

**Give thanks to the Lord for He is good. His love endures forever. Amen.**

<sup>26</sup>Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Get up and go south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” (This is an isolated area.) <sup>27</sup>So he got up and went. And there was a man, an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of Candace, Queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship. <sup>28</sup>He was on his way home, sitting in his chariot and reading the prophet Isaiah.

<sup>29</sup>The Spirit told Philip, “Go over there and stay close to that chariot.” <sup>30</sup>Philip ran up to it and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet. Philip asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” <sup>31</sup>The man replied, “How can I unless someone explains it to me?” And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

<sup>32</sup>Now the passage of Scripture the eunuch was reading was this: He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he does not open his mouth. <sup>33</sup>In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who will talk about his generation? For his life is taken from the earth.

<sup>34</sup>The eunuch said to Philip, “I ask you, who is the prophet talking about—himself or someone else?” <sup>35</sup>Then Philip began to speak. Starting with that very passage of Scripture, he told him the good news about Jesus. <sup>36</sup>As they were traveling along the road, they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water. What is there to prevent me from being baptized?”

<sup>38</sup>He ordered the chariot to stop. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. <sup>39</sup>When they stepped up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away. The eunuch did not see him anymore, but went on his way rejoicing.

<sup>40</sup>Philip, however, found himself at Azotus. And as he went from place to place, he preached the gospel in all the towns until he came to Caesarea. **This is God’s Word.**

**Dear Friends,**

We have a struggle that many of us deal with every day. There are times when we want to be recognized individually for what we do and then there are times when we just want to blend into the crowd – we don’t want to be noticed. We all approach that struggle in different ways. Some of us have outgoing personalities and some of us are shy. When we have achieved some sort of accomplishment we do like to be recognized, but when we are caught doing something wrong we would rather blend in and hope to go unnoticed. We all have some similarities but we are also individuals.

This portion of scripture before us this morning emphasizes that when it comes to our spiritual life God knows each one of us individually and **“He Cares for Each One of Us Individually.”** There is no blending in and going unnoticed with God. We aren’t lost in the shuffle of what’s going on around us. God is not too distant to care about us. He knows us. We can see evidence of that as we **“Look at what He did for the Ethiopian Eunuch,”** and then compare that to **“What He does for Us.”**

**I.** Before Jesus ascended into heaven he told his disciples, **“You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth,”** (Acts 1:8). That is what Philip was doing – witnessing about Christ in Samaria – when he received this special

message from an Angel of the Lord, **“Get up and go south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.”** (Acts 8:26). God had chosen Philip at this specific time to bring the gospel to a specific man.

Luke describes this man for us. **“An Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of Candace, Queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship. <sup>28</sup>He was on his way home, sitting in his chariot and reading the prophet Isaiah.”** (Acts 8:27-28). When he calls him an Ethiopian he is telling us that this man is black. He is also an important official in charge of the treasury. This means that he was an important man in his country with a lot of power and responsibility. He also was a eunuch. A lot of times we pass over this fact but it had an impact on his worship in Jerusalem. Eunuchs were not permitted to gather with the people as they worshiped and so this man could not be a full fledged convert. He had probably gone to Jerusalem for a special festival but could not have the complete experience of the celebration. Now he was on the way home and he was reading the book of Isaiah, probably out loud as was the custom in that day.

Now we get to see the miracle of how the Holy Spirit works and how God lets us participate in his work. **“<sup>29</sup>The Spirit told Philip, “Go over there and stay close to that chariot.”<sup>30</sup>Philip ran up to it and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet. Philip asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?”<sup>31</sup>The man replied, “How can I unless someone explains it to me?” And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.”** (Acts 8:29-31). The Holy Spirit directed Philip to this man and gave him an opportunity which Philip took.

The Ethiopian was like many people of the time. He had the Old Testament scriptures but did not understand them. In addition to this, he did not know about Jesus. Philip seized the opportunity to bring the Good News about Jesus to this man. I don't think it is any coincidence that he was reading a prophecy that talked about the Savior. This gave Philip the opening he needed to talk about how this prophecy had been fulfilled.

Moved by the Spirit and his newfound faith, the Ethiopian asked to be baptized. What a wonderful fruit of faith and confirmation for Philip that the Holy Spirit had worked through the Word to enlighten this man. After the Ethiopian man was baptized, he rejoiced in knowing his Savior. Philip's work was done and the Holy Spirit took Philip away to share God's Word in other places.

In many ways we are a lot like that Ethiopian man. We may not call ourselves wealthy but many of us have been blessed in many ways. We have our own homes or a place to live. We have a car or means of transportation. We have jobs and we have responsibilities. There are also times when we read the scriptures and don't understand what we are reading. At times like that, God sends someone to help us. They don't always come knocking on our door but they might. It could be a neighbor or friend with whom you can discuss God's Word. There are Bible classes that give you the opportunity to ask questions and to learn about different portions of scriptures. There are books and commentaries to help us and you have your pastor to answer your questions about scripture. If you think about it, the Lord gives you even more opportunities to learn about his Word than the Ethiopian had.

**II.** God has also called us to faith just as he did the Ethiopian. He put someone special in our lives to tell us about our Savior. Maybe it was your parents or grandparents who brought you to be baptized and in that way you were brought into God's family. Maybe it's a special aunt or uncle or sponsor who prays for you and encourages you to hear God's Word. Maybe it's a friend or coworker who shared Christ with you in some way. God wants you in his family and he has come to you in His Word and sacrament to bring you faith. What a wonderful miracle that the Holy Spirit has created faith in our hearts.

And we rejoice in that faith just as the Ethiopian did. We rejoice that Jesus paid for our sins on the cross – every one of them. We rejoice that the Holy Spirit brings us forgiveness through the faith he has created in our hearts. We rejoice that he promises us eternal life in heaven and all we have to do is trust and believe in Jesus as our Savior and the Holy Spirit gives us the faith to do that. We rejoice that God gives us opportunities to hear His Word and learn more about him and the blessings he has for us. We rejoice that we have opportunities to serve him just as Philip did.

The Holy Spirit doesn't whisper in your ear but I would bet that he gives many of you an opportunity to talk about your Savior every week or maybe even every day. Our problem is that we don't always take those opportunities. Many times we are afraid – which really is a lack of love for God and a lack of trust. God has equipped us with his Word. When one of those opportunities presents itself, step out of your comfort zone and take it. You might be surprised at the response.

Some might reject what you have to say, but others might rejoice and be glad to learn about their Savior. Maybe you are their "Philip," the person God has sent to share the gospel with them.

At times we are tempted to think, "Does God really care about me and the other people in this world?" You bet he does. He sent his Son to pay for our sins, even our sins of doubt, and not only our sins but the sins of the whole world. His Word assures us of that and then he gives many opportunities to share that Good News. God Cares!

God cares about each one of us individually.

Just look at what he did for the Ethiopian Eunuch and  
look at what he has done for us.

Rejoice in your faith just as the Ethiopian did and take some of those opportunities God gives you to share it. Amen.