

Phillip's Sermon To The Ethiopian Eunuch

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Date: 30 May 2021

Preacher: Rev. Kenneth Ferguson

- [0 : 00] So sing Psalms Psalm 139 A on page 180. O Lord, you have examined me.
- You know me through and through. My sitting, rising, all my thoughts afar are known to you. My going out and lying down are plain before your view, before I speak a word, O Lord, it is well known to you.
- You hem me in behind before. You lay on me your hand. Such knowledge is too wonderful, too high to understand. Where can I from your spirit flee?
- Or from your presence go? If to the heavens you are there, or in the depths below. If I should take the wings of dawn and dwell beyond the sea, there also it would be my guide, your right hand holding me.
- He stands us to God's place. O Lord, you have examined me.
- [1 : 11] You know me through and through. My sitting, rising, all my thoughts afar are known to you.
- My going out and lying down are plain before your view, before I speak a word, O Lord, it is well known to you.
- You hem me in behind before.
- Such knowledge is too wonderful, too high to understand.
- Where can I from your spirit flee? Or from your presence go?
- [3 : 04] If to the heavens you are there, or in the depths below.
- If I should take the wings of dawn and dwell beyond the sea, there also you would be my guide, your right hand holding me.
- Let us pray. O Lord, give us to realise anew this morning how great you are, that you have no beginning and that you are unchanging and unchangeable.
- You have no ending. You are the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last. And besides this you are all seeing and all knowing, as the Samist discovered for himself.
- When he said you have searched me and known me, you know my sitting down and rising up. All my thoughts are far to the unknown.
- [5 : 02] And when we think of the thought processes that we ourselves have, and the many wayward thoughts that take place in our minds, and the impure thoughts that so often seek to assert themselves over our thinking.
- And then when we think that you know these things and attaching to all of these is guilt because they are not according to your mind.
- We break your law continually, not only in our thoughts but in our words and actions. And we ask this morning Lord that you would forgive us freely, all of our sins.
- We are so encouraged when the Bible tells us that if we confess our sins, that you are faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

So give us that grace we pray, it will enable us to truly repent of all of our sins. And give us that saving faith whereby we will lay hold upon Jesus Christ as our Lord and as our Savior, as our mediator, as our elder brother and as our friend.

[6 : 35] Who came into this world to seek and to save the lost. And who calls to us this morning in these marvellous words of invitation. Come unto me, all you who labour under heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart and you shall find rest unto your souls.

We thank you this morning that Jesus is alive. He is alive forevermore, sitting at the right hand of power.

And he himself says that all power is given unto him. And on the basis of that power, he commissioned the disciples of old to go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

With the promise, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. We thank you Lord for this morning, for the beautiful day.

[7 : 45] We thank you that all these things in providence are in your hand also. And we pray that you would bless us as we gather together to worship you. You know every one of us, minutely and individually.

You know our thoughts, our longings. You know our fears, our problems. We thank you that you are able, by your grace, to address all the problems that we bring before you.

We thank you this morning for the scriptures of the Old and the New Testaments. The only rule given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy you. And we pray that this world will be made effectual this morning in the experience of every one of us.

To encourage those who are downcast, to strengthen those who are weak, to give light to those who may be in darkness. And to sanctify those who are so aware of their sin and shortcomings.

We thank you for this congregation. We pray that you would bless them. And we ask that you would continue to bless the preaching of the Gospel here. And throughout our island and throughout our nation.

[9 : 03] All our districts and our nation and our world needs to hear the Gospel. And we ask, O Lord, that you would accompany the word preached this day with the mighty saving power of your Holy Spirit.

For without you we can do nothing. But your word nevertheless will not return unto you void. Will accomplish that which you please and prosper in the thing where too you will send it.

Remember those who are mourning today. In these difficult days and months of the past year with the pandemic, so many hearts have been broken.

So many tears have been shed. We pray that you would heal those who are mourning the passing of loved ones. And those who look upon their loved ones as they lie on sick beds.

We pray that you would heal according to your own purpose. Strengthen those who are doctors and nurses and carers as they look after those who are suffering.

[10 : 12] Bless them we pray. And bless us as a generation of your people. We ask, Lord, that in these days you would turn to us and reveal to us the glory of your grace.

If it's your purpose for us that you would come in a day of reviving power to the gospel. That many would be turned from darkness unto light and from their evil ways unto ways of holiness and truth.

Bless us now, Lord, as we continue before you. Read us and guide us in this act of worship and forgive every sin we pray. In Jesus' name, amen.

I'd like to see a few words by way of a children's address. And I'll let you into a little secret.

I had a birthday last week. And I've never been as old as I am now. This is the oldest I've ever been.

[11 : 21] And I was reading the other day of the minister by the name of Matthew Henry. Some of you may have heard of him.

He was a very famous minister who wrote a commentary on the scriptures. And I have often felt indebted to Reverend Matthew Henry for the many insights he's given on the world of God.

But this was his birthday that he's talking about in his diary. And he says that he was 35 years old this particular day when he wrote this.

It is now, he said, high noon with me. But my son may go down even at noon.

He meant by that that the scripture says that 70 years is the span that the Lord promises to us generally.

[12 : 26] And he had reached 35, which was halfway there. And that fact gave him to think along these very somber and searching lines.

He said, what was I born for? Well, I was born a rational creature. That is a person who is able to reason things out.

I was also born a health-less creature when my mother washed me and clothed me. I couldn't do that for myself.

But I was also born a sinful creature. And that's the way we all are by nature. We are born into this world with the guilt of Adam's first sin attaching to us.

We are sinners by nature. And Matthew Henry reminded himself of that. I'm a sinful creature. Secondly, he said, where was I born?

[13 : 35] And he said, I was born in the church of God. I think he meant by that that his family and his extended family were God-fearing people.

And he was born in the church of God. And then he said, I was born in a land of light.

In other words, he was aware that the light of the gospel had dispelled the darkness of ignorance and idolatry and godlessness from this nation into which he was born.

And he said, I was born in a land of light. Isn't that a wonderful thought? But then he said, I was born in a house of prayer.

His parents, his father was a minister, the extended family would have prayed for him maybe before he was born, that he was surrounded by prayer from the womb.

[14 : 47] And once he was born, he was prayed for. As he grew up, he was prayed for. What an amazing privilege that is. When I think of my own parents, you think of your own parents and people who prayed for you maybe long before you were born.

And even after that, when we lived our wayward life, they prayed for us. What a blessing that is.

But then he says thirdly, what was I born for? Not what I was born, but what was I born for?

Well, firstly, he says I was born to glorify God. That's the first thing. That is why we are in this world first and foremost.

To glorify him, to honor him, to love him, to serve him, and you cannot begin to do that early enough.

[15 : 51] From being knee high, we are asked to give our hearts and lives to the Lord, to glorify God.

But then the last thing he said was, what was I born for?

To prepare to get to heaven. These are Matthew Henry's words when he was 35 years old. And he saw these as the most important thoughts to write down on that particular day that March is 35th birthday.

And how do we prepare to get to heaven? Well, I think Jesus said this very, very clearly, and I think it answers the question, how do we prepare to get to heaven?

He said, seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all other things will be added up to you. Make it a priority.

[17 : 01] Make seeking the Lord, worshiping the Lord, following the Lord, living for the Lord, believing in the Lord, loving the Lord, the priority of your life.

And then all other things will fall into place. So many people, they love money more than they love the Lord. They love fame. They love all sorts of worldly pastimes more than the Lord.

But Matthew Henry says, no, I came into this world to glorify God and to prepare to get to heaven.

May God bless these thoughts to us, and may He bless us on every one of our birthdays.

However old or young we may be, let us remember that each birthday is a reminder. Set our house in order, for we shall surely die and not live.

[18 : 10] I mean, let us now read the word of God. It's from the New Testament scripture and from the Acts of the Apostles and chapter eight.

The Acts and chapter eight, and I can read from the beginning of the chapter. And Saul approved of his execution.

This is the stoning of Stephen, the account we have in the previous chapter. Saul approved of his execution.

And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem. They were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.

Devote men buried Stephen and made grave lamentation over him. But Saul was ravaging the church, and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison.

[19 : 19] Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word. Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ. And the crowds with one accord paid attention to what was being said by Philip when they heard him and saw the signs that he did.

For unclean spirits came out of many who were possessed, crying with a loud voice, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed.

So there was much joy in that city. But there was a man named Simon who had previously practiced magic in the city and amazed the people of Samaria, saying that he himself was somebody great.

They all paid attention to him from the least to the greatest, saying, this man is the power of God that is called great. And they paid attention to him because for a long time he had amazed them with his magic.

But when they believed Philip, as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized both men and women.

[20 : 28] When Simon himself believed and after being baptized, he continued with Philip. And seeing signs and great miracles performed, he was amazed.

Look on the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God. They sent to them Peter and John. We came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit.

But he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.

Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles hands, he offered them money saying, give me this power also so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.

But Peter said to him, may your silver perish with you because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money. You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God.

[21 : 33] Repent the effort of this wickedness of yours and pray to the Lord that if possible the intent of your heart may be forgiven you. For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity.

And Simon answered, pray for me to the Lord that nothing of what you have said may come upon me. Now when they had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans.

Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, rise and go towards the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza. This is a desert place.

And he rose and went. And there was an Ethiopian, a Eunuch, a court official of Candace, Queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure.

He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning seated in his chariot and he was reading the prophet Isaiah. And the Spirit said to Philip, go over and join this chariot.

[22 : 41] So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, do you understand what you're reading? And he said, oh, can I unless someone guides me?

And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this. Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter and like a lamb before its shearers silent.

So he opened not his mouth. In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation for his life has taken away from the earth?

And the Eunuch said to Philip, about whom I ask you, does the prophet say this? About himself or about someone else? Then Philip opened his mouth and beginning with this scripture, he told him the good news about Jesus.

And as they were going along the road they came to some water. And the Eunuch said, see, here is water. What prevents me from being baptized?

[23 : 48] And he commanded the chariot to stop and they both went down into the water Philip and the Eunuch and he baptized him. And when they came up out of the water, the spirit of the Lord carried Philip away and the Eunuch saw him no more and went on his way rejoicing.

But Philip found himself at Azotus and as he passed through he preached the gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

Amen. And may God bless to us with that reading from his holy word and to his name be all praise. I'd like to focus on some verses in this chapter as our sermon this morning.

Acts chapter 8 and reading, let's say from verse 29.

Acts 8 from verse 29. And the spirit said to Philip, go over and join this chariot. So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, do you understand what you're reading?

[25 : 04] And he said, how can I unless someone guides me? And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. And the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this, like a sheep he was led to the slaughter and like a lamb before its shearer is silent.

So he opens not his mouth. In his humiliation justice was denied him. You can describe his generation for his life has taken away from the earth.

Chapter 7 gives us in great detail the sermon or the speech that Stephen made before the Jews.

And because they didn't like the content of his speech, they rose up and stoned him.

And it says at the very end that they laid their garments down at the feet of a young man named Saul and that he was approving of this stoning of Stephen.

[26 : 29] And as a result of Saul and his animosity and hatred of the gospel and the Christian church, there was a time of great persecution awaiting the followers of Christ.

And it says at the beginning of chapter 8, there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem and they were scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria except the apostles and so on.

A time of persecution. These have come along in the experience of the church on repeated occasions down through the centuries.

The world has shown its hatred of the church and has caused such pain and horror among the people of God.

We remember the times in Scotland called the Covenanting times, when saints were put to death savagely.

[27 : 44] But also in various times through history, people were dealt with so roughly because they were Christians.

I was reading recently about a young man who was 19 years of age and he was burnt at the stake because of his faithfulness to Christ.

At that particular time in the 17th century, people were so violently opposed to the gospel of Christ to the extent that many people were burnt at the stake.

And we see here that this was a time of great persecution for the church and even in our own day when we read some of these reports of areas of the world where Christians are suffering because of their faith.

Some of them are put to death, some of them are imprisoned, some of them are denied justice all because they love the Lord Jesus Christ and are not willing to turn their back upon Jesus.

[28 : 58] But I'd like to highlight this particular area of scripture to do with Philip who was a preacher of the gospel during these difficult times.

And I'd like just to mention four headings, the preacher Philip, secondly the congregation for him and I'm thinking particularly of his meeting with the eunuch of Ethiopia.

The preacher, the congregation and thirdly the sermon that Philip preached based on what the Ethiopian had been reading from the prophecy of Isaiah and fourthly the effect that that sermon had upon the Ethiopian eunuch when he was going along he said, there is water here, what prevents me from being baptized?

He wanted to devote and commit his life to Christ in a public way by being baptized because the Lord had blessed the preaching to him.

Actually then one or two words on the preacher before us in this particular context. This was not Philip the disciple but this was Philip the deacon.

[30 : 30] We have mentioned of him made in chapter 6 and from verse 1, in these days when the disciples were increasing in number a complaint by the Hellenist arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution.

And 12, the 12 summoned the full number of the disciples and said, it's not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. Therefore brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the spirit and of wisdom whom we will appoint to this duty, but we will devote ourselves to prayer and the ministry of the word.

And they chose these people, Stephen a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit and Philip and Prochorus and Nicannor and Timon and Parmenus and Nicholas a proselyte of Antio.

Of these people Philip is the one that I want to focus on this morning and see how wonderful this particular testimony is.

He was a man of good reputation, a man of full of the Holy Spirit, a man full of wisdom.

[31 : 57] And because people were being scattered now because of the persecution Philip went down to the city of Samaria, it says in chapter 8 verse 5, and he proclaimed to them the Christ.

He proclaimed Christ to them. He preached Christ as the saviour to these people. And it says from verse 6, the crowds with one accord paid attention to what was being said by Philip when they heard him and saw the signs that he did.

Unclean spirits came out of many who were possessed, crying with a loud voice, and many who were paralysed or lame were healed. So there was much joy in that city.

You see this happened after the day of Pentecost and prior to the day of Pentecost during Jesus' ministry the Samaritans really were not for Jesus coming into their midst at all.

I know that he came and he spoke to the woman of Samaria and then as a result of her witness having been converted through Jesus' ministry there many of them also believed.

[33 : 17] But up until that particular time there was much opposition from the Samaritans regarding the Gospel. But now the spirit of God is being poured among them and unclean spirits came out of many of them and many were saved.

Much joy in that city. And Philip was used mightily in that particular place.

But then the Lord by his angel calls Philip to another sphere of service. To another sphere of service.

And we go along verse 26 and chapter 8. The angel of the Lord said to Philip, rise and go towards the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.

This is a desert place. So he rose and went. This Philip who had been used so mightily in Samaria he has moved from where he is to another place.

[34 : 37] Down to Ords Gaza which is a desert area. What kind of congregation awaits them down there? You may think. Well it's very interesting.

The congregation is a very very small one. Very different seemingly from the congregation that was building up in the city in which he had been.

But nevertheless Philip eagerly responded to the calling to go elsewhere.

He didn't know what was ahead of him but he went in obedience to the call. Just like Abraham of old when he was called to leave Ur of the Caldees the Lord appeared to him there and said get out from here and go to a place that I will show you.

And the scripture says he went out not knowing where he was going but he was obedient to the call. He was obedient to the Lord's direction and now the same we see here with Philip.

- [35 : 53] He did exactly what the Lord told him not knowing exactly what lay ahead of him. But then as he was in the way of obedience there was an Ethiopian, a Unoch, a court official of Candice, Queen of the Ethiopians who was in charge of all her treasure.

There he was making his way back home having been at Jerusalem worshipping.

This was one man but it was of the Lord's making that Philip was called from you could say from the midst of a revival in Samaria to go and deal with this one man.

And the spirit says in verse 29 go over and join this chariot. So Philip ran to him and he heard him reading the prophecy of Isaiah.

Well he wouldn't ordinarily would you join up with a chariot that's there in the desert without being told by the Lord to do so.

- [37 : 14] And that's exactly what happened here. He ran over eagerly knowing that the Lord's spirit had directed him to this particular man.

Now this was a very interesting man. He was a man of high rank. He was I suppose in today's terms the Chancellor of the Exchequer of that great country of Ethiopia.

He was a dignitary well educated man. He had been all the way up to Jerusalem.

He had been following the faith of the Jewish people probably having gone up to a feast and you know having left Ethiopia to go to Jerusalem for a feast that was no main feat.

I've been trying to figure out the kind of distance this man would have had to travel and it's not easy to work it out but it's at least I would say a thousand miles both ways over land and sea.

- [38 : 31] And this man was dedicated to his religion. He went up there to one of the feasts maybe the Passover feast or the feast of Tabernacles.

He doesn't see exactly which one it was but he had been there and this is now coming all the way back.

And the Lord had something for this man because he's a thirsty man. He's a searching man. He's a seeking man and it's as if Jerusalem hasn't really answered all his questions and the sacrifices there haven't really satisfied his soul and the priest he saw there often operating at the temple didn't do anything for him really because he knows he needs something more and he's searching for something more and he knows it's in the scripture somewhere and he just can't figure out what these words mean but he's reading Isaiah 53 and he asks how can I understand it unless somebody guides me and he invited Philip to come up and sit with him in his chariot.

A stranger. Nevertheless this man is so taken up with this quest to get to know who this is talking about.

Is it about himself or some other passion he's saying that the prophet is speaking here and when Philip came up he started preaching Jesus to him.

- [40 : 15] The spirit had directed Philip and now he was in a situation where he had a congregation of one speaking about the one saving, speaking about the way of salvation through Jesus Christ.

The sermon. Thirdly, the sermon. Philip opened his mouth and beginning with this scripture he told him the good news about Jesus.

You know the word Jesus means savior and the good news about Jesus takes to do with this passage of scripture that this man was reading.

There are three or four things I want to highlight from what these words in verses 32 and 33 are referring before us. The Jesus spoken of by these words is a Jesus who is likened to a sheep led to the slaughter and a lamb before its shearer is silent so he opens not his mouth.

He preaches to him about a suffering Jesus, a suffering savior.

[42 : 00] The first thing I'd like to highlight is it's a submissive savior. Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter, he was submissive in the sufferings that he was enduring.

It's as if he was willing to go along with all that was happening and surely that was very true that Jesus came not to do his own will but the will of the Father who sent him and that will included living a perfect life of obedience to God's law every day of his life and also dying a substitutionary death on the cross of Calvary.

Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter. If you read in Leviticus chapter 1 we find that sheep were sometimes used as a sacrifice of consecration.

In other words when a person brought a sheep as a sacrifice to sacrifice it as a burnt offering that was pointing to the man who was bringing the sacrifice as giving himself in total consecration to God.

And this is what I believe we have here that Jesus in his total submission to the Father's will he gave himself unto death even the cursed death of the cross.

[44 : 03] He's a submissive savior. But also he is a suffering savior.

What exactly did Jesus suffer? Was it just physical pain or mental agony? Well he suffered both of these.

The wounds in his hands and his feet give ample proof of his physical suffering. The marks upon his back that were the result of him having been lashed and whipped.

The crown of thorns having left these marks and wounds upon his head. Certainly his suffering was physical.

Ah but you see he suffered much deeper sufferings than the physical. He suffered in his soul.

[45 : 14] The theologians used to say words like this. He suffered hell intensively but not extensively.

What they meant by that I believe was this. That the pains of hell that his people were due to receive because of their sin now he suffered for them.

He suffered for them and he bore their hell if I can put it that way. He bore the eternal sufferings which only a divine person could suffer because he was a divine person and he added divine efficacy to everything that he did and said and suffered.

He's a submissive, savior, a suffering savior. Interestingly he is also a silent savior.

See what it says? Like a lamb before its shearer is silent so he opens not his mouth.

[46 : 39] Like a lamb silent before its shearer so Jesus is. When you remember when he went before Herod he didn't say anything.

Pilate it says if Pilate was astonished that he wasn't I said we're fighting his corner and protecting himself from the word spoken against him.

Why isn't he speaking? And when he's on the cross people were walking past the cross shaking their heads and saying he saved others he cannot save himself.

Let him come down from the cross now and we will believe him. He was silent.

Why was he silent? Because in his silence he spoke volumes regarding his submissiveness to the suffering that he was enduring.

[47 : 58] Regarding the truthfulness and truth of his words spoken hitherto he had nothing else, nothing more to say.

He had said it all in his life and in his teaching. I know he's silent.

Or he's not all silent because he said from the cross father forgive them but they know not what they do.

And he also answered the thief on the cross. In his last moments of life the thief said remember me when you come into your kingdom barely I say to you today you shall be with me in paradise.

What marvelous words he spoke there. But regarding the silence he didn't attempt to answer the cries of those who were crying against him.

[49 : 17] But there's one more thing before I go on like alarm before it's shearer. It's silent. It's as if the picture we have is like this that Jesus was being shorn of his claim to divinity when they didn't believe him.

He was being shorn of his claim to be the Messiah when they didn't believe him. He was being shorn of the dignity that he possessed as the eternal Son of God.

They didn't want to hear it. And it's as if they were shearing him of all of these things taking away from him what was rightfully his and what he claimed for himself rightfully.

But he remained silent. And that's what people still do in our day.

They shear him of his authority over this world. His authority over our nations.

[50 : 37] His authority over our lives. Every detail of our lives. It's as if people want to silence him and shear him from all involvement with them in their day to day living.

We will not have this man to reign over us. Keep him silent. Keep the Bible's closed.

Keep people away from churches. Subdue and suppress gospel witness. But one more thing before I go on.

Jesus' Savior, suffering Savior, silent Savior, substitutionary Savior.

He was the substitute, all of his people. You see what it says? Philip opened his mouth, verse 35, and beginning with this scripture he told him the good news about Jesus.

[51 : 53] It's as if Philip expanded his sermon to include more of Isaiah 53 from which these verses have come.

And you remember what it says in Isaiah 53? He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our inequities.

The chastisement of our peace was upon him. And by his stripes we are healed. Isn't that an amazing statement from Isaiah?

The sermon. Well, the sermon had a really interesting effect upon the Ethiopian unit.

He had seen everything in Jerusalem, but really he couldn't see anything at all until Jesus revealed himself to him in a preachy.

[53 : 00] You see, the Holy Spirit was there. In this chariot there was the Ethiopian congregation. Philip the preacher and the Holy Spirit working, applying to this Ethiopian unit, the power of the word of God in his own life.

Just like happened in the experience of the woman of Samaria when she was trying to evade Jesus' questionings. She said, eventually, well, when the Messiah comes, he will show us all these things.

I, who am speaking to you, am he. It was the self-revelation of Jesus to her soul that saved her soul.

And it's the self-revelation of Jesus Christ to the Ethiopian unit that changed his life also.

And whether you are one person in a congregation or more than one in a group, large people, of people in a congregation, it doesn't really matter.

[54 : 23] The Lord deals with people as individuals as if there was no one else in the whole wide world but you and him.

People on either side of you may not know anything special is happening in your life, but when the Lord deals with you savingly, he focuses on you.

And what do we see happening here? The effect on the unit as they went on. He saw water and he said, what prevents me from being baptized?

He wished to profess Jesus Christ as his own Savior. Jesus had made himself known to him as his Savior.

Jesus had made himself precious to him as his Lord. And now he wanted to make a public statement, I belong to Jesus.

[55 : 33] He is my Lord. I don't want to live any more for myself. I want to live for him who gave himself for me.

The apostle writes to the Corinthians, we are not our own. We are bought with our price. And this man knew something of that.

He knew that Jesus was the answer to his searching. That Jesus was the answer to his need as a sinner.

That Jesus was a suitable Savior for him and no other Savior could or would do for him. He gave himself publicly to him.

Have you done that? Has Jesus made himself known to you? Are you able to say with the psalmist, whom have I in the heavens high, but you, O Lord, and in the earth whom I desire besides you, there is none?

[56 : 50] When I was thinking of this yesterday, he went on his way rejoicing. A verse from Genesis 32 came to my mind.

And it's the account we have of Jacob wrestling with the angel at Peniel.

And it says, chapter 32 in Genesis says, Jacob, verse 30, Jacob called upon the name of the Lord.

And he called the name of the place Peniel saying, I have seen God face to face, and yet my life has been delivered.

It's as if I know that Jacob's situation was a somewhat different situation in that he was wrestling with the angel.

[57 : 46] But he came to this point that he had seen God face to face. He had that close encounter of a saving kind with the Lord.

The Ethiopian had such a close encounter with Jesus Christ. And you see, I have seen God face to face, and my life has been delivered.

And the sun rose upon him as he passed Peniel, limping because of his hip. The sun rose on him. It's a new day for him.

A new stage of his life. And same with the Ethiopian. It's as if the sun has risen and he goes on his way rejoicing.

He didn't have any of this rejoicing when he was looking at the after in Jerusalem or the priesthood in Jerusalem or observing the feasts in Jerusalem.

[58 : 49] The Lord Jesus made himself known to him in a saving way. And that's what made the difference in the life of this man.

In the song of Solomon, we have this in chapter 2, verse 11, Low the winter is past, the rain is over and gone, Flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds has come.

And the voice of the turtle is heard in the land. And Jesus says, arise my faithful one and come away.

I know that's a different context, but you see the same kind of optimism, the same kind of joy, the same kind of life is there.

The rain is over and gone. The winter is past, the winter of ignorance, the rain of sin and iniquity. And now the time of the singing of birds has come.

[60 : 01] And the Lord has brought his blessing into the life of the church. He went on his way rejoicing.

What about us today? Whatever we feel about ourselves, this is the only savior for us.

The suffering savior, the victorious savior, he rose from the dead on the third day. And now he is exalted as a prince and a savior to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.

Though your sins be like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. Though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

May the Lord grant that we might know that cleansing power of Christ's blood for ourselves as we go on. Let us pray.

[61 : 18] Help us, Lord, to hear what God the Lord does speak. We thank you that you speak peace to your people because you are a God of peace.

You made peace through the blood of your cross and give us to rejoice this morning in that blood of atonement.

This is what is said concerning the assembled multitude in heaven at last, that they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Grant, Lord, that that may be true of each one of us. Go before us this day and this week and cleanse every sin. In Jesus' name we ask it.

Amen. Now we will listen to Psalm 23 from the Sing Psalms.

[62 : 28] And we sing the whole of the Psalm to God's praise. We will listen to it. The Lord is my shepherd. No, one shall I know.

He makes me lie down where the green pastures grow. He leads me to rest where the calm waters flow. The whole of the Psalm to God's praise.

The Lord is my shepherd. No, one shall I know.

He leads me to rest where the calm waters flow.

My water is set, he is led to his way. His great heart of righteousness may give me strength.

[63 : 44] And this is he who has done his great things on his way.

Your holiness, I bear darkness this year. He wants you and will be going out of here.

Your eyes and your steps bring me comfort and cheer.

In the sight of my air, he's out in all your spread. Behold the rejoicing, you pour on my head.

My power, where rules and vibrations be fair.

[64 : 53] So surely your covenant, mercy and grace, will follow me closely in all of my ways.

I will live in the best of the Lord of my days.

Now may the grace of her Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, rest upon and abide with you all. Now and forevermore. Amen.