

The Leader Philip, Acts 8

Series: The Early Days

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There were men in my childhood, during the days of Gospel Meetings, Lectureships, and Mission Reports that stood out as giants in the faith. These men were legends, heroes, and someone I aspired to be like. My list included Marshal Keeble, Gus Nichols, Jimmy Allen, Jim McQuiggan, and Mid McKnight. As I wrote this I wonder if my children, and especially my grandchildren could begin to make such a list. I know we have had national figures like Billy Graham that have left their mark on our collective faith. When we had such men to look up to we had more young men wanting to be preachers. On the mission front there was Otis Gatewood (who invited me to train under him in Vienna, Austria to smuggle Bibles behind the Iron Curtain) and a couple of missionaries from Africa who reported every few years to the church at Dasher. They showed slides, and it excited my young heart to want to see foreign lands in the name of Christ. Where are the heroes today?

Let's go back to the early days and find one. His name was Philip. He was part of that band of brothers who were chosen to minister to the Grecian widows in Acts 6-a man full of the Holy Spirit, faith and wisdom. His story is found in Acts 8. After Stephen was stoned, the church at Jerusalem was scattered because of the persecution by the Jews. (Uprooted from home and in an environment of persecution.

Two Stories:

8:4-25 Philip in Samaria (Relate the story)

8:26-40 Philip on the Gaza Road (Relate the story)

What stands out about Philip?

- Where Philip went the Word of God went (8:4-5)
- Philip being a Grecian Jew was not opposed to going to Samaria (8:5)
- Philip was gifted to perform miracles, bringing great joy to the city (8:6-8)
- Philip preached in the face of pagan opposition and competition in the person of Simon the Sorcerer (8:9ff)
- Philip's message was focused on:
 - The good news of the kingdom of God
 - The name of Jesus Christ

- Philip told them to believe and be baptized (just like Jesus, Mark 16:15-16)
- Philip communicated with the apostles, and received support from them, (8:14-25). He was a team player. He did his part and then stepped aside.

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- Philip was available to go when and where needed (8:26, 39, 40)
 - Philip being a Grecian Jew was willing to talk to an Ethiopian eunuch-that is a big deal. (8:27)
 - Philip listened to the Spirit of God (8:29)
 - Philip knew his Bible (OT) (8:28-35)-and was willing to help someone who didn't. Philip knew this text was about Jesus.
 - Again, Philip must have told this man to believe and be baptized (8:36-38)

What are takeaways for us if we are to return to the early days?

- Philip was **willing** to teach anyone.
- Philip was **prepared** to teach anyone.
- Philip was **eager** to baptize anyone

If Philip were here today he would tell you the good news of the kingdom about the name of Jesus Christ, and that you need to believe in Jesus, and be baptized into Christ.