

Working with God

INRODUCTION:

- A. Of the some, 2,930 Bible characters, some of them are well known . . . others are lesser known.
1. Permit me to re-introduce you to some of the most famous and well-known men in all the Bible. Perhaps you will thrill at hearing their names called again.

a. Shammua . . . Sham uh	f. Gaddi . . . Gad igh
b. Shaphat . . . Shay fat	g. Ammiel . . . Am ih el
c. Igal . . . Igh gal	h. Sethur . . . See thur
d. Palti . . . Pal tigh	i. Nahbi . . . Nah bee
e. Gaddiel . . . Gad de ul	j. Geuel . . . Gee you ul
 2. Is there some confusion in name and placement recognition here?
 - a. Each of these men were leaders, heads of one of the tribes of Israel.
 - b. Each of these men were faithful in carrying out God's mission for them.
 - c. Each of them became a leader without faith . . . but not without influence.
 - d. Would it help me to tell you that these famous men in the Bible may me more familiar to you as the 10 of the 12 spies of Israel that spied out the land of Canaan? Caleb and Joshua being the remaining two of the twelve.
 - e. You did not recognize them by name . . . but remembered them for their failure of faith. **Numbers 13:3** – “. . . Men who were heads of the children of Israel.”
 - f. Although identified as the Ten Spies, they are individually named in the Bible.
 - g. **Isn't it interesting that we tend to remember them for what they failed to do rather than what they did do.**
 1. They were willing to work with God . . . Up to a point.
 2. They were willing to refuse God's work . . . When they wanted to.
 3. They do some good . . . But we remember what they did not do.
 3. Do we not see a similar situation at work in the lives of brothers and sisters in the Lord's Church today?
- B. Lesson Text: 4th case example of conversion in the Book of Acts: **Acts 8:26-40**
- C. There is nothing more exciting than to be used by God to lead someone to Him . . . Or to do whatever needs to be done in the Lord's work.
1. In our lesson text, Philip had the advantage of an angel of the Lord telling him go to the deserted area between Jerusalem and Gaza (60 miles between the two).

Obviously, God does not send an angel to give us such a directive today, but there is no denying that many times things work too well to be mere coincidence.

2. Either way, it is important to take advantage of the opportunity handed to you by God.
- D. In our study today, let's revisit our lesson text and through Philip learn more about working with God.
- E. **Work** – Physical or mental activity directed toward the accomplishment of a task; the labor by which a person earns his livelihood.”
1. What is the work of God? What is the work of the Church? The work of the church is the work of God.
 - a. Evangelism – to **preach** Christ.
 - b. Benevolence – To **practice** Christ.
 - c. Edification – to **personify** Christ.
 2. **Listening friends, it is very possible to spend so much time doing “Church work” that we fail to do the work of the Church.**
 3. **Ephesians 3:10** – “The manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church.”
 4. There is something for everyone to do in the cause of Christ among men. Every age has its place in God's work.
 5. About **25%** of the members assume **100%** of the responsibility in local congregations.
 - a. Another report said about **8%** of the members do all the work within the local congregation.
 - b. Averaged together those two numbers are only **16.5%**

TO WORK FOR GOD, ONE MUST TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OPPORTUNITIES.

A. BE AVAILABLE

1. One of the biggest challenges in life is learning to be available.
2. Students fail in school because they do not make themselves available for proper study and instruction.
3. Husbands and wives break up because they stop making themselves available to each other.
4. Employees lose their employment because their lack of availability to the company who needs their time and expertise in manufacturing a product or rendering a service.
5. There are probably opportunities all around us wherein we could share the gospel with others . . . except for the fact that we are unaware of them because we haven't made ourselves available.
6. What might have happened if Philip had not made himself available?

7. What might have happened if Ananias didn't make himself available to talk to Paul?
8. Brethren, be available for opportunities to be used of God.

B. BE KNOWLEDGEABLE

1. One of the biggest things Philip had going for Him was his familiarity with the Scripture that the Eunuch was reading.
2. It is said that God's people today do not know His word as thoroughly as we ought to know it.
3. **Amos 8:10-11** – "I will turn your feasts into mourning, And all your songs into lamentation; I will bring sackcloth on every waist, And baldness on every head; I will make it like mourning for an only son, And its end like a bitter day. Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord GOD, **That I will send a famine on the land, Not a famine of bread, Nor a thirst for water, But of hearing the words of the LORD.**"
4. There were times in this country when many denominational preachers would tell their people not to engage a member of the Lord's church in a discussion of the Bible. Brethren, we were known as a people of the Book.
 - a. We don't study the Bible like we should.
 - b. We study about the Bible.
 - c. We study topics and refer to the Bible.
 - d. But we really don't dig into the Scriptures like we used to do.
5. How can I teach someone about Christ and about salvation if I don't know what I am talking about?
 - a. **2 Timothy 2:15** – "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."
 - b. **The King James translation renders it.** "Study to show yourself approved unto God, a worker that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth."
 - c. **Matthew 7:7** – "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you."
 - d. **1 Peter 3:15** – "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear."

C. BE WILLING

1. Most important of all, it was Philip's willingness to drop everything and go down to the road the eunuch would be traveling on.
2. What if he had said no?
3. You can have opportunities right in front of you everyday, but unless you are willing to act on them, they are just wasted opportunities . . . and possibly . . . just possibly . . . wasted souls as well.

4. Two great Biblical attitudes:

- a. Isaiah: **Isaiah 6:8** – “Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: ‘Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?’” Then I said, ‘**Here am I! Send me.**’”
- b. Samuel: **1 Samuel 3:9** – “**...Speak LORD, for Your servant hears . . .**”

WHY IS IT THAT SOME PEOPLE REFUSE TO TAKE AN ACTIVE PART IN THE LORD’S WORK?

A. For some it may be due a lack of knowledge.

1. In which case they need to be taught.
2. They need to be shown how.
3. They need to be encouraged.

B. For some it may be due to a perceived lack of ability.

1. In which case they need to carefully assess the abilities God has given them.
2. They may need to worked with as they endeavor to do various things for the Lord.
3. We all have aptitudes . . . strengths . . . and weaknesses.
 1. What we can do for the Lord . . . We need to be doing it.
 2. What we can’t do . . . we need at least to attempt to learn how to do it.

C. For some it may be due to being afraid . . . Afraid of being embarrassed . . .

Afraid of failing . . . Afraid of not doing as well as others, etc. Through managed efforts, fear can be overcome.

1. Early on that may be understandable . . . But at the same time we need to learn that God can help us deal with our fears.
 - a. **Psalms 53:5** – “There they are in great fear Where no fear was . . .”
 - b. **Psalms 56:4** – “In God (I will praise His word). In God I have put my trust; I will not fear. What can flesh do to me?”
 - c. **Psalms 64:9** – “All men shall fear , And shall declare the work of God; For they shall wisely consider His doing.”
 - d. **Hebrews 13:6** – “So we may boldly say: ‘The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?’”
2. Do not allow the devil to hold you back by making you afraid.
3. Begin on a smaller scale age gravitate to a larger one. We can help you.

D. For some it may be because of secret sin or un-repent of sin in their lives.

1. While it is important to recognize sin in one’s life . . . it is more important to remove the sin and make things right with God . . . The get on with one’s service to the Master.
2. **James 4:17** – “Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.”

E. For some it may be due to a lack of spiritual growth and a lack of faith.

1. **Hebrews 5:14** – “For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food.

13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe.

14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”

2. Your failure to grow is not God’s failure . . . But your own failure.

2 Peter 3:18 – “But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

EXCUSES

A. Moses. Appearing before God at the Burning Bush.

1. **Exodus 13 11** – “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?”
2. **Exodus 4:10** – “O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither before nor since You have spoken to Your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.”
3. **Exodus 4:13** - “O my Lord, please send by the hand of whomever else You may send.”
4. God tired of hearing Moses make excuses. **Exodus 4:14** – “So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses.”

NOTE: Does not God tire of hearing His people make excuses today for not doing His work . . . Or remaining silent when opportunities arise?

B. Gideon. **Judges 6:15**

1. “O my Lord, how can I save Israel?”
2. “Indeed my clan is the weakest in Manasseh.”
3. “And I am the least in my father's house.”

C. Both went on to serve boldly, faithfully, and successfully.

GOD HAS SELECTED MEN, THE MALE MEMBERS IN HIS SERVICE, TO CARRY OUT LEADERSHIP IN PUBLIC WORSHIP SERVICE.

A. **1 Timothy 2:8** – “I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.”

B. Examples:

1. Patriarchal - Men were responsible for leading
2. Tabernacle – Men were responsible for leading
3. Temple – Men were responsible for leading
4. Church - Men are responsible for leading
5. Worship services of the Church - Men are responsible for leading

C. Why are men responsible for leading? Why are men responsible for conducting the public worship services of the Church?

1 Timothy 2:13-14 – “For Adam was formed first, then Eve . And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.”

D. **1 Kings 20:13-14** – “Suddenly a prophet approached Ahab king of Israel, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD: ‘Have you seen all this great multitude? Behold, I will deliver it into your hand today, and you shall know that I am the LORD.’

14 So Ahab said, ‘By whom?’ And he said, ‘Thus says the LORD: ‘By the young leaders of the provinces.’ Then he said, ‘Who will set the battle in order?’ And he answered, ‘**You.**’”

1. Who will call the assembly together for worship? . . . “And he answered, ‘**You.**’”

2. Who will lead us in prayer today? . . . “And he answered, ‘**You.**’”

3. Who will lead us in singing praises and hymns? . . . “And he answered, ‘**You.**’”

4. Who will lead at the Lord’s Table? . . . “And he answered, ‘**You.**’”

5. Who will offer thanks for the unleavened bread? . . . “And he answered, ‘**You.**’”

6. Who will offer thanks for the fruit of the vine for us? . . . “And he answered, ‘**You.**’”

7. Who will offer thanks for the giving of our means? . . . “And he answered, ‘**You.**’”

8. Who will stand before us and read God’s Word? . . . “And he answered, ‘**You.**’”

9. Who will stand before us and teach us from God’s Word? . . . “And he answered, ‘**You.**’”

E. The male members of this congregation occupy a unique position:

1. A position of **opportunity** . . . Three services a week are being conducted.

2. A position of **responsibility** . . . Public leadership in these services.

3. A position of **service** . . . A service that only men can scripturally do.

4. A position of **love** . . . Why would one not love to serve God in these unique ways?

5. A position of **faithfulness** . . . If you refuse to perform it, then who will?

Remember the 10 spies? Willing up to a point, then unfaithfulness set in.

F. Brethren

1. There must be **knowledge**

2. There must be **desire**

3. There must be **willingness**

4. There must be **determination**

5. There must be **effort**

FURTHER GLEANNINGS FROM ACTS 8:26-40

A. The Ethiopian Eunuch needed salvation.

1. God has responded to our need for salvation, now many must respond to God for it.
2. You quickly see where Philip took the Eunuch. He told Him about the person in the Scripture that he was reading about there in Isaiah 53:7-8 . . . that person was Christ.
3. Not only that, but he taught him the gospel that was the whole reason for Jesus coming to the earth.
4. Now it's safe to say that the Ethiopian was a God-fearing man. He had traveled some 1,000+ miles each way in order to worship in Jerusalem.
5. Ethiopia was located south of Egypt in a part of the broader Old Testament land of Cush.
6. This would have been a long hot trip for a man without any commitment in his heart for God.
7. Being a good Jew wasn't enough anymore. He now needed to know about the Savior of his soul and the need to fully obey the Son of God.
8. Friends, too many fine people are dying thinking the gospel isn't relative to them.

B. There was the need for Immersion.

1. I also find it very interesting that once they came to water that the Eunuch wanted to be immersed.
2. I am sure that if it had been all that was necessary, he could have sat right there in the chariot and prayer some "sinner's prayer" or "asked Jesus to come into his heart." The story of Jesus did not establish the sufficiency of that.
3. I am sure he had water on his chariot for drinking purpose.
 - b. If sprinkling would have been sufficient, a few drops of it could have been used.
 - c. If effusion, pouring a little bit of water on one's head, had been sufficient a small amount of the Eunuch's drinking water would have been sufficient.
 - d. But notice it now . . . a greater amount of water than would have been required for sprinkling or effusion was needed, and when the Eunuch saw such a supply sufficient for a burial (immersion), he wanted the chariot stopped so he could:
 1. Go to where the water was.
 2. Go down into the water.
 3. God down under the water via baptism.
 4. In order to go into Christ and His church.
5. There it is now . . . when the Ethiopian Eunuch heard the gospel message, and it convicted him to see the need to be baptized. That baptism was immersion.

D. Salvation brought joy to the Eunuch . . . and it will to you.

1. **Acts 8:39** – “Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing.”
2. Why was he so happy?
 - a. He was accepted. Have you every stopped to think about how important acceptance would be to him.
 1. Being a eunuch, he probably was not accepted by other men.
 2. Being a foreigner, he wasn't fully accepted by the Jews.
 3. Being a proselyte to Judaism, he wasn't fully accepted as a Jew in faith.
 - b. That may be why he said, “See, here is water, what hinders me from being baptized?” The Greek construct of that passage literally says, “What stops me from being baptized?”
 - c. Perhaps . . . just perhaps, he was expecting another barrier from another source.
 - d. Even if he had been expecting another barrier . . . he found none.
 - e. There is nothing that disqualifies you from coming to Christ if you really are willing to repent and do what His will for you would require.
 - f. There is nothing that separate us from God once we are in Christ. **Romans 8:35-39** – “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
 - g. Watching the reactions of people who are baptized into Christ is a real insight into their lives. Those who see real salvation cannot hold back real emotion. That is exciting to see. Our emotions meet theirs on those occasions.
 - h. The gospel cause joy in our lives.

REST WILL COME LATER FOR GOD'S PEOPLE . . . WORK AND SERVICE MUST COME FIRST!

- A. Look at what happened to Philip next. **Acts 8:39** – “Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing.”
 1. Philip didn't say, “What a relief, my work is done . . . I will go back home . . . to my house and say, “I did my Christian service for this year.”
 2. Not so . . . The Lord took Philip's availability, knowledge, and willingness in the direction of others who needed Christ.

3. He sent him back to work in another place.
 - a. He had sent him from Jerusalem to Samaria . . . and he went.
 - b. He had sent him from Samaria to teach the Ethiopian Eunuch . . . and he went.
 - c. Now he sends him to “. . . Azotus. And passing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea” Acts 8:40.
 - d. There was still much to be donning to spread the gospel . . . and he kept on doing it.
4. I read a notation that had appeared in a newspaper accounting that a church that had been ongoing for some 115 years had finally closed its doors.
5. I wonder why?
 - a. Did they live in the past and not minister to the present.
 - b. Did they fail to remember that yesterday’s homeruns will not win today’s ballgame?
 - c. Did they reside in their glory years and forget that there was still work to be done.
 - d. Or did they do all that they could in that area and people just didn’t want anything to do with God.
6. Some research has concluded that people who retired early died younger than those who worked longer.
 - a. Is that not true in the church.
 - b. When you stop working for God you begin to die spiritually.
 - c. Retirement years from one’s secular work can provide a wonderful time to become more active in the Lord’s work.

THERE IS WORK YET TO BE DONE.

- A. Probably every congregation has those who have never taught a class . . . participated in any activity of the church . . . or shown that they were Christians more than showing up for a worship service on Sunday morning.
- B. There is way too much to be done in the name of Christ in our community alone to keep every member busy until they die.
 1. There are people to teach.
 2. There are souls to save.
 3. There are children to guide.
 4. There are hurting people who need comfort.
 5. There are hungry people who need to be fed.
 6. There are needy people who need help.
 7. YOUR help is needed to take care of these needs.
- C. Brethren, we need every member actively involved in the Lord’s work here.

1. We have done some good things in our past . . . but there is still much to be done. He cares about what is being done now. Again I repeat: "Yesterday's homeruns will not win today's ballgame."
2. If you helped establish this congregation and build this church-wonderful . . . now help fill it.
3. If you helped teach children in the past-great . . . and teach a new group. If you lead someone to Christ-fantastic . . . now lead someone else.
4. If you did anything-that is wonderful . . . now keep on going and do some more.
5. Remember: It could mean the difference in someone's salvation . . . beginning with your own.
6. God doesn't want the lukewarm . . . He wants the red hot one.

CONCLUSION:

- A. You can make a difference! On the Lord's behalf and for your spiritual good I am asking:
 1. Are you available?
 2. Are you knowledgeable
 3. Are you willing?
- B. A hymn says: "There is work to do, there is work on every hand." There really is!
- C. Two great Biblical attitudes:
 1. **Isaiah:** **Isaiah 6:8** – "Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: "Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?" Then I said, "**Here am I! Send me.**"
 2. **Samuel:** **Samuel 3:9** – ". . . **Speak LORD, for Your servant hears . . .**"
- D. Challenge yourself to
 1. Be Available
 2. Be Knowledgeable
 3. Be willing
- E. Be responsive . . . lead others to Christ . . . never stop working for Him until eternal rest comes after the while.
- F. Perhaps you are like the Ethiopian Eunuch:
 1. You have been a long way religiously . . . but in a wrong direction.
 2. You have come a long way religiously . . . but not far enough.
 3. You desire to stop your chariot of life and become obedient to the will of God.

God's Plan for Man's Salvation