

MAXIMUM IMPACT IN OUR WORLD

November 29, 2009

SERMON TITLE- ACTS-traordinary: Divine Appointment

Acts 8:26-40

NOTES BY BILLY GROSS

(Keith preached 2 messages – 2 for 1 special)

Message 1 – Final thoughts around the *Holy Spirit's power* that fills us for daily life and also breaks strongholds in our lives.

There is a tension in this life of faith:

We serve an almighty, good God who has the power to change the difficulties of our lives. -- He does not always come through in the ways we ask or expect.

Our frustration /confusion with this tension reveals two core weaknesses in our perspective:

1. How deeply tied we are to this world; we mostly see our lives through a finite, worldly lens (rather than the heavenly, eternal lens)

a. Paul is a good example of living with eternal, heavenly perspective – he declared “we are more than conquerors through Him who loves us” eventhough his life was fraught with pain and difficulty: ostracized, imprisoned, beaten, shipwrecked, snake-bit, and more. He also had a “thorn of the flesh” that he asked God to remove, and God did not.

b. May God teach us how to live in the pain and confusion of adversity . . . with assurance rooted in the cross, comfort flowing from His presence, and hope fixed on our future (*certain*) glory. Will we trust in God’s love and goodness, even when we can’t SEE how He is working in our circumstances?

2. How much we want to be equal with God. We want to know everything as He does – the why’s, how’s, when’s.

a. We rarely see such questions in scripture:

i. David did – in his Psalms. He would question and lament his difficulties and the injustice around him, but he would invariably end up in a place of worship, surrender, and trust.

ii. Job – had questions and confusion (mainly due to the poor counsel of his supposed friends), but Job also came to a place of surrender to the Lordship of God. He accepted that God is God and worthy to be trusted! (Job 38, 40:3-5, 42:1-6)

b. The story of the Fall in Genesis reveals this desire “to be like God”. It is the essence of sin (Genesis 3:1-7)

c. Our bent is to orient God around our lives and our agenda. The call of faith is to orient

ourselves to HIM and His agenda (which is actually in our best interest, even when we can't see it). It's a trust issue!

Message 2 – The story of Phillip and the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:26-40)

God “pulls” Phillip away from the exciting revival in Samaria where many are coming to faith in Christ . . .

to encounter this unique individual: an Ethiopian eunuch of high standing, officer to the Queen, a man of wealth and education, a religious man – having been on pilgrimage to Jerusalem (exploring or practicing Judaism). He is spiritually hungry as he grapples with the scroll of Isaiah.

God sends Phillip to speak His love and salvation to this eunuch as he helps him understand what the scriptures reveal about Jesus.

1. Keys from this story:

a. The Christian life is not meant to be lived ON the “mountain-top”, but in the trenches of everyday life.

(Phillip leaves the exciting revival of hundreds to go into the desert, to stand beside a single chariot.)

b. God is passionate for individuals. (again, Phillip leaves hundreds to minister to ONE).
Matthew. 18:10

c. God always goes before us (prevenient grace). (God was already working in the eunuch's life, preparing him for Phillip's coming.)

d. This is an outstanding model of personal evangelism (see #2 that follows):

2. Great model for personal evangelism:

a. **Begins with Listening for the Spirit's guidance** (that will steer us to people where He is stirring)

b. **Watch for divine appointments - - and obey** when they are revealed. (we sometimes talk ourselves out of the whispering direction of God)

c. **Be alert to the foundation already laid by God.** (as opposed to thinking we have to drum up a spiritual agenda)

d. **Care for the person is primary to an evangelistic agenda.** (we need to meet them where they are and respond to them as individuals rather than focusing on our gospel presentation. We are not after salvation notches in our belt. We want to LOVE people and share life with them)

e. **Let the individual's questions drive the conversation.** (be relational and attentive.)

Listening to them is as important as what we have to say)

- f. **Give verbal witness.** (if we have honored a-e above, this will be a very natural thing)
- g. **Invite a response.** (again, if we have done the above well, this will often be a natural thing, but we need to also remember that they may not yet be at a place of decision. Sometimes, we are sowers or waterers rather than reapers.)

“Father, thank you for your passionate love for this unique man from Ethiopia; for sending one of your finest to speak to him; for revealing the wondrous truth that your gospel and life are **for HIM**; for saving this one lost and precious sheep that day.”

“Thank you, Jesus, for coming to save us all! We rejoice in your incarnation. We worship YOU as we celebrate your birth.”