

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

20 – Window of Opportunity

Acts 8.26-40

Obedience

- Don't count on it being easy, safe, or familiar
 - Easy – desert place
 - Safe – approaching the chariot
 - Familiar – Ethiopian, not a Hebrew
 - Church: “rise and go” to a place and a people
 - They may be different than us, but they are our responsibility
 - Lead people to say yes to knowing, enjoying, and serving Jesus together
 - Personally: “rise and go” is God's command
 - Is there a place in your life where you have heard God clearly but haven't obeyed?
 - Ministry – Money – Relationships – Purity – Disciplines – Emotions
 - “I want to see God move like He did in Acts...” – do we obey, pray, give, serve like they did?
- Caution: Count on Jesus to ask for your comfort
 - There are things you can only know and experience when you are outside your comfort zone
 - There are lessons that can only be learned outside your comfort zone
 - There are contours of soul that can only be shaped outside your comfort zone
 - WHY would I do this then?
 - Because your allegiance is to Jesus and not your comfort
 - Because the higher price is paid when you don't follow Jesus

Opportunity

- Our obedience opens doors of opportunity
 - Because God is always at work around us and allows us to join Him
 - Philip encountered a man hungry for something he didn't know anything about
- Seizing the opportunity demands sharing who Jesus is
 - Ask good questions – what are you reading?
 - What if they're not reading anything? – 5 Questions
 - Are you the kind of person who gets invited into someone's life for these conversations?
 - Don't assume their curiosity will get them to where they need to be spiritually

- It really is about Jesus – always
 - Start where they are and don't wish they were different
 - Be clear on the Good News – Rescue, Resurrection, Repent
 - Seizing the opportunity ruins you for the ordinary
 - Transformation of your own life and other's lives will be the only thing that satisfies – nothing superficial will (Philip the Evangelist in Acts 21)
 - You get caught up in a story big enough to live in – you never know the echoes
 - God used Philip first – not Peter, James, John, Paul
 - Acts 1.8 – God is sending the Gospel to the nations through an Ethiopian which ultimately will influence Martin Luther 1500 years later through Michael the Deacon
 - Caution: you may end up in a different place than expected
 - Church – “I expect us to be a church of 1000”
 - Personally – if you're not doing what you thought but are doing what God wants, you're winning

Abandoned to God but never abandoned by God

Questions for Discussion

1. When have you heard God say “Rise and Go” and it ended up being a hard place – but you had / have no doubt that it was God who sent you?
2. Who / What is the greatest ministry opportunity in your life right now? What are you doing about it?
3. What are some good questions that can get you engaged in a spiritual discussion? (Trent stated there are 5 basic “Big Questions” that everyone orbits: what is reality? who is well off? who is a good person? how do you become a good person? how am I to understand evil and suffering in the world?)
4. Why can we not assume that their curiosity will lead them to a correct understanding of God? Read Matthew 16.13-18. How did Jesus speak about Peter's understanding of God?
5. When is the last time you had the chance to share the Gospel with someone? When will your next opportunity be?
6. What is one way that you have obeyed and seized the opportunity, only to find out later that what you did had a far larger impact than you ever anticipated?