

Prayer Meeting Address given by Mr Jabez Rutt at Lamberhurst on 1st April 2025

Reading: Acts 8, verses 26-40

It is a wonderful account here of the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch. Obviously he was what we would call the Chancellor of the Exchequer, he had charge of all the Queen's treasures. It appears to me that he came up to Jerusalem with a desire to worship the Lord at the time of the Passover, no doubt. Now he was reading in the Scriptures, he had a desire, he was seeking, he wanted to know more. These are evidences of that inward divine work of the Spirit in the heart, that desire to read Scripture, that desire to seek knowledge and understanding. These things flow from that inward power and work of the Holy Ghost in the heart, that is what makes a believer. Philip said unto him first, "Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him." Then "The place which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter;" that beautiful prophecy in Isaiah 53, the prophecy concerning the sufferings of Christ. The eunuch answered Philip when that passage was read, "I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? Of himself, or of some other man?" He was enquiring, he was seeking. I think the answer of Philip was very beautiful, "Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus." We preach Christ crucified, "he preached unto him Jesus." It is obvious that the word of truth entered with power into his heart as Philip preached unto him Jesus, opening up those beautifully prophecies in Isaiah 53. "He was wounded for our transgressions," there is no doubt that the eunuch would have heard of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and now Philip would open it to him that this is who the prophet was speaking of. He obviously opened it to him in that he spoke of the Lord Jesus Christ as being the Son of God. We know that from the eunuch's confession.

"And as they went on *their way*, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, *here* is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" We read in Psalm 110, "Thy people *shall* be willing in the day of thy power." With the eunuch this was the day of the Lord's power. There was no doubt that as Philip preached unto him Jesus there was a sacred reality of the truth that entered into his heart by that divine enlightening of the Spirit of God through the

ministry of his servant, Philip. "And as they went on *their way*, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, *here is water*; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" It is wonderful, my beloved friends, when the Lord moves us in love to follow the Lord Jesus Christ. I have sometimes heard years ago ministers speaking in a way, almost to get a big stick and to make people be baptised and warn you that the Lord will do this or that if you do not get baptized. I did not like that aspect that some people have. If we rightly enter into the sacred ordinance of believer's baptism we do it in love, that is what motivates the living child of God. It is a faith that worketh by love and the Lord draws his children in love to follow the Lord Jesus Christ. That lovely verse there is in Matthew 3 at the baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ in the river Jordan. John, as it were, resisted at first the desire of Jesus to be baptized, and he said, "I have need to be baptised of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said," what wonderful word it is, "Suffer *it to be so now*: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." It is a righteous thing in the eyes of God, in the eyes of Christ, it is a righteous thing to be baptised in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. It is a righteous thing for a believer. The Lord Jesus is very clear in his teachings in the gospels concerning, what we might call, gospel commandments or gospel precepts to follow the Lord Jesus Christ. We read in Mark 16, in verse 15, "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." There is the scriptural doctrine of believer's baptism.

Then we come to verse 37. This was the verse when I got up this morning, if I have a service in the evening the first thing I do is think about that coming service. As I was getting up and moving around these words just dropped into my heart, "And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." It is wonderful to be brought to believe, to be brought to love, to be brought to embrace in the arms of faith our Lord Jesus Christ. "We love him, because he first loved us." O that it may be a word of direction to one and another here this evening. "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." What a confession of faith that was. "And he commanded the chariot to stand still:" this so clearly speaks to us of the mode of baptism, "and they went down both into water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out

of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing." What a wonderful pattern that we have set before us here in the word of God. "And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." What a follow on from that previous verse, "And as they went on *their* way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, *here* is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, if thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." That is the confession of his faith, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." It is believer's baptism. "And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch: and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing."

Friends, it is well known in church history that the Christian church in Ethiopia is a very ancient church, it goes right back to the time of the Ethiopian eunuch and no doubt from the seed of grace sown in the heart of the Ethiopian eunuch it spread throughout the land of Ethiopia. You see how the Lord guides and directs his servants. Philip was in a place where there was a lot of activity, a lot of baptizing, a lot of conversions and the Lord took him into a desert to preach to one man. Those seeds sown in the heart of that one man then spread throughout another nation on the earth. O that the Lord would arise in the days in which we live and graciously grant the outpouring of his Spirit and the ingathering of precious souls.