

*“Open our hearts to your power moving around us and between us and within us,
until your glory is revealed in our love of both friend and enemy,
in communities transformed by justice and compassion,
and in the healing of all that is broken. Amen.”*

When I started work on what I was going to say I honestly kind of hit a brick wall. I thought, “What can I say about the 1st John passage or the Gospel?” While reading Acts 8:26:40 I frankly forgot about this passage. “So, why not focus on this reading” I thought. So let’s dig into this together

Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch

This one those stories we hear about and we are not sure what to do with it. I honestly never heard to this passage until I took my New Testament class for a second time in college. So, in my own life this a passage that glossed over or completely looked over. In other stories of conversions in the Book of Acts this story often over-shadowed by the conversion of Saul to Paul. While, Paul is important, and will go on and write most of our New Testament. So is this unnamed eunuch from a foreign land and culture.

So, Philip was one of the seven deacons picked to fairly distribute the food to the people. In the first half of Ch. 8 Philip was sent forth to preach the Gospel in Samaria. Once he was done there the spirit sent him south to Gaza by way the “wilderness” road. While, traveling the road he sees a lace for better word a

covered wagon. While reading up on this a few people have pointed out how similar this is to the Jesus being called out by the Spirit. I will touch on this later.

So, Philip listens to God and goes toward Gaza. This is where we meet the Ethiopian eunuch traveling back home from Jerusalem. Philip sees and hears this man reading from the scroll of Isaiah, and the Spirit tells him to go after him.

The eunuch is reading Isaiah for a very important personal reason. Isaiah envisioned redemption for the sexually ambiguous. In the restoration of God's people, eunuchs would be brought within God's house and given a name greater than sons and daughters (Isaiah 56:3-5). God's embrace of the eunuch, and a foreign eunuch at that (compare to Isaiah 56:6-8), shows that the promised age of restoration has begun to dawn. With that being said it makes sense that he, being a eunuch, was reading the scroll of Isaiah. Which, leads us to the fact this man clearly is trying to follow God, but because he is a eunuch he can only be a "God Fearer".

The story of the eunuch falls in line with Luke's, the writer of the Gospel and the book of Acts, theme of the inclusive nature of God's Kingdom or how I like to view it as God's ever-expanding table. While the eunuch was not the first gentile to become a Christian he is the one of the most radically different gentiles though. Here is a person who could have been a Black Christian we read about. Which, that plays into the fact there were people who were pushing for the circumcision of the gentile believers. Some of the gentiles did go through circumcision, like St. Stephen the Martyr. By baptizing the eunuch, Philip is in a way shouting to the

world that God's Kingdom has no boundaries. This probably wouldn't happen if the God weren't literally telling Philip what to do, but that simple act he expanded God's table. I will leave you with a question. In what ways have hurt God's ever expanding table, and how can we help expand God's table.