

A Name Better Than Sons and Daughters

Acts 8:26-40

Intro

Acts – the amazing story of Jesus sovereignly building his Church with the gospel by the power of the Holy Spirit. In Matthew 16:18 we see Jesus proclaim, “I will build my Church.” In Acts we see that Jesus is the master builder.

Phillip had been preaching to large crowds in Samaria and the gospel was having great success! And God through an Angel sends Phillip out of the big city to a lonely highway that leads to Gaza. The end of verse 6 describes this location as a desert place. To meet with a single man – The Ethiopian Eunuch

What the Eunuch was searching for

The Ethiopian Eunuch

- Ethiopia – Large portion of the African continent south of Egypt (modern day Sudan).
- He was a court official of the Queen of Ethiopia
- Candace – a title for Ethiopian Queens (like Pharaoh for Egyptians)
- A very important man – had the charge of all the Queen’s treasure
- And he was a Eunuch – A Eunuch was a man who had been castrated. In the ancient world, it was common in the royal court for, high ranking, male, non-family members to be castrated. This was essentially the only way a man could be trusted in close quarters with female members of the royal family.

Look at how far the Eunuch travelled – Over 1,000 miles (5 mo.)

Why – worship

There is an insatiable longing in every human heart for worship. We are worshipers by nature. It’s not a question of if we will worship. It’s a question of what we worship.

Because we are created in the image of God (we are created by God and for God), we are created in such a way that our hearts can only be satisfied in the true and living God. ***We are most human when we are in fellowship with God and he is the object of our worship.***

This is why sin is so inhumane. Sin takes the longing and craving of the human heart, which only God can fill, and tries to satisfy it with other things. Sin bends the desires of our hearts towards things that are destructive to us. So, sin is the lie that something other than God can give me true joy and peace, in reality, sin is the loss of joy and peace.

This incredible longing in the human heart has caused this man to travel extreme distance over a long period of time, looking for something to worship, looking for something to quench the deepest thirsts of his heart. And guess what, he’s going to come up empty.

He comes all this way to discover that he can’t be fully included. The Jewish ceremonial law prohibited Eunuchs from entrance into the Temple and the worshiping assembly.

Deuteronomy 23:1 "No one who is emasculated or has his male organ cut off shall enter the assembly of the LORD. (NASB)

This is profound but I think it's a good illustration of the point made here in our text. The Eunuch invests enormous amounts of time, money, and no doubt his emotions in finding the ultimate worship experience in Jerusalem, only to be disappointed and turned away empty.

We do this too don't we? How many times have you been looking for ultimate fulfillment only to be disappointed?

There are several ways we do this, and usually the preacher will point out money, sex, and power, which are all true, but let me try to hit a little closer to home.

One of the ways we seek ultimate fulfillment is through relationships, especially romantic relationships. From a fairly young age, most of us experience a longing to share our minds, hearts, bodies, and lives with another person. And this is a God-given natural desire which is good. But what happens is, in our affections, this good God-given desire becomes an ultimate desire. And we begin to put our desire for that person into the place that only God can fulfill.

So if you're single, you're going to be tempted to think, If I could only find the right person to make all my dreams come true, then I would find happiness. Then I would be a whole person. But what happens, you're constantly disappointed and depressed because you can't seem to find the right person. **And when you do get in a relationship, you've asked a mere mortal to do for you what only God can do.** So over and over your relationships end with more heart ache and disappointment than you started with.

And what happens when you think you've finally found that person? You marry them and then one day you realize they're not making you happy? Why is that? Two reasons 1. When you were courting each other you both put your best foot forward. And you both acted like whatever you thought would make the other person most happy. Eventually it becomes too hard to keep pretending you're the perfect person. And you both start acting like the person you really are. And it's usually not too long after that when you start saying, I don't even know who this person is I married. 2. Of course, the second reason, is that you were asking that person to do something they're not qualified to do.

No human being, not your soul-mate, or the greatest spouse ever can fulfill the deepest longings of the human heart. Only God is qualified to do that. And the more you ask another person to do what only God can do, the more damage you're doing to them and yourself.

Our relationships on the horizontal level will only be as healthy as our relationship to God on the vertical level. It's only when two people treasure their relationship with Christ above all things that they can truly love one another in spite of all their failings.

And if you're single here today, I'd like to be kind and very direct... If Christ isn't your greatest treasure, if you're not seeking to have your deepest needs met in him, then you're a horrible match for another person. And if you find someone, no matter how wonderful they are, if Christ isn't their all in all, then in the end, the only thing you'll ever do is harm each other.

But we do this in other ways too. We have religious ways of doing this. Sometimes we worship our worship instead of worshiping Christ. This is why you see people constantly skipping around from one Church to another. (Now don't get me wrong... I know there are biblical good reasons for leaving a church). But a lot of what we see is people dating churches. They skip around every so often. They'll find a new one that they like for a while, but then when the newness and excitement wear off, they're off to the newest and best thing. Or at the first sign of struggle or hardship, they abandon ship.

We have to be careful not to ask a (even) Church to do for us what only God can. Listen, I believe we should find a great sense of belonging and fulfillment in our Church family. But the Church can't be our all in all. Sometimes we have this image in our minds of the perfect Church. And we're constantly longing for

that Church. And sometimes we're disappointed in the Church God's placed us in because it doesn't meet the ideal we have in our minds. I want to let you down gently here, there is no perfect Church until we get to Heaven... Our business here at The Road is not to be the fulfillment of people's needs. Our job is to point people to Jesus Christ, he and he alone can satisfy the God-sized hole in the human heart.

So, when you're out talking about The Road, I don't want you to set people up for disappointment. Please don't go telling anyone that we're a perfect Church or how great we are. Here's what I want you to tell people... Be honest with them... Tell them that we are messed up needy people. Tell them that the great thing about The Road is that we have discovered how great Christ is! And that he is our treasure. And we are satisfied not to be a great or perfect Church. Our only desire is to see and enjoy the glory of Christ and to help others do the same.

Middle class ordinary way of doing this...

You see what will happen if we keep seeking things other than Christ and a relationship with him to satisfy our deepest needs? We're going to be just like the Eunuch. We'll go great distances, spend enormous amounts of our resources, our time, money, energy on things that can ultimately only disappoint us.

What the Eunuch found

Even though the Eunuch didn't at first find what he was looking for. I want you to see what he did find. And it's so important here to realize a couple of things. **The fact that the Eunuch was searching is in fact proof that God's grace was already active in his life.** We sometimes think of humanity in terms of people seeking for God but the truth is, none of us, in and of ourselves, seeks for God.

Romans 3:10-11 as it is written, "THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE; 11 THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD;

John 6:44 "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.

The fact that the Eunuch is seeking is proof that God's grace is already at work in his life. In fact, it's not so much that the Eunuch is seeking Christ. It's that Christ is seeking him.

Look what the Eunuch did find in Jerusalem:

A scroll of the book of Isaiah (Isaiah 53 – the Suffering Servant)

Isaiah 53:4-6 Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. 5 But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed. 6 All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him.

Isaiah 56:3-5 Let not the foreigner who has joined himself to the LORD say, "The LORD will surely separate me from his people"; and let not the eunuch say, "Behold, I am a dry tree." 4 For thus says the LORD: "To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths, who choose the things that please me and hold fast my covenant, 5 I will give in my house and within my walls a monument and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off.

The biblical Jesus

Not a Jesus who is a figment of our imagination

We so often come to the Scriptures

What the Eunuch did

What prevents (hinders) me from being baptized?

The person who comes to truly know Jesus wants to obey everything Christ teaches. True faith manifests itself in obedience.

Baptism is a ritual that is reserved for disciples of Jesus.

Matthew 28:19-20 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

An outward sign of an inward reality. Baptism is a public statement that you have died to yourself and you have risen to new life in Christ. It's a vivid portrayal of the fact that you have been immersed into Christ.

What hinders you?

What's hindering you from surrendering the rights to be your own savior and god and turning to Christ?

What distractions are hindering you from seeing Christ is your only treasure?

What's hindering you from being like Phillip and spending your life helping others come to see and know this Christ?