

Every Part on Mission

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[0 : 0 0] man hey it's so good to see you guys um a few of you are like hey i saw you on a video which is a weird way to start a relationship so i'm glad we can meet in person taking us to the next level um yeah it is a huge joy and privilege to be with you um we love you guys i get to hear all kinds of updates all the time because i'm around jesse and haley and alan and shelly and everybody else but just a great privilege to be with you this morning in person my wife jill and our two boys jed and wyatt and our family's doing okay um we just they white wanted to sit with rory so it's not like we pushed him out over here um but um anyway it's so good to see you guys um we are going to continue this morning in this series that you guys have been in through the book of acts and if it's your first time joining us um we're really glad you're here and you can catch up if you wanted to if you wanted to watch like or watch or listen to like the previous sermons in the series you can do that on the app or on the website um but we're jumping in um this morning just a quick refresher acts is written by this guy named luke and luke's actually a doctor he's a physician um and and and so i kind of like that about luke he brings to uh to the table when he's writing he brings this he's very detail oriented he's thought through intentionally um what details much like a doctor would you know in the way that a doctor charts things and so um luke actually writes two books uh the first one is called luke um and if it's in the new testament there's matthew mark luke and john um is how the new testament starts and those are four gospels we call them and they're really the the life and ministry and death and resurrection of jesus um and so these are four different um historical accounts and luke writes one of them um the gospel of luke and then he writes a second book the book of acts and um and these aren't meant to be seen as two completely separate things um they're meant to be seen as a prequel and a sequel um and and we know that because luke starts off the the book of acts in verse one he says in my first book you know i i i wrote about all that jesus began to do and teach and it's his way of segueing from his first book into a second book and saying and now we're gonna we're gonna look at what jesus is continuing to do and teach and and what he meant by that is we we we see the birth of the church um that the body of christ as is called in scripture um that we are the hands and feet of jesus we are in we see the church empowered by the holy spirit comes to life and it's filled with purpose and and and roles and responsibilities and opportunities to love and serve each other and love and serve the world around them um and so this whole thing starts and it's not just a historical that's what the church was it's it's meant for us to be that's what the church is because we are part of this continuation of what jesus is continuing to do in the world and so it's it's just a phenomenal book um and we spent a last kind of six or so weeks um looking at all kinds of different um aspects of this the the body of christ what does the body do we call it the body in motion because um like our human bodies um this body the body of christ the church has a purpose it it has roles and so um it's been just i think a great series to to look at our own roles and and appreciate the roles of others and just see really what church is supposed to be so as we've been working through this story um we've gotten to a part where um things have gotten hard it starts off with a just an amazing you know uh kind of revival thousands of people get saved in this one day and they're they're experiencing favor with everybody life is good um in fact you get to acts four and they're they're sharing their stuff there's people who had stuff sold that stuff and gave that money to help people who did i mean it's just this crazy amazing generous community everyone's loving each other everything's awesome and then things get hard um there's their experience experience some like division and they work through that and then after they work through that they experience persecution so there's struggle from the inside and now there's there's struggle from the outside and so we're kind of picking up

into this story um one of the leaders stephen has just been killed um for his proclamation of of the gospel his his refusal to back down who jesus is so it's a tough time persecution has broke out

against the church and we're picking up in acts chapter 8 um in verse 26 through 40 now an angel of the lord said to philip philip was one of the leaders in the church 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 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 was reading the prophet isaiah and the spirit said to philip go over and join this chariot so philip ran ran to him and heard him reading isaiah the prophet and asked do you understand what you're reading and he said well how can i unless someone guides him and he invited philip to come up and sit with him now the passage of scripture that he was reading was this quote like a sheep he was led to the slaughter and like a lamb before it shears is silent so he opens not his mouth and his humiliation justice was denied him who who can describe his generation for his life was taken away from the earth and the eunuch said to him about whom i ask you does the prophet say this is it about himself or is it about someone else and philip opened his mouth and beginning with this scripture he told him the good news about jesus as they were going along the road they came to some water and the eunuch said see here's water with the exclamation point because as you remember reading a while ago they're in the desert and so this is a surprise to this eunuch he's like hey we're in the middle of the desert there's water and he goes well what prevents me from being baptized and he commanded the chariot to stop and they both went down into the water and philip and the eunuch and he baptized him and they came up out of the water and the spirit of the lord carried philip away and the eunuch saw him no more and he went on this 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 let's just deal with that last little little tidbit there before we move on because some of you are like whoa wait what um yeah so this is crazy essentially philip got teleported like 20 miles away right it'd be like these guys do a baptism here and jesse disappears and shows up you know in harlow or something like it would be noteworthy it would be uh something to talk about but the reality is that's about all we know and it's amazing but it's not really the point of the sermon so um what is the point of the sermon well i think this this passage of scripture i i've always thought like man this is like the like one of the best if not the best uh passages to help us learn how to be good personal missionaries those of us who are followers of jesus how to how to share the gospel and and and love people around us and share the gospel with them and um and uh and luckily for me it's not just me who thinks that um uh this is a michael green who's a new testament scholar he says he thinks the primary reason that luke this this physician who's detailing this whole historical account he says he thinks the primary reason that luke includes this story of the ethiopian eunuch was to teach the value of personal one-on-one evangelism evangelism and to show how it could be done that literally this is the reason this is in the bible it's because it's it's so uh it's so um yeah it showed this so well and so um just quickly for those of you who might be here or watching this or listening to this who aren't yet followers of jesus you're just kind of checking this whole thing out or uh you you came to town for thanksgiving and next thing you know your family's like yeah well you ate the ham now you have to come to church um ham is better than turkey we'll just get that out of the way um but if that's if that's you um man we're so glad you're here um and i hope this morning that you're helped as well and you know understanding who this jesus is um that we love so much um but i would say this i think if i if i was you and i wasn't yet a follower of jesus i would probably be perplexed why do christians feel like they have to tell everybody about jesus why do they feel like they always have to share the gospel with me and try to get me to come to church what's the point here you know and um i think that's a great question um it's here's what here's what it's not christianity is not like a pyramid scheme you know where like if i tell 10 friends and they tell 10 friends and they tell 10 friends you know i get like a bigger house in heaven um that's like not what's going on here um actually the reason that christians tell other people about jesus is because jesus has been so good to us um and um in fact the more that we are aware of his goodness to us the more that we want to tell people about him uh one of my heroes charles spurgeon he says this it's a little cheeky but he says um i won't believe you tasted the honey of the gospel if you're content to eat it all by yourself it's like a good restaurant like you can't shut up about it you want to tell everybody about it well that's that's really that gets at the kernel of what's going on here jesus has been so good to us and so we want to tell everybody about it it's not a pyramid scheme it's just man we just we can't help ourselves um and really in this way every christian is meant to be a missionary or um meant to to have a mission that's that's really what we're calling this this sermon every every body part on mission um now maybe you're here

and you've been a christian a long time you never thought of yourself as a missionary you think i know i know of a missionary i've supported missionaries and they're in places like the middle east and they're in places like china they're in places like africa and that makes total sense because we definitely we really need missionaries there but you've never thought about yourself as a missionary you know but you're a follower of jesus maybe you've actually never thought well this is not really a place that needs missionaries i mean if i was in china i guess i'd be a missionary but here you know and so it's a good question to ask what kind of a place needs missionaries i would say places that are filled with darkness and sadness and you know problems only jesus can fix check check check right we're checking all those boxes right people worshipping crazy things that can't deliver check you know like all the all the things when we boil it down to what is a place that needs missionaries it's here it's actually everywhere um and and so and we we want to we want to make a difference as as a church in our community we want we want to fill this whole this whole area with the gospel and that requires not just church services it requires missionaries um where we live is beautiful but it's broken and maybe you're not from here maybe you you know a lot of folks have moved in over the last few years um after covid and all the rest and you know um they move here because this place is so beautiful and it can be in this sense like idyllic you know doesn't have the struggles of like big cities like raleigh or whatever you know and then you get here and realize oh no it's just like everywhere else hard sad crazy stuff people battling addiction people battling depression just yeah all kinds of hard sad stuff um i'm a i'm a chaplain uh for moorhead um firing ems and i do stuff with you know police department all the rest there and um you know i i am from moorhead there's a there's a book about moorhead and my mom as a little girl my dad are on the cover of the book i like i'm just like moorhead as it can get but it was not until i started running all these ems calls that i realized how much really goes on i mean it's you know i've run four or five overdoses in a day just in moorhead you know it's amazing how many hard sad things are happening in these beautiful places that we call home and those places those problems are problems only jesus can heal and those that means we need missionaries we don't just need churches and church services so how do we learn from this story how to be a good missionary if you're here and you're a follower of jesus that's that's the hope of this passage uh in this sermon um so we're just going to go through this um and just pull some stuff out of it the

first thing is in verse 26 and in verse 29 two really supernatural things happen the first of which being um philip gets woken up by an angel and told to get up and go to the south you know down to like this this road from jerusalem to gaza in the middle of the desert and then verse 29 the holy spirit says to philip go over and join that chariots these two things happen right and what do we see philip doing here he's he's a follower of jesus but he's not like you know living his best life now over here plotting his own course just you know living life no no he's he's led by the spirit he's obedient to the spirit and so i think that's a first thing for us if you want to be a good missionary good missionaries are obedient to the holy spirit's leading they're obedient to the holy spirit's leading now maybe you're saying well it'd be easy i guess donnie if an angel woke me up yeah and also might freak you out so be careful what you wish for you know um and i guess i guess that's true like if an angel was like get up get up you know you got to go to you know james city there's a guy there you're gonna i guess that would be easier but actually we have the same holy spirit the same holy spirit that spoke to philip that same god who did this lives in us he's in you he's in you everywhere you go every single day today when you leave here no matter where you go where you live you got to go to the grocery store you're going out for lunch whatever you're doing your neighborhood every single detail everywhere you go god the holy spirit who's in you knows every detail about all those people which is crazy to get your head around it's wild it's wild to think about that and that that he's he's got a plan to use you and me in the same way that he had a plan to use philip here that he's always doing this um we had a crazy situation recently uh our family we go on vacation once a year we save up all our miles we go down to mexico this little town and you know you get down there for free and then it's pretty much free once you're there and and so we but we like going like we like to go on family adventures and um we found all these little beaches through the years at this one spot but you kind of got to get off the beaten path and so we're headed to one of these beaches and the gps kept routing us this road that we had never been down before and it kept taking it we kept resetting it kept taking us there it kept resetting it kept taking us there i was like well you know like maybe they've changed up the roads here significantly you know it'd been a year since we've been there and but it just the road kept getting worse and worse until the point where it was like we were trapped on this like very very very dangerous mountain road now luckily we were in a huge um

all-terrain vehicle known as the kia minivan um that sits near on three inches off the ground um and uh and we end up on a single lane mountain road like drop drop offs on either side at one point i had to get our family out of the car because there was only room for like three wheels to go across this one spot not four i mean it's gnarly it was crazy and we actually end up stuck on this mountain road and have to abandon our van in the desert no cell phone service with our kids right and you're like man i thought you were a good dad i was wrong um and so we get our kids we start praying we look at we like i still had an ability to see the map on my phone because i hadn't turned it off and i could see that it was 10 or so miles through the desert this way towards any kind of civilization like up and down mountains and then it was like you could go up and over hill like about a mile or so down to this giant like estate on the beach and but it was clearly like a private massive compound well that was that was our best shot and so we start walking to this thing and it's like it's like scary walking like trying not to fall rock sliding everything and the whole way we're walking this i'm thinking you know this is not really the kind of place in mexico you sneak up on you know like um and um and so we're getting closer you can see this giant estate and they've got like a whole field of like solar panels i mean they're living off the grid big signs that say like private property walls and walls and fences and barbed wire all that stuff and here we come like walking through their backyard essentially up over this hill and we're like hands up and i'm pushing like jill and the kids out front because they're cute and no one's going to shoot them i mean i would shoot me if you saw me you know like um and so you know we're saying help in spanish we're like coming up on this little spot and um crazy story this couple was there this family who were they're americans and um they had just gotten there two days before they bought this brand new home they had just gotten the wi-fi installed but it was going to be taken down the following day you had to literally sit by a palm tree in the yard in a chair to get on wi-fi and we were able to get on the wi-fi and and contact some of our friends uh in new mexico that we've known through the years who were able to come and rescue us and help us get our van off the mountain and all that um but but this family for a couple hours hosted us and kept bringing us food and they kept asking us questions and we just kept saying you know your god's answer to prayer we prayed that god would send help we told our kids like our god will send help he will rescue us and he did it through you and i could tell they were like yeah but you know like it wasn't really like they they thought that was what was happening you know um and we interacted with them a little bit more over the rest of the trip we brought them some fish that you know i just we kept trying to you know pay them back after you know because really they saved our lives no exaggeration and um cool story anyway uh fast forward a couple days after we get back from mexico i get an email and the couple who we'd stayed at their home we've been at their home that that day the husband's mom had figured out who i was and got my email address and emailed me to say listen sounds like something really scary and hard like happened to your family i'm glad you're okay she said but here's the thing i've been praying for years that my kids would meet jesus she's like and i don't know what happened to you but somehow god sent you like to my kids in the middle of nowhere in mexico and they can't stop talking about you guys like they keep saying like yeah they were praying and like like like they're like man this is like made an impact on them and i just got another email from the mom the other day you know and it's just wild that like i mean i would have i would preferred god to say hey here's a nice road to this nice place i don't know why he had to throw the whole scary mountain thing in there but like it's just wild you start to think about that god like the holy spirit he saw that family sitting on that beach and they're like they're a little safe little world here away from everything you know living their best life and he's like nope i'm gonna send people right into their backyard it's like show them who i am it's just incredible um so we just see this intentionality we see act 17 says this that god made from one man every nation of mankind but he determined allotted periods and boundaries times and places of their dwelling place which means everywhere you go god knew exactly where you're going to be and he's dropped you like a gps pin there and so he's got a purpose that he wants to work through you and me he's put his spirit inside of us i think that the trick for us is to be obedient like philip and that takes some courage and you don't always get it right by the way i mean one time i i thought god told me to get on the table at a taco bell and preach the gospel and i did it and no one responded it was weird all my friends were like we're done with you um um so you don't always get it right and i mean i might get to heaven and go oh look all of them got saved i just didn't know but um but the point is of being obedient to it right being willing to to step out in faith and actually listen uh follow the holy spirit so you might find yourself at the grocery store today you look over and there's somebody who's like man god i feel like you want me to go and say

something well there it is okay next thing we see is how philip does it so uh the eunuch says well who's this about this is about the prophet is about somebody else and philip opened his mouth and beginning with this scripture he told him the good news about jesus um and this scripture wasn't like john 3 16 it wasn't like he was sitting there reading you know for god so loved the world he gave his only son who's this about you know um it's isaiah it's isaiah 53 and so i think we see some skill set here that i think

[20 : 12] is good for us to look at and so that that's that's the second point is good missionaries are skilled at pointing people to jesus they're skilled they've got some skills they've developed i think there's some things you can actually learn you can actually learn how to be a good missionary you can learn and we see some of these skills here the first one is his ability to seemingly take any text in the bible and point to jesus like i think i think the i think the unit could have been reading anything and philip can be like let's do this it was clear that philip had done some pre-season work here he had been working in the off season looking at the old testament and seeing how it pointed to jesus and and and he was able to connect those dots and that's a good skill to learn it's a good skill to learn to know how to how to point people to jesus from any passage of scripture the second little skill we see here that's really good one is philip ask a good question philip says do you understand what you're reading what philip could have done was gone he goes up the chair the guy's reading isaiah he's like whoa my bad clearly you've got it all figured out you're reading isaiah what am i even doing here i mean i thought god told me to come over this is crazy sorry he didn't settle for the fact the guy was reading isaiah he asked an engaging question do you understand this and sometimes we settle too quick oh you go to church on easter my bad i'm sure you got it all figured out instead of going hey do you understand do you know what you're like he asked an engaging question he draws the guy out and the third thing and maybe i'm taking some license here but i don't think so he gets in this guy's chariot and i'm drawing this out because we see jesus do the same thing he gets in people's boats he gets in zacchaeus's house there's something about getting into this place that someone else is comfortable and a lot of times us as followers of jesus we want to draw people into our comfort zone come to our church come to the church office come to my house instead of being willing to get into their comfort zone and i'll just tell you personal experience for me has backed this up that people are far more open when they're in a spot that they're comfortable i mean i've had friends who i tried for years to share the gospel with them over coffee at the church office nah i mean there's almost nothing more intimidating than like a wall of commentaries you know um and then they say hey you want to go hunting you want to go fishing and within five minutes in the boat or in the blind boom they're pouring their heart out because that's their comfort zone that's where they're comfortable and so i just i think there's some we see there's something about being in someone's comfort zone asking good questions that often leads to open hearts and we see that here and we see that all throughout the scriptures and i think it's something that you and i see in our lives as well the next thing we see is uh philip gets dropped somewhere else he's he gets dropped in azotus and then he preaches the gospel all the all the towns he comes to caesarea and i think that and the rest of this chapter here shows us the third thing which is that good missionaries are willing to take the gospel to anyone anywhere at any time anyone we see throughout this chapter we haven't had time to look at this morning but it starts off with the gospel getting preached to a bunch of samaritans which i mean if you know anything about these people groups the the the jews did not like the samaritans and and so now that they're taking the gospel to these people that they have historically hated and not liked it would be uh akin to americans you know taking the gospel to people in the middle east possibly or you know north korea or something like that just think about people that we just tend to go you know as americans it's that kind of like racial subcultural thing here and then then then the gospel goes to a guy who's a magician and that's not like ta-da like a magician that's like a guy who was like um who would have likely been you know possessed by demons um really like i mean someone you would have gone no way no how so that's the second person and now you've got this ethiopian eunuch you've got three in this one chapter three crazy different people that that um philip's bringing the gospel to the second thing we see is the gospel he's willing to take gospel anywhere he's doing it in

jerusalem then he does it in samaria now he's out in the desert then azotus then these other towns in caesarea anywhere um uh it's actually it's interesting this uh this idea of this ethiopian eunuch because ethiopia in ancient literature was considered the ends of the earth as far as anyone could imagine ethiopia was it that's like when you thought about the ends of the earth it's ethiopia and in

this very chapter you've got samaria and ethiopia being reached it's the very thing that jesus said would happen right he said in acts chapter 1 verse 8 this is what jesus said to them before he ascended he said you will receive power with the holy spirit which we've already seen the holy spirit at work in philip he's come he'll come upon you you'll be my witnesses it's what we see philip doing witnessing in jerusalem judea samaria and the ends of the earth and in this very chapter you see all that stuff happening jerusalem judea samaria the ends of the earth ethiopia right and so it's anyone it's anywhere and it's any time um and and any time piece i think you have to go back to the beginning of this chapter and look at why was philip on this little journey what got him out here in the first place it was persecution if you go back and look at acts chapter 8 verse 1 it says there arose on that day a great persecution against the church and they were scattered throughout the regions of judea and samaria they were chased out they were they were forced out except the apostles devout men buried stephen and great they made great lamentation over him they were they were sobbing they were devastated over the loss of their friend but saul who becomes paul saul was ravaging the church he's entering house after house and he's dragging off men and women that's a violent picture he's busting open doors he's dragging men and women out of the home and and the emphasis there on women because even in that moment it would that cultural moment it would have just been unthinkable to treat women this way and committed them to prison and those who were scattered went about preaching the word that's that's philip he's recently been made a homeless nomad because of persecution i think we can say that it was not a you know easy time to be a follower of jesus back then and i draw that out because i know that in recent years things have gotten harder for us here and we can find ourselves longing for the old days pining for the old days oh remember when you know back in the 50s or back in the 60s or back in so-and-so was president or back when that was going on back when that we can always be looking over our shoulder thinking oh those were the days and those were the days but um good missionaries they play the hand they're dealt and when the going gets tough tough missionaries get going phil wasn't sitting around pining for the old days oh i used to have a house my friend steven used to be alive he used to get to decide i wasn't woken up by angels and told where to go all the time he went about preaching the word he was obedient and so i'm just saying this because i know a lot has changed for us in the last several years and i've been we started one harbor um almost 14 years ago a lot has changed in those 14 years it has gotten more complicated it has it's gotten tougher it's gotten way tougher and so many respects but we gotta we gotta watch that we don't fall into the trap of looking over our shoulder longing for some this is the moment we're in and right now in this moment we're in the spirit of god is in us still that hasn't changed the gospel is still the same as it was and and the hopelessness that everyone around us is facing is hopelessness that only jesus is the hope for those things have not changed and so there's a sense in which i want to call us to just get on with it stop looking over your shoulder if that's you stop pining for old days and say jesus you put me right here right now you could put me in alive at any point in time this is when you've got me and you put me right here right now right um we don't lose the narrative of philip uh his life in this passage we it pushes pause and we only pick up on philip's life 20 years later in acts chapter 21 it says on the next day we departed

and came to caesarea remember that was the last town that philip was in when we found him in acts chapter 8 we entered the house of philip the evangelist man this to me is just so incredibly noteworthy philip wasn't some flash in the pan had a good moment then he was damp no he's so faithful i think this is one that we wouldn't maybe have thought of i wouldn't have thought of before but we need to we need to consider these things good missionaries never stop fighting for themselves in their quest to reach everyone with the gospel they never stop fighting for themselves 20 years later philip is still called the evangelist in fact he wasn't even called the evangelist in acts chapter 8 we just see him evangelizing and 20 years later they're going that's you you're an evangelist now um what's what's interesting here if you're if you if you um if you're a new follower of jesus you're probably like you're probably an evangelist you're probably just telling everybody you're witnessing to cats dogs squirrels grandmas everybody like you need jesus and you need jesus and you need jesus that's what happens we get so like yes we get so excited about jesus in those early days and then tragically bizarrely over time we start to cool off of that and to the point where it's almost like an old married couple when they see a new married couple and the new married couple is making out in public and you're like get a room you know like the old married couple can be like oh we remember those days you guys will don't worry you'll have a few fights you'll get over it that's such a cruel way to act by the way right but we can go oh yeah we remember

what it was like when we actually you know we're affectionate and oh you'll get over it in the same way sometimes it's like followers of Jesus over time we can start to look back at those kind of young just let's go get it let's tell everybody about Jesus oh you'll get over it you'll get over it you do a few bible studies you'll calm down isn't that crazy isn't that crazy to even think about 20 years later Phil's still going for it man he's still telling people about Jesus in fact they've now nicknamed him the evangelist he's placed roots down he's got a home we learned he's got a family he's got these four daughters he's still going for it now let me just say this kind of thing that we're that I'm drawing out here I would not have seen until recent years but I've lost a lot of friends along the way in these last 14 years some of my friends are no longer following Jesus and they were like leading churches some of them have you know their marriages have fallen apart they've they've walked away from you know faith it's crazy and I just find myself in recent years like I'm drawn to passages of scripture that were previously unhighlighted like this one like I just had never seen this another another great example is in first Corinthians 9 so if you've been at one harbor before we close the service by saying we're going to make disciples push back darkness all for the sake of the gospel yeah you guys some of you got it it's all right the turkey's still kicking in so it's gonna slow you down but um that passage like I love that passage that yes all for the sake of the gospel he's going to all people even by all means some might be saved like that whole thing but I had missed what Paul does next he doesn't just say I'm becoming all things to all men that by all means I might save some he's not just saying that right after he says all for the sake of the gospel the next thing he says is this in verse 24 of first Corinthians 9 do you not know then erase all runners run but only one receives a prize so run that you may obtain it every athlete exercises self-control in all things they do it to receive a perishable wreath but we an imperishable so Paul says I in this whole I'm doing all things for the sake of the gospel I don't run aimlessly I don't box as one beating the air I just put my body I keep it under control lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified he's saying look I'm not just passionate about reaching other people I'm passionate about making it to the end and listen this is this is like to me I just had never seen this really until the last couple of weeks that's in first Corinthians 9 okay remember how we had Philip who's in Acts 8 and then 20 years later in Acts 21 he's still the evangelist okay first Corinthians 9 we have Paul saying I don't box like this I don't fight like this I'm looking forward to this what do we see happen towards the end of Paul's life 10 or 12 years later Paul writes second Timothy and he gets to chapter 4 and he says this listen this is this is at the end of Paul's life I'm already being poured out as a drink offering Timothy the time my departure has come listen to what Paul says I have fought the good fight I have finished the race I have kept the faith henceforth for me has laid up a crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous judge will award to me on that day and not only to me but also to all who've loved his appearing I had never seen the connection these two passages Paul back in his sort of middle of life first Corinthians 9 wrestling all this is saying man I'm watching how I run I'm watching how I fight I'm box like someone beating the air and I'm I'm not thinking about a perishable wreath I'm thinking about an imperishable wreath and at the end of his life he says I did it that race I was trying to run I ran it that fight I was trying to fight I fought it that crown I was looking forward to I'm about to get it I'm about to get it I did it Philip made it to the end Paul made it to the end brothers and sisters we need to get excited about some passage of scripture like that we need to get excited about making it to the end of our race too many people are yeah walking away you don't have to you don't have to you can be an evangelist you can you can want everyone to get saved you can do everything for all for the sake of the gospel we can do all that stuff and you can fight for yourself you can do both of those both those things can be true and both those things should be true the last thing um that I want us to look at here as we start to kind of look to close is this passage this this if you don't get anything else you got to get this in fact if you get everything else you don't get this it won't work let's just reread this passage that the eunuch was reading like a sheep he was led to the slaughter like a lamb before it shears is silent so he opens not his mouth and his humiliation justice was denied him in fact who can describe his generation his legacy his family his life was taken away from the earth he didn't get to sit on a rocking chair watching his grandkids his life was taken away who's this about himself or someone else Philip opened his mouth and beginning with the scripture he told him the good news about Jesus man a lot of things we learn here about being a good missionary this is I think the most important good missionaries never stopped being amazed by Jesus man he had lost his home he lost his friends he didn't know where all his buddies were they'd been scattered they didn't have like some Facebook check-in safe like I'm safe in Samaria like he had no idea as far as he knew he was never going to see him again as far as they knew they were

never going to see him again and philip with all that changed one thing has not changed he still loved telling people how good jesus was the good news was still good news to him if philip is a good missionary in the bible there's another missionary that's a bad one his name was jonah it's a short little book in the old testament if you want to go read it and jonah is essentially a bad missionary because he knew a lot about god in his head but he'd forgotten a lot about god in his heart he knew that god was kind and forgiving and slow to anger all those things in his head but he'd forgotten that god had been like that to him and my friends that is a dangerous place to be and too many followers of jesus get there too many of us grow into jonah's not philip's over time we gain head knowledge head knowledge head knowledge head knowledge we do bible studies and book studies and all these things and we obsess over facts that stay in our head about god and never make it to our heart and we get worse on the inside jonah was worse for his knowledge he was he was self-righteous he was judgmental he didn't want to see his enemies forgiven he he got worse on the inside that's a that's that's that's not a good missionary head knowledge about god is dangerous without heart knowledge who god how this god has been good to you and so i'm asking you is the good news still good news to you or has it become old news to you like come on man give me something i can use what's this easter or something man is it still good news the the the best the best way to kind of i think the best rocket fuel for going out and telling people about how good jesus is it's not we show you slide after slide of facts after facts about all the hard sad things going on in newburn and around the area i think that that's that's fine it's not bad to do that but the best rocket fuel i know is to is for you to see again how good jesus has been to you nothing will like rekindle that fire like that there's a quote from this book um written by dane orland that i think just just does a great job here it might even help you to close your eyes i'm just going to read this short quarter you know and just just sometimes it helps me to close my eyes so i can just ponder um he says this it is the son of christ heart not the clouds of my sins that now define me we who are in christ who are followers of jesus we listen to this statement brothers and sisters we no longer look to the future for judgment we look to the past think about that are you consciously aware of that that if you died right now it wouldn't you're not looking forward to judgment you're looking over your shoulder he says at the cross we see our punishment happening all all our sins being punished in jesus like a sheep he was led to the slaughter like a lamb before it shears is silently open not his mouth justice was denied and we look back not forward our sins and the punishment we we deserved it was punished in jesus he goes on and quotes jonathan edwards he says god's love is an ocean without shores or bottom god's love is an ocean without shores or bottom it's endless his love for you is endless his forgiveness toward you is endless his grace toward you is endless his mercy toward you is endless and he concludes by saying this this is the greatest news in the history of the world why do we tell people about jesus because he is so unbelievably good because there's nothing like him there's no one like him hey if you're here or you're watching or listening to this and you're not yet a follower of jesus first of all i commend you for being here you might have been forced to be here by your family you still came takes courage to do that um let me just say this um this is not really a story about being a good missionary i know i said it was but it's like it is and it's not because it's mostly like every other story in the bible it's mostly about a good god that's really what it's about i mean philip's great but like he didn't want to do this on his own god made him do it you know let me just tell you a few things about this passage i think might be interesting for you if you're not yet a follower of jesus the first one is going to sound like a nerdy bible fact but it's not it's that uh in the in this chapter you have a big chunk of scripture devoted to this this this this the gospel going to these people the samaritans this whole big passage here

[40 : 23] it's a lot of scripture but it makes sense because a lot of people like many many many samaritans believe towns of these people start becoming followers of jesus so it feels noteworthy if we're if we're luke we're like writing that one down like oh that's got to go in there right it's this big chunk of scripture here then you go over to this the second half of this chapter and almost the exact same amount of scripture is used to talk about one guy one guy now why is that even worth thinking about because this god doesn't just see us as crowds of people he sees individuals he doesn't just care about crowds he cares about one he cared about these towns of samaritans believing and he cared about this eunuch on his chariot going through the desert all by himself and god said i see him and he sees you what did he see well he's we don't know a lot about him but we know something he was an ethiopian he was a eunuch he didn't fit the mold safe to say in fact if he was an actual eunuch there is evidence that the new the old testament would have had scriptures that

prohibited him from even entering the the the the area the temple to worship and so he might have made that whole distance and had to stand on the outside he does this long journey hundreds of miles to the desert he goes to this service he's coming back he's reading isaiah he has no idea what he's reading he's this gentile i think there's evidence that he wanted god but it seems to be evidence he wasn't sure if god wanted him maybe you're like him trying to be a good person maybe even you're here today because you're just trying to just go through the motions and trying to figure out who god is the amazing thing is that god sees exactly where you're at god saw that eunuch in the middle of the desert and god sees you right where you're at and another amazing thing is if that's you and you're here you're not here because of you you're actually here because of him this god this god sees you he knows everything about you and he wanted you here today he wants you to he wants you to know who he is god sees right where you're at and um he wants right in on your story sometimes we do this thing where you think i gotta get this together i gotta quit this sin i gotta do that i gotta if i change all these things if i quit those habits if i get 30 days without that addiction then i can come i just love that the eunuch had no time to clean up his mess again maybe some license here but i don't think so this chariot sounds really great a chariot yeah imagine living in that thing for like weeks and months as you travel through a hot desert there's no wet wipes there's no hand sanitizer there's no deodorant i don't think this thing smelled amazing i think it was probably pretty disgusting but the eunuch was used to it because it was his mess and here philip jumps into this stinky chariot man i think it's just a great illustration of what god does with us he's not like oh if you clean that chariot up i'll come over there but you got to get your mess sorted out first god knows how messy your life is he knows how stinky stuff really is like on the outside it looks like a chariot on the inside he knows what's really going on and god wants in on your mess that's this god he doesn't just see a crowd of people who are going oh looks like these guys are fine he sees you every single one of you and the ones of you who are like i don't know if i really believe this i don't know if you really want me he sees you he knows your mess and he's like i want in on that don't clean up a thing let me in just let me in without you man it would be such an honor for us to talk with you and pray with you this morning we'll hang around here at the end um for those of us who are already followers of jesus as the band comes up you've got these little cups and if you wouldn't mind just kind of grabbing those and carefully peeling this back we should

be good at this by now look my guess is that you have probably felt to some degree this morning a bit like oh i mean some of you are like i'm killing it this is great probably some of us are like man i don't know i feel like i've kind of dropped the ball on this or man i've lost this or i don't know if i was ever like this maybe your excitement maybe the things you're most excited about telling other people about are just very different to this this is not where we come to be guilted into action guilt is a is a powerful motivator we could do that it's just not the best motivator the best motivator is grace and that's what we find when we come to this meal we don't find a meal of guilt we find a meal of grace there's no way to this like if you really behold this that's all it is it's a meal of grace a meal we didn't deserve it was startling for the disciples to even hear it wait what what what your body broken for us your blood shed for us that is this meal my friends god's love toward you now is an is an ocean without shores or bottom paul says it's christ's love that compels us that's what should send us out the doors running telling everyone about it is the love of the love of god that has been shown into our hearts as we just beheld him man we were lost broken and hopeless and far from god and god came and he lived a life we couldn't live he died a death was sacrificial in our place he paid for our sins he shouts it is finished and he dies and he bursts out of the grave and he gives us new life he secures for us an eternity this is the greatest news in the history of the world but before we run out the doors to share it we just behold it again take a second just say jesus thank you for your love for me jesus remind my friends of your love for them in a personal real way restore to us that joy of our salvation how incredibly good you are punished for us punished for us suffered and died for us denied justice for us thank you for your love jesus for us
Amen.