

1. Introduction:
  - a. Last week we talked about the general concept behind God's Will
    - i. Fall in love with Jesus, obey him, seek His fame/glory
  - b. What about the specifics?
    - i. Sometimes God does tell us to do specific things
    - ii. If God is telling us, then we want to listen and know what's real
  - c. But there have been times when I feel like maybe I should do something
    - i. And I was wrong
  - d. Maybe you too want to know the specifics, but you have your own fears
    - i. Don't want to be "that weirdo"
    - ii. Don't want to mess up or end up with foot in mouth
  - e. So how do we know when God is telling us to do something? What do we do when he does speak?
2. *Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "**Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.**" This is a desert place. **And he rose and went.***
  - a. God really does speak. He really does.
    - i. Word is **alive**. Spirit **lives within** Jesus' followers.
    - ii. Philip is sensitive enough to listen to the Spirit (within believers)
      1. When you get that feeling...maybe it's God, but how do you know?
      2. Does it line up with scripture?
      3. Is it God's will? (cf. last week's sermon)
    - iii. God speaks through His Word and through his spirit (which is in line w/ God's Word), but are you listening?
  - b. God tells Philip to leave Samaria and go south
    - i. Phillip could have made excuses. He could reason it away with logic:
      1. It was an interruption
      2. doesn't make sense to go w/ this successful ministry
      3. Gaza is a desert (e.g. There's nothing there)
    - ii. That's normally what we do, isn't it?
    - iii. Or he could have simply chosen disobedience (I don't want to - I met this cute Samaritan girl)
  - c. Philip responds with obedience
    - i. First, he was listening to God (important step)
    - ii. Second, he heard and obeyed
  - d. When it comes to obedience, there is no room to question God.
    - i. Sometimes his commands do not always make sense.
      1. Such as, to gain your life you need to lose it and sacrifice what you desire
    - ii. He deserves it. He is our Creator, our Savior, and the only true God
  - e. When God puts something on your heart, don't question the logic, simply obey
3. *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.*

- a. Phillip listens, and we now learn why God wanted him there.
  - b. Still, on the surface this doesn't make sense.
    - i. He is a Gentile (even further than Samaritan's)
    - ii. He is a eunuch - not allowed to worship
    - iii. But Worshiping at Jerusalem means he is clearly open to spiritual things
    - iv. Evidenced by reading Isaiah (crazy in and of itself - how'd he get copy?)
    - v. God wanted Philip to run into this man despite logic, tradition, and precedent
  - c. Just because you obey, doesn't mean that it is going to make sense immediately.
    - i. Sometimes it takes time for things to unfold.
      - 1. Lot of times, delayed results stop us from obeying the next time
    - ii. Sometimes it might not make sense this side of heaven.
  - d. So, it is more than simply obeying; it is also trusting. Trust and obey.
4. *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 are reading?" And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.*
- a. Let's backtrack: court official to the queen; in charge of all her money; in the desert (sounds like an ambush to me!)
  - b. That's pretty gutsy to "go over and join"
    - i. More like "Go over and get yourself killed"
  - c. Philip is on a roll though and he RUNS to him (make it even worse, Philip...)
    - i. He is aggressive to obey
    - ii. Is that your norm?
  - d. Hears him reading the scripture and asks his question (probably as the guards are grabbing him)
  - e. Here Philip aggressively obeys despite not just logic but safety
    - i. Put yourself in his position
    - ii. Run up to the visiting dignitary to tell him about Jesus
  - f. Jesus was aggressively obedient to death. What are we normally obedient unto?
    - i. Comfort, safety, convenience?
    - ii. Philip could have died, but he listened anyway
  - g. When Jesus says jump: jump. Go: go. Talk: talk.
    - i. Regardless of logic. Regardless of interruptions. Regardless of safety.
  - h. Safest place to be is aggressively obeying God
5. *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 shearer is silent, so he opens not his mouth. In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is 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.***
- a. Philip could have said according to the standard interpretation of the day...
    - i. Could have encouraged him to keep reading and pray for him

- ii. Could have loved and served the guy hoping he would “get it”
      - iii. Maybe that’s what you would have done...
    - b. But he sees the open door and aggressive enough to walk through it. Immediately
    - c. He doesn’t do it in a weird way:
      - i. Begins with what the guy was reading and brings it to Jesus
      - ii. So he knows the scriptures
      - iii. Some of you need to simply practice sharing your faith
        - 1. That’s good. Do it in front of the mirror.
        - 2. Right your testimony down and practice saying it in 3 minutes
        - 3. Memorize the verses used in the Romans Road to sharing the Good News
    - d. God opens a door and Philip walks through it
      - i. That’s what we need to start doing, isn’t ?
      - ii. Being sensitive to hear from God and then acting on it
      - iii. Seizing opportunities for the glory of God
      - iv. If this is our mission, then we should be on the prowl for these kinds of open doors.
    - e. When God opens a door, walk through it
      - i. He will open and close doors and if you are in the Word, in prayer, striving for obedience for the glory of God, have confidence in the doors that are opened for you
      - ii. When God opens a door, walk through it
6. *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?**” And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him.*
- a. No excuses obedience: Here’s a nasty puddle. Let’s do this.
    - i. Not "I'm not ready, I still have problems, etc"
  - b. Guess what? Instant obedience rubs off on others (your spouse, your kids, your friends, your small group, those you are discipling or encouraging)
  - c. Let me just tell you that one of my biggest pet peeves is when we coddle people too an unhealthy level
    - i. False culture of what it means to be a disciple
    - ii. We need to be gracious and gentle with one another as we grow, but we can’t ignore growth either
  - d. I love this guy’s heart. That’s how I want to be. That’s how I want you to be.
    - i. Do you have something right now that God is pressing on you? What’s preventing you from \_\_\_\_\_ ?
7. *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.***
- a. Since Philip has been so obedient, God whisks him away for more fruitful ministry

## 8. Application/Conclusion

- a. Everyone knows about the 5 second rule... but what about the 10 Second Rule
  - i. Do the next thing that you are reasonably certain Jesus wants you to do, immediately, before you change your mind, within the next 10 seconds.
- b. Obedience leads to:
  - i. Personal spiritual growth - knowing Jesus
  - ii. Fruit and results - seeing God move in your life and others' lives
- c. **Be Sensitive to Listen**
  - i. Pray as you read the Bible
  - ii. Be open to promptings from the Spirit of God
    1. Colleen's story
  - iii. Allow yourself to be interrupted from YOUR agenda
- d. **Be Aggressive to Act**
  - i. Some things you don't have to "pray about"
  - ii. Some things require immediate action
  - iii. Be aggressive. Be Bold. Be powerful in the Spirit.
  - iv. Testimony about missed opportunities
    1. *It makes me cry when I think about that poor woman. She was crying and shouting out for Jesus to help her. She was so hurt and angry and alone. All I had to do was go over there and show her some compassion and give her a hug or tell her that Jesus loves her. All I did was watch her walk by. That was 1999.*
    2. *How many times have the roles been reversed and people have reached out to me? And how many times have I been in her situation and no one even cared to help? I remember one time, when John told me that he wanted a divorce in 2004 I sat in a catholic church during a service. I couldn't help myself, I was crying so hard, audible, and just alone, leaning against a marble wall. People were sitting directly behind me, no one even offered me a tissue.*
    3. *So much for being an effective member of the body of Christ. Sometimes I think people expect to "hear" God's voice or specific instructions. But sometimes he's already given us the instructions "love one another" should be enough for anyone to get up off their butt and give someone a hug or tissue or a kind word.*
  - v. Sometimes we expect to hear specific marching orders (and sometimes we do), but other times God has already told us what to do.
  - vi. We need to be aggressive to seize the opportunities. No regrets.
  - vii. Train yourself to be sensitive to God by obedience
  - viii. **Be sensitive & aggressive**