Don’t Sleep on It!
Acts 8:26-40

Preview: God is clearly at work here, but the story turns out as it did because two men obey.

1. Rule 1: when God commands, we reject pragmatism.
   a. Pragmatism says “do whatever you think should bring the best results.”
   b. God’s first command is all kinds of “non-sensical.”
      i. Philip is north of Jerusalem, likely on his way further north to Caesarea (see vs. 40 and Acts 21:8). God says go south.
      ii. Philip is effectively evangelizing populous cities. He’s told to go to a desert place.
      iii. Why would you evangelize a deserted place?
   c. God’s unrevealed reasons:
      i. A well-respected man who desires God is on his way out of town.
      ii. He’s headed to Ethiopia (then south of Egypt), known as “the ends of the earth.” (See Acts 1:8)
   d. Caution: don’t assume that you can always figure out “why” if you try hard enough.

As God said through the prophet Isaiah, “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.” (Isaiah 55:8–9 ESV)

2. Rule 2: we must obey even when its awkward.
   a. Philip, a common man, is accosting a high-ranking official.
      i. Candace was a title given the Queen Mother, who basically ran the entire country for her son.
      ii. Philip is interrupting his reading, presuming to teach an obviously learned man.
   b. Many of us are rarely so bold.
      i. “Never discuss religion or politics.”
      ii. “Don’t be ‘judgmental.’”
   c. The eunuch cannot understand without help.

“How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?” (Romans 10:14 ESV)

   d. God doesn’t make suggestions that we can opt out of if they make us uncomfortable.

3. Rule 3: delayed obedience is disobedience.
   a. Or, “you obey the first time you are commanded.”
   b. The Eunuch is immediately baptized, which was always commanded alongside repentance.
ii. There is no NT classification for a non-baptized believer.
iii. The eunuch does not wait to throw a party or invite his friends. He does not take a test or pass a class.
   c. Obedience is not to be done when it is most pleasing and convenient for us.

4. What is the good news?
   a. That although the penalty for sin is death (Rom. 6:23), and we all sin (Rom. 3:23), God made a way for us to be made right again.
   b. The suffering servant foretold in Isaiah 53 is Jesus.
   c. He was perfect, and thus did not deserve death, but he offered himself to death to pay our penalty (Rom. 5:8).
   d. Anyone who is included in Christ is thus forgiven (Rom. 8:1)

   As 2 Corinthians puts it, “For our sake [God] made him to be sin who knew no sin (Jesus), so that in [Jesus] we might become the righteousness of God.” (2 Corinthians 5:21 ESV)
   e. Anyone who is joined with Christ is included into God’s love and favor.
      i. The eunuch’s physical mutilation prevented him from entering God’s temple (Deut. 23:1).
      ii. To fully convert to Judaism required circumcision and thus was unavailable to him as well.
      iii. But “why shouldn’t I be baptized?” There’s no reason why!

5. What is baptism?
   a. Not a method for removing guilt (1 Pet. 3:21)
   b. Act to signify repentance.
   c. Mark of entrance into the faith.
   d. Identification with the burial and resurrection of Jesus.
   e. The old me is dead and buried, the new me lives!
   f. Something all Christians do.
   g. To not be baptized is to disobey God’s command.
      i. What about…a past baptism under certain circumstances?
      ii. Let your conscience be your guide.
      iii. Your salvation doesn’t depend on how well you understood theology.
      iv. If you were baptized to any degree as a mark of proclaiming Christian identity, don’t worry about doing it again!
      v. (If in doubt, remember Jesus never said, “thou shalt not be baptized twice!”)

6. Final thoughts:
   a. The eunuch went away rejoicing over his inclusion into Christ.
      i. If the “good news about Jesus” doesn’t seem that good to you, you aren’t understanding it properly.
   b. God sent Philip back on his way, without delay.
      i. You will never miss out on something more important by obeying God.
ii. It is never a “waste of time” to stop and obey God.

When the clock stops ticking for you, which of the following will please God?

i. “Sorry God, but I didn’t think that would work.”

ii. “Sorry God, but you don’t get it, people just don’t do things like that.”

iii. “Sorry God, I didn’t have the time.”

iv. “You know God, I was going to get around to that someday.”

v. “But the Huskers were playing!”

When God commands, don’t sleep on it. Just obey.

**For Next Week**

**Read**

Philippians 2:12-18

**Consider**

Is there a difference between striving to “not be a bad person” vs. striving to “become blameless and pure?”

Verse 14 tells us how to become blameless and pure: namely, that as God works in us to act according to his will, we “do everything without complaining or arguing.” Does this surprise you? Why/why not?

On a scale of 1 (I obey begrudgingly when forced to) to 10 (I delight in obeying every command of God), where do you fall? Why?

**Discuss**

Share with a fellow believer one time last week where you knew how God wanted you to act and you disobeyed. Then share one instance where you knew He wanted you to act and you obeyed.

**Pray**

Ask God to give you a stronger desire to obey him, and to train you to delight to obey his every command.

**Do**

Write down one action that you know God wants you to do this week. Then go obey!