

Bible Stories for Adults

Philip

Acts 8

Opening

- Gathering: Why is it more difficult to reach out to people from a different culture?
- Today's Focus: Philip effectively witnessed to Samaritans and helped the church grow beyond Jerusalem and Judea.
- Key Verses: *When they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Acts 8:12*
- The eunuch said, "Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?" Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." The eunuch answered, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." ... Then Philip baptized him. Acts 8:36-38*

Opening Prayer

Lesson

The Church's Mission (*Acts 1:8*)

- What mission did Jesus give to His church before He ascended?
Matthew 28:19
- How could this small group of only 120 accomplish such a huge task?
Acts 1:8

Location, Location, Location (*Acts 5:16*)

- Where did this group begin their ministry and why?
Acts 1:4, 12; 2:1, 4
- How effective were they in Jerusalem?
Acts 2:41, 46-47; 4:4, 16; 5:28; 6:7
- Did the Good News move out into Judea as Jesus had said?
Acts 5:12, 16

A Gentle Reminder (*Acts 6*)

- What problem provided a reminder that Christ came for everyone, not just those in Jerusalem?
Acts 6:1
- How might the solution to this problem have been a gentle reminder to look outward?
Acts 6:3-5, 9
- What did Stephen say that should have also reminded the Christians of moving past Jerusalem?
Acts 7:48-50

A Not-So-Gentle Reaction (*Acts 7*)

- Of what did Stephen accuse the Jews that could warn a church focused only on its home town?
Acts 7:51
- How did the Sanhedrin respond to this accusation?
Acts 7:57-58

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God Turns Evil to Good (Acts 8:1-5)

Did killing Stephen satisfy the Jews who were trying to protect their faith?

Acts 8:1, 3

Usually only men were held in jail before a trial. Why did Saul even put women in jail?

Galatians 1:13-14

How did God use this evil act to help His need for the church to move beyond Jerusalem?

Acts 8:4

How did the church stay together if they all ran from the dangers in Jerusalem?

Acts 8:1b-2

Dying unburied was a great dishonor. It was illegal to publicly mourn for a criminal.

How did the central church in Jerusalem stay in touch with the scattered Christians?

Acts 8:5

Jerusalem to Judea to Samaria (Acts 8:6)

Did Philip go to preach to the scattered Christians or to witness to Samaritans?

Acts 8:6

Why was this a significant step for the early Christians?

John 4:9

How would Samaritans feel about rumors that Christians spoke against venerating the temple?

John 4:19-20

What would Jesus have thought about this teaching that God isn't only in the temple?

John 4:21-24

With the Pentateuch as their Scriptures, would the Samaritans accept a Messiah from the Jews?

Deuteronomy 18:17-19

How likely is it that Philip would have reminded the Samaritans of this?

Acts 3:22-23; 7:37

The Great Power (Acts 8:7-13)

How effective was Philip, a Greek-speaking Jew, in Samaria?

Acts 8:7-8

Had these Samaritans seen great powers before?

Acts 8:9

Was Simon ignored because of his great ego?

Acts 8:10-11

Did the Samaritans view Philip as another great magician like Simon?

Acts 8:12

Did Simon get mad about this new competition and try to discredit Philip?

Acts 8:13

Let's Check This Out (Acts 8:14-17)

What did the church in Jerusalem think when they heard about Philip's activities in Samaria?

Acts 8:14

What did Peter and John find?

Acts 8:15-17

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God's Purpose for the Visit (Acts 11:18)

Why would God have withheld the Spirit from the Samaritans until Peter and John arrived?

Acts 11:1-3, 15-18

Couldn't they have learned from the evening news? Why did Peter need to bring the Spirit?

Matthew 16:17-19

Peter opened doors at Pentecost, now for Samaritans, later for Gentiles (Cornelius)

Brought acceptance by and incorporation into the one Christian church

Anything for a Buck (Acts 8:18-23)

What did Simon the magician think when he saw the Spirit being given to the new Christians?

Acts 8:18-19

What did Peter think of this opportunity to fund some great new church programs?

Acts 8:20-23

But verse 13 says Simon believed and was baptized. How could Peter accuse him of scheming?

Matthew 7:15-20

Faith (Acts 8:24)

But Simon knew that Jesus was the Messiah. Doesn't that mean that he was a Christian?

Matthew 7:21-23

What else is needed beyond knowing Jesus? Believing that what we know is true?

James 2:19

So what was Simon missing?

Romans 10:9-13

What are the three elements of an adult faith?

Notitia

Assensus

Fiducia

Was Simon rebuked for not developing his faith beyond mere assent?

Ephesians 2:8-9

Did Simon see the error of his ways, repent of his sin and ask for this saving faith?

Acts 8:24

Outward Bound (Acts 8:25-29)

Did this experience in Samaria effectively open the church to inclusion of these half-brothers?

Acts 8:25

Did Philip focus his ministry on witnessing to the Samaritans?

Acts 8:26

Why would the Spirit send a great evangelist like Philip out into the desert?

Acts 8:27-29

Ethiopia - South of Egypt, north of current Ethiopia between Aswan and Khartoum

Ruled by the queen mother (title of *Candace*)

The king was the child of the sun and was too holy for government

The eunuch was a very important official - "Secretary of the Treasury"

Only important and rich people could get a copy of a book of Scripture

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The God-Fearer

Proselyte - A Gentile who believed in God, was baptized and circumcised

God-fearer - A Gentile who believed in God and was baptized, but not circumcised

Why would this man likely be a God-fearer and not a full proselyte?

Deuteronomy 23:1

Why might he be so interested in the book of Isaiah to have a copy?

Isaiah 56:3-5

An Opportunity to Witness (*Acts 8:30-35*)

What did Philip do with this opportunity to witness to this Ethiopian?

Acts 8:30-31

What section had the Ethiopian so confused and why?

Acts 8:32-34

How did Philip respond to this great lead-in?

Acts 8:35

A Response of Faith (*Acts 8:36-38*)

How effective was Philip's witness?

Acts 8:36-38

Was it difficult for Philip to provide this witness to the Ethiopian?

1 Peter 3:15

Was Philip able to respond so well because he had a carefully prepared witness speech?

Luke 21:15

The Spirit's Direction (*Acts 8:39-40*)

How else do we see the Spirit's hand besides the desert meeting and the Scripture selection?

Acts 8:39

Note: Simon would have loved this one!

How did Philip react to this strange and amazing experience?

Acts 8:40

Closing Prayer

Response - Consider and meditate on one each day this week

1. When has God taken a bad experience in my life and turned it for His good?
(*Acts 7:57-8:4; Genesis 50:20; Isaiah 38:17; Jer 29:11; Romans 8:28; Eph 6:19-20; Phil 1:12-14*)
2. How often do I share my faith with others wherever I go?
(*Acts 8:4-5, 25, 40; Isaiah 6:8; Mark 16:20; 2 Timothy 4:5; 1 John 1:1-3*)
3. When have I recognized the presence of the Holy Spirit in others?
(*Acts 8:14-23; 10:44-48; 19:1-7; 1 Samuel 10:9-11; 19:19-21; Luke 1:41-45; John 3:1-2*)
4. When have I recognized the presence of the Holy Spirit in me?
(*Acts 8:14-17; 36-38; Mark 6:7-13; John 20:21-22; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22; 5:5; Galatians 5:16-25*)
5. Do I recognize the Spirit's guidance in my life?
(*Acts 8:26-30; 9:10-17; 16:6-10; 1 Sam 11:1-8; Luke 1:26-38; 4:1; 11:9-13; Romans 8:1-17, 26-27*)