

## **Who is Your One Person?**

**Acts 8:26-40**

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Good morning church. It is so exciting to see each of you here today. We have much to anticipate this Christmas season, mainly the remembrance of the birth of the Savior of the world. But we are also anticipating Revival in 2020.

Last week we started a three part series, entitled Revival, which will position us as a church to experience God's favor and spiritual renewal in the upcoming year. Pastor Larry began the series by asking you to consider this question: Is God my one priority? Is your relationship with God top priority in your life?

I'm sure that most of us, including me, would say, man I want to draw closer to God, but it seems that life has a way of getting in the way sometimes. Whether it be time, work, kids, responsibilities, or other things (the list can be exhaustive), it just seems that knowing God and growing in my relationship with him is sometimes hindered.

What about you? I want to ask you to do something for us before you depart the worship service today. In your copy of the current that you received when you came in, you will find an insert survey. I want to ask each of you to fill out this six question survey for us.

This is going to help us know how we can help you grow in your relationship with God over the course of the year. We don't want you to put your name on it. And, we ask you to be honest about where you are right now. I sometimes have the temptation to answer self-reflective questions based on where I think I will be in the near future.

But, where are you now? It should take you just a few moments. If you have already done it, you can fold it and put it in the offering basket later. Or on your way out, you can place it in the black offering box that is right by the exit. There is also one in the lobby.

We hope this will help us all with what our vision is challenging us to do, that we would invest in our relationship with God in 2020; that we would make knowing him our top priority. And, we are going to do this together. We challenge you to do a Bible reading plan this year that will have us reading much of the Bible.

The Bible reading plan is called Foundations 260, or F-260, for short. Print copies are available in the lobby. You can also find the plan digitally through the YouVersion Bible App. In addition, we have devotionals available in the lobby as a supplement to the reading plan.

We have adult, student, and kid versions. Here is the thought behind that, we want families to do this together. I got the adult devotional for my wife and I, and the kid version for my kiddos, and they are excited about growing in their relationship with God along with us.

These devotionals are \$10, and last week we sold out of the adult copies. We will have more available this coming week, but you can preorder a copy today and we will have it available next Sunday. And if you don't have a Bible, we also have those available in the lobby. We have a regular Bible, and a study Bible to provide extra help in understanding God's Word.

Starting the week of January 5th, we will all begin reading the Bible together. Each Sunday, the pastors will prepare a message from that week's Bible reading, and our small groups will discuss the sermon or another passage from that week's Bible reading together as a group.

We believe that if we all take this challenge seriously, that we will grow in our relationship with God this year, and he will bless us with his presence this year in astounding ways. But as Pastor Larry shared last week, this is a choice that you have to make. Each one of us has to decide in our hearts to be all in.

Today, I want to share with you the second component of our Revival series: Identify. And the question I want you to consider is this: Who is your one person? Who is one person that you will reach this year with the Gospel. Who is the one person that you will pour into spiritually. Who is the one that you will help grow in his or her relationship with Jesus? Who is your one?

### **I. God Loves the One (Acts 8:26-27)**

Did you know that God loves the one? That is the first point of the message today. God has a vested interest in the one? Let me show you in our passage today, in Acts Chapter 8, starting in verse 26:

**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."

**Acts 8:27** So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship,

So, we are introduced to the object of God's grace in the beginning of our text, the Ethiopian eunuch. We find that this man was a higher up in the Ethiopian government. His role was much like the Secretary of the Treasury, which is a cabinet position in the United States government. He was in charge of the finances of their government.

We also know he was a Jew, who had made his way to Jerusalem to worship. He was a God-fearing man but he was not a saved man. But, God shows the measure of his love by going to some pretty amazing providential measures to give this man a gospel encounter. Just follow me for a second. I want you to take a look at this map:



Ancient Ethiopia was also called the land of Cush. It was located to the south of Egypt. It is approximately a 1000 mile journey from Cush to Jerusalem. The eunuch had traveled that far to get to Jerusalem. In our text, he is heading back home.

At the same time, an angel of the Lord appears to Philip, who is currently in Samaria. Earlier in this chapter, we learn that great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem. As a result, Philip was in Samaria. Look at what happens:

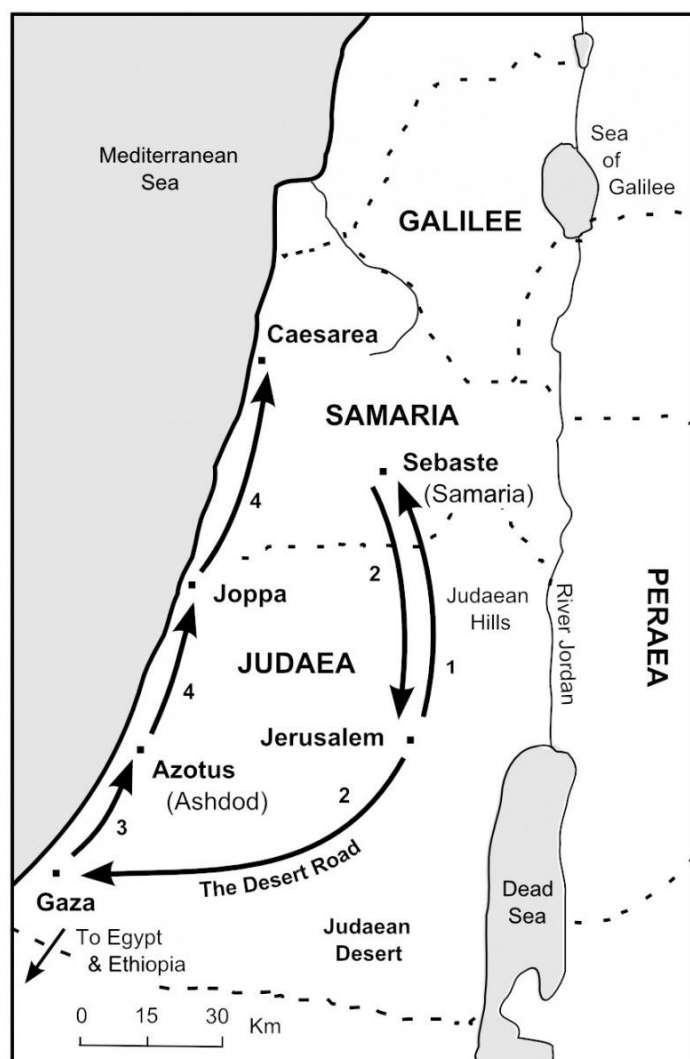
**Acts 8:4** Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.

**Acts 8:5** Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah there.

**Acts 8:6** When the crowds heard Philip and saw the signs he performed, they all paid close attention to what he said.

**Acts 8:7** For with shrieks, impure spirits came out of many, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed.

**Acts 8:8** So there was great joy in that city.



So, take a look at this map. Philip left Jerusalem and he is currently in Samaria, north of Jerusalem, and revival has just broken out.

And, God tells Philip to leave the revival and travel between 50 and 75 miles to the desert road (located south of Jerusalem) to meet this Ethiopian Eunuch who was traveling back home after already going 1000 miles. God orchestrating this encounter goes to show you how much he cares for one.

In the parable of the Lost Sheep, Jesus tells his disciples that a shepherd who has 100 sheep will leave the 99 to go find and rescue the one if it is lost. Jesus said:

**Luke 15:10** In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the

**presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”**

And similarly, in 2 Peter 3:9, we see that

**The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.**

This story is one of many, just like it in Scripture. And throughout the course of the past 2000 years, it is one story out of millions upon millions that show the extent of God's love to reach one.

Now, the second thing I want you to see is that God uses reached ones to reach one.

### **I. God Loves the One (8:26)**

### **II. God Uses Reached Ones to Reach One (Acts 8:28)**

I would like a show of hands, how many of you would consider yourself to be an ordinary person? An ordinary guy or ordinary gal? Did you know that Philip was just an ordinary guy. Just two chapters prior, he was just a regular member of the church. The apostles asked for the church to choose 7 men to help with ministry to the widows and food distribution. He was one of those selected.

Isn't it amazing how God can take the ordinary to do the extraordinary. He uses this ordinary church member, and does something extraordinary. He uses him to preach the word which starts a revival and now sends him to reach one.

Aren't you glad God sent someone to reach you? Lost in sin, and in need of a Savior, God sent someone to reach you. You see, for those of us who once were the one, God has given you the purpose now to reach the one. Just as he used Philip, he desires for ordinary reached ones, like you and me, to join his extraordinary mission to reach one.

### **III. Identify Your One**

#### **1. Listen to the Spirit (8:29)**

But, the first thing we must do is identify who our one is. But, you may be wondering, "How do I identify my one?" Well the first thing we must do is Listen the Spirit. The

eunuch is on his way home, sitting in his chariot, reading the Book of Isaiah the prophet, and in verse 29, it says that:

**Acts 8:29 The Spirit told Philip, “Go to that chariot and stay near it.”**

This is the second time the Spirit has told Philip to do something in our passage. He first told him to go to the desert road, and now that he is there awaiting further direction, the Spirit tells him to go near the eunuch’s chariot.

You see, Philip is in tune with God’s Spirit, and he is listening for direction. Is that something that you do? Do you pray for God’s direction? Do you pray for God to lead you to accomplish his mission? Have you ever prayed and asked God to reveal to you someone who needs to hear the Gospel or who needs to be helped in their walk with the Lord?

Or, do you struggle with that? Or is listening for God’s leading and prompting difficult. If so, I want to remind you what Pastor Larry taught last week, that if you commit to investing in your relationship with God this year and allowing Him to be your one priority, then you will begin developing your listening skills.

You will begin to sense the leading of the Holy Spirit when making decisions about God’s agenda in life, and also about the person God is calling you to identify as the one you will focus on this year to invest in their spiritual growth.

Maybe God has already put one person on your heart as you have been hearing this. I urge you to be listening to God. And once he reveals his direction, the next step is for you is to identify your one to obey the Spirit.

### **III. Identify Your One**

**A. Listen to the Spirit (8:29)**

**B. Obey the Spirit (8:30a)**

What is Philip’s response when he listened to the Spirit’s direction to go to the chariot?

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

This is the second step of obedience that Philip has taken thus far. He left Samaria when the Spirit called. And now that he is on the desert road, he obeys the call to go to the chariot to minister to the eunuch.

Has God ever told you to do something, and you resisted because it didn't make sense or seemed too hard? If so, you are not alone. Look at what Philip was facing. He was asked to minister to a man who was from a different country, culture, and race. If I were in the same position, I hope that I would have the courage that he had.

But, here is the challenge for all of us: If we listen to God and he reveals to us the one person we are to invest in spiritually this year, we must not delay in pursuing opportunities to engage with them.. The Apostle Paul challenged the early church in the same way. In Col. 4:3, he wrote,

**Col. 4:3 And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains.**

**Col. 4:4 Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.**

**Col. 4:5 Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity.**

God has called us to reach the one. But, some of you might be thinking, I don't know how to do that. God may show me one to reach, but how would I even go about doing that?

Well, there are six practical steps that we can glean from Philip's interaction with the eunuch that will help you reach your one once the Lord has helped you identify who it is.

#### **IV. Reach Your One**

##### **A. Engage in a Conversation (8:30)**

The first step is to be intentional in your conversations with the one you are reaching. Look at what Philip does:

**Acts 8:30 Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. "Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked.**

Philip observed what the eunuch was doing and asked a question that would open up a conversation about spiritual things. In the same way, we should be intentional to engage in conversations with our one. Philip shows us that it is good to use a question to help open up the conversation.

Do you have a church home? You are a really nice person, are you a Christian? What do you believe about spiritual things?

Then the second step is to listen.

### **B. Listen (8:31-34)**

When you ask questions, listen to what they say in response. It will help you understand their perspective or the areas where they may need help in understanding. After Philip started the conversation with, “Do you understand what you are reading?” He listened, and the eunuch replied:

**Acts 8:31** “How can I,” he said, “unless someone explains it to me?” So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

**Acts 8:32** 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.

**Acts 8:33** In his humiliation he was deprived of justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth.”

**Acts 8:34** The eunuch asked Philip, “Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?”

The eunuch is confused and misunderstanding the Scripture. Similarly, when you listen your one, you most likely will hear misunderstandings about Christianity. But, you still need to listen.

I want to share with you a conversation that one of our church members had with a friend just this past week after she engaged him in a conversation about his faith, Her friend said:



So, the way I would explain it is that I 'grew out of' religion through education...I researched lots of different religions, found that science has disproved so much of what was considered fact back in the time they wrote the books that it kind of devalued the rest for me.

I've also seen the ugly side of religion too where I'm from and it made me realize that different religions have always been started when the guy who "writes the book" is trying to push an agenda and quite often the things that cause wars are tiny differences in translation.

I think all faith is positive and that there has to be something bigger than us but it's up to every individual to discover what that thing that gives them faith is--there's no one right answer.

You may know someone with a similar perspective. You may be sitting here today with that same perspective. The eunuch was in a similar situation. Confused about the truth and in need of someone to teach him. Philip listened but it didn't stop there. In verse 35,

**Acts 8:35 Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.**

So, the third step, is that we must share the Gospel.

### **C. Share the Gospel (8:35)**

Tragically our church member's friend is in a hopeless situation but he doesn't realize it. He thinks that he is the one who can decide which path is the right one to God. He needs the Gospel. Now we don't know what Philip actually said. But, listen to how our sister in Christ responded to her friend after praying for a couple of days:

"I don't really know about all that stuff, really just what God has done for me in my life. I grew up as a Christian as well, but fell away for a really long time. I had a lot of questions and doubts and honestly, I went for years without thinking about God.

Thankfully, by His grace I have been saved. I believe that Jesus died on the cross and was resurrected to save us from our sin and that we would be able to have a personal relationship with Him. I do believe that He is the one true God and the creator of the universe.

I don't like using the word religion and I don't necessarily claim one denomination. I'm just a follower of Christ who believes that the Bible is the living Word of God. It's all about Jesus."

Is that not incredible. It seems that maybe God has already directed our church member to the one person she can invest in. Now, what if that person accepts Christ. Well the next step is to tell them the next steps.

#### **D. Tell them the Next Steps (8:36-38)**

Look at how Philip leads the eunuch after salvation:

**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?"**

**37 If you believe with all your heart, you may. The eunuch answered, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.**

**38 And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him.**

Regardless of whether that verse is in there or not, it is clear that Philip tells the eunuch that his next step of obedience after salvation is to participate in believer's baptism. Why else would they be looking for a place to stop. And it says that Philip baptized the eunuch.

It is our hope that next year, that the one that God puts on your heart will be saved, and that we can celebrate their baptisms just like we celebrated earlier as a church family.

But, we need to close, and I'll go over these last two quickly. Number 5 is:

#### **E. Trust God with the Results (8:39)**

**Acts 8:39 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.**

Philip did not get to see what became of the Ethiopian eunuch. You may not either. Your one may not accept Christ. Maybe they will, but you won't get to be with them

through their growth as a Christian. Or maybe you will have the chance to help them grow from spiritual infancy to childhood, and then to spiritual adulthood.

Regardless, we trust God with the results. We just need to remain faithful. And that is step six:

**F. Repeat (8:40)**

**40 Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and traveled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea.**

He was at it again. Our work is never done. This year we hope for each reached one here to reach one for Christ. But, then we need to help the ones we reach, learn how to reach one themselves. Can you imagine the exponential impact this could have on the kingdom. Reached ones, reaching ones, who will eventually reach one.

In one year our church could double. In two years, it would quadruple with those who have been saved and are added to our number for the glory of Christ. But, it begins right here with you. Will you commit to reach one person this year. Who is my one person?