

Acts 8:26-40

The faithful husband comes home from work to his lovely wife. He hangs up his coat and enters the kitchen. His wife is peeling potatoes in the sink. "Hello honey," he says cheerfully. "Hi," was her short response. A little suspicious, he asks, "Well, how was your day?" "It was fine." "Is something wrong?" "No." "Really? It seems like somethings wrong." "No. I said, everything's fine!" "Did I say something? Did I do something wrong?" "If you really cared you would know."

I would ask, with a show of hands, for how many husbands have had this fun conversation with their wives before, but that might just lead to a few more similar conversations. So husbands, keep your hands down. It's for the best.

These conversations are so frustrating, for us clueless men, of course, because the wife refuses to say what the problem is. Which leads us to cry out along with the Ethiopian Eunuch from our reading today, "How can I know unless someone tells me!?"

It's a stereotype I know, and to be perfectly honest, men are actually more likely not to want to talk about issues and feelings. So I could very well ask the ladies how many times they've had conversations like this. But that is not ultimately the

point. The point is, communication is important in a relationship. You have to talk to fix any of the issues.

The point for our sermon today is similar, communication is important spiritually. Now, while, without anyone telling us anything, we can know there is a God, this didn't all come from nothing, and we all have these consciences and a vague sense of right and wrong, and nothing else explains that other than a God.

But as to who that God is? How can we know unless someone tells us? The husband frustratingly cries out "How was I supposed to know!?" Likewise, the Bible tells how King Josiah tore his robes when they found the Old Testament that had been lost for so long, and he read it and realized they had been sinning for years, "how was I supposed to know!?" No one told him. Likewise many have not been told that God is not some grey haired man in the sky tallying up our sins to send us to hell. No one told them.

No one told the Ethiopian eunuch on the chariot either. He read Isaiah and, like everyone else ever who has read Isaiah, said, "huh?" But God solved the problem. He boomed down from heaven in thunder an explanation to the Eunuch. Oh, no he

didn't. He sent a ray of sunshine that gave the eunuch clarity and a warm heart.

Nope, he didn't do that either. Truth is truth, regardless of how you feel.

So when someone needed to tell the Ethiopian man about Jesus, God sent a person, who knew what the Bible actually said, to go and talk to the man. To ask him about what he read, and to sit with him and explain it. And through a regular sinful man speaking God's word, the Spirit of God brought this Eunuch to faith.

And is it that surprising? It shouldn't be. The frustrated husband knows this, "How can they know unless someone tells them?" Paul says the same thing in Romans 10: For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."<sup>14</sup> 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?<sup>[e]</sup> And how are they to hear without someone preaching? <sup>15</sup> And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!" <sup>17</sup> So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

Now, to be fair, God has spoken directly to people sometimes, like Phillip in our reading, or Joseph, Jesus' guardian, was warned in dreams, and one time when his prophet was so dense, God gave his word through a donkey. Though, most of the

time His direct speaking was to his apostles and prophets, people in a special relationship with God and in a special office charged with communicating God's Word to the people. And, yes, He still can talk to us directly, he's God, he can do whatever He wants. But he never promised it. So if you do hear a voice, heed John's advice from our epistle reading and "test the spirits" to make sure they are from God. And what do you test them against? The Bible. What we *know* is God's word that he has promised to work through. So if you hear a voice that tells you to murder someone test it against God's word, like the 5<sup>th</sup> commandment, "thou shalt not murder." Hmmm. Maybe that voice wasn't God after all. Test failed.

But I've never heard a voice, and I would bet most of you haven't either. And that's OK. Because the prophets and apostles heard from God and wrote it down so we, just like all the other people they preached to who never heard a voice, could know God's will. So maybe God doesn't speak directly to us, because we have all we need in the scriptures to bring about faith? I think so.

God has spoken to people miraculously before, but most of the time, he works in very normal and real ways. So much so that he was willing to come down himself as a normal, but at the same time very not-normal, sinless, person, Jesus. Hebrews writes, "In these last days he has spoken to us by his Son." You want to know what

God wants to say? You want to know how he feels about you? You want to know his will for you? Look to Jesus and the scriptures: Old and New Testaments, that reveal him to us.

Revealing the One who was prophesied to save His people from their sins. Look to the word that tells us of the One who would speak the truth and uphold righteousness. The One who would answer the problem of evil that is in you and in this broken world. Overcoming it all as he took our punishment upon himself as the Ethiopian Eunuch heard in Isaiah, “like a sheep he was led to the slaughter, in his humiliation justice was denied him.” And, “He was pierced for our transgressions and by His wounds we are healed.” Jesus. The One God come down, the One who God made sure to tell us about, through prophets, apostles, ministers, the ones who saw and heard him with their own eyes and ears. And they died so that you could hear what God has to say to you. That he hates evil and punishes it, but he did that on the cross so that we might be set free. And this event of the cross screams what he has to say about you: He loves you. Why else would he die for you?

And his resurrection calls out to you, “don’t be afraid.” He conquers death. He gives salvation and eternal life. That is what God wants to tell you, that is his will for your life, that you hear, believe unto salvation, and remain in Him – the Vine.

Let us thank God for His word that he gives to us and the Holy Spirit that brings us to faith through this Word or the Wet Word. Thank God for the beautiful feet that brought the word of Jesus to us. The feet of parents, or grandparents, or ministers like Phillip.

Let us also reflect on our own lives. Are we willing to climb into a chariot with someone who has questions about God? Even if they are a foreigner from Ethiopia? A scary thought isn’t it? So let us support and pray for those who are brave enough to do it. A missionary, an evangelist. And let’s not use them as an excuse not to be Phillip ourselves. Be strong and courageous, you don’t have to know every answer to point to Jesus, and we have resources to help you learn the answers too. The answers our children need who don’t know the Bible, the answers the college student needs when his faith is challenged for the first time. The answers we have, but how will they know if no one tells them? Let’s learn, lets grow, lets tell.

God is real, eternal life is real, and we have been told through the testimony of those who saw God in the flesh die and rise, who heard his promises that he did it for us. We have the Holy Spirit to believe it and boldly confess it. Take heart, be of good cheer, you are in Christ, which means you are forgiven and you have salvation. That's a good word you won't hear anywhere else. Amen.