The eunuch asked Philip, "Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?" 35 Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.

36 As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptized?" 38 And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. 39 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. 40 Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and traveled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea.

There is a five-step process to witnessing.

(1) Listen for the Lord's prompting

Acts 8:26 Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza."

This step requires a prayer life with God. We are to first pray and ask God to give us opportunity. Then, we are to listen for God. Philip didn't know where he was going or why. He heard the Lord and he obeyed. Although the Bible does not say this, I believe that Philip was in prayer prior to this, asking the Lord to use him.

(2) Look for the opportunity

Acts 8:30 - Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet.

Philip heard this Ethiopian reading scripture and saw an opportunity to strike up a conversation. Although this example is probably rare, look for opportunities to spot one seeking God.

(3) Take Action

Acts 8:30-31 - 30 ... "Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked.

31 "How can I," he said, "unless someone explains it to me?" So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

Philip not only saw an opportunity, but he used this situation to begin probing. He quickly found out that this man was a seeker. Don't be afraid to ask probing questions such as...

“Do you go to church?”

“Do you believe in God?”

“Do you believe there is a heaven?”

(4) Share your testimony

Acts 8:34 - The eunuch asked Philip, “Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?” 35 Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.

Philip took the prompting to share his testimony of Jesus Christ.

(5) Offer Jesus Christ

Acts 8:36 - As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptized?” 38 And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him.

Philip not only shared his testimony, but was prepared to invite the Ethiopian to receive Jesus Christ and be baptized. The man accepted and was baptized on the spot by Philip.