

Evangelical Free Church of America

- “We exist to glorify God by multiplying transformational churches among all people”
- “In essentials, unity. In non-essentials, charity. In all things, Jesus Christ.”
- Small core of agreement, then “significance of silence” = we might debate but never divide over secondary issues
- Great Lakes District Conference
 - Greg Jao: beyond colorblindness in ministry
 - Missions: “ReachGlobal empowers disciples who make disciples in their own native context.”

it might not
be obvious



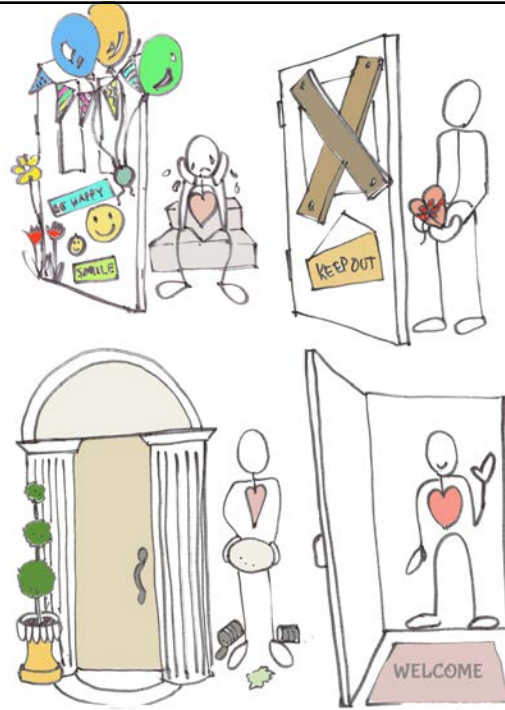
Appearances

- “One person pretends to be rich, yet has nothing; another pretends to be poor, yet has great wealth.” *Proverbs 13:7*
 - Why would a poor person pretend to be rich?
 - Why would a rich person pretend to be poor?
- “You can’t judge a book by its cover.”
 - What does it mean?
 - What are some examples as we look at people?
 - How might this be a problem in Christianity?
 - How might this be a problem when sharing the Gospel?

Sharing Good News

Acts 8:26-40

Chinese: page 1778
 Spanish: page 1396
 Brown: page 1099
 Green: page 749



A new stage in the growth of the early Christian church

- “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses **in Jerusalem**, and **in all Judea and Samaria**, and to the **ends of the earth.**” *Acts 1:8*
- Jewish people wanted to stay pure by keeping away from...
 - non-Jewish people (including **foreigners**), **especially Samaritans**
 - Persecution sent Jewish Christians (including Philip) to the Samaritans
 - Philip proclaimed the Good News of Jesus to Samaritans, and they joyfully believed! *Acts 8:5-25*
 - **unclean** people, including those with physical ailments and deformities
- “Those who had been scattered preached the word [about Jesus] wherever they went.” *Acts 8:4*

Philip's Journeys

- Greek-speaking Jew moved to Jerusalem from a Greek-speaking place
- Part 1: prompted by Persecution
 - Persecution made him leave Jerusalem
 - He went into Samaria (north)
 - He told the Good News about Jesus
- Part 2: prompted by the Holy Spirit
 - Spirit made Him go south of Jerusalem
 - Spirit made him go north to Caesarea
 - Always telling the Good News of Jesus



Acts 8:26-40

- 26-28:** Angel of God sent Philip to the southern part of Judea
- 29-31: • Previous movement was because of persecution
- 32-35: • Ethiopian (Nubia/Cush rather than modern
- 36-38: Ethiopia) was probably socially distant from Jewish
- 39-40: society: race, wealth, foreign power, physical status
- Reading out loud, a personal copy of Isaiah

Chinese: page 1778

Spanish: page 1396

Brown: page 1099

Green: page 749

A passage in Isaiah with special significance

Let no **foreigner** who is bound to the Lord say,
 “The Lord will surely exclude me from his people.”
 And let no **eunuch** complain,
 “I am only a dry tree.”
 For this is what the Lord says:
 “To the **eunuchs** who keep my Sabbaths,
 who choose what pleases me
 and hold fast to my covenant—
 to them I will give within my temple and its walls
 a memorial and a name
 better than sons and daughters;
 I will give them **an everlasting name**
that will endure forever.

And **foreigners** who bind themselves to the Lord
 to minister to him,
 to love the name of the Lord,
 and to be his servants,
 all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it
 and who hold fast to my covenant—
 these I will bring to my holy mountain
 and give them **joy in my house** of prayer.
 Their burnt offerings and sacrifices
 will be accepted on my altar;
 for my house will be called
 a house of prayer for all nations.”

Isaiah 56:3-6

Acts 8:26-40

26-28: Angel of God sent Philip to the southern part of Judea

29-31: Ethiopian eunuch invited Philip to explain the Bible

32-35: • Spirit nudged Philip toward the eunuch

36-38: • A simple question: Do you understand?

39-40: • Answer: explanation is required (mystery)

- Biblical mystery: can only know if you are told (like a secret or a surprise)

Acts 8:26-40

26-28: Angel of God sent Philip to the southern part of Judea

29-31: Ethiopian eunuch invited Philip to explain the Bible

32-35: Philip explained God's answer for a broken world

36-38: • Mystery (surprise): Son of God took brokenness

39-40: of the world onto Himself

- Good News: God solved the brokenness of the world and of each of us in Jesus' death and resurrection

Acts 8:26-40

26-28: Angel of God sent Philip to the southern part of Judea

29-31: Ethiopian eunuch invited Philip to explain the Bible

32-35: Philip explained God's answer for a broken world

36-38: Eunuch asked to be baptized. Philip baptized him

39-40: • Eunuch seems used to directing things!

- Perhaps he expected objections

based on typical social reactions to his identity

- Not in Christ!

Acts 8:26-40

26-28: Angel of God sent Philip to the southern part of Judea

29-31: Ethiopian eunuch invited Philip to explain the Bible

32-35: Philip explained God's answer for a broken world

36-38: Eunuch asked to be baptized. Philip baptized him

39-40: God sent Philip to do more 'evangelism' and eunuch continued his journey with rejoicing

- Evangelism = "good news telling"

- Eunuch had the Word and the Spirit. That's enough

- Philip's evangelistic work continued

- Acts 21:8: Philip had settled in Caesarea

The Big Idea

The Kingdom grows

as the Spirit orchestrates and empowers

SOMETIMES NATURALLY AND SOMETIMES SUPERNATURALLY

BOTH CHRISTIANS AND NOT-YET-CHRISTIANS

and God's people help others

know the mystery of the Gospel

INCLUDING THOSE WE JUDGE AS 'FAR AWAY'

mystery = like a secret, you can only know by being told

God solved human predicament by sending His Son to suffer in our place

You can't judge a book by its cover.



**You can't know a person's heart
by appearances
or by superficial contact**



Application

- **Correct our broken ways of valuing people**
 - We confuse social categories with...
 - openness to the Gospel
 - value to God and the church
 - “Upside down” values of God
 - So hard for rich people to enter God’s Kingdom
 - Jesus came for the sick, not the healthy
 - We honor those in high standing,
and Jesus honored the poor widow who had no standing

“But the Lord said to Samuel, ‘Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.’” *1 Samuel 16:7*

**LEARN TO BE WATCHING FOR
THE CONDITION OF PEOPLE'S HEARTS,
AND THE WORK GOD IS DOING IN THE HEART**

Application

- **Correct our broken ways of valuing people**
- **Share the good news**
 1. Pray and listen for the Spirit's guidance
 - Ask God to do His work
 - “One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. **The Lord opened her heart** to respond to Paul's message.” *Acts 16:14*
 - Ask God to show us the work He is doing
 - Ask God to direct us to people in His wisdom
 - Sometimes a natural connection and affinity
 - Sometimes to people who are seemingly far away

Application

- **Correct our broken ways of valuing people**
- **Share the good news**
 1. Pray and listen for the Spirit's guidance
 2. Listen: Learn what the Spirit is already doing
 - Ask
 - “Do you understand ____?” (your life / the world / Christianity)
 - “What puzzles you about life? What troubles you?”
 - “If you could put Christianity in a sentence, what would it be?”
 - Listen
 - Questions may not be necessary. Listening always is

Application

- **Correct our broken ways of valuing people**
- **Share the good news**
 1. Pray and listen for the Spirit's guidance
 2. Listen: Learn what the Spirit is already doing
 3. Speak: Is there trouble?
 - “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be **no more death’ or **mourning or crying or pain****, for the old order of things has passed away.” *Revelation 21:3-4*

Application

- **Correct our broken ways of valuing people**
- **Share the good news**
 1. Pray and listen for the Spirit's guidance
 2. Listen: Learn what the Spirit is already doing
 3. Speak: Is there brokenness or regret or guilt or shame?
 - “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” *2 Corinthians 5:21*

Application

- **Correct our broken ways of valuing people**
- **Share the good news**
 1. Pray and listen for the Spirit's guidance
 2. Listen: Learn what the Spirit is already doing
 3. Speak: The Good News in Christ
 4. Invite
 - Hesitation: "Can there be any real good in Christianity?"
 - Simple invitation: "Come and see!" *John 1:46*
 - To church. To a Life Group event.
 - To a coffee conversation. To read the Bible. To ...

Application

- **Correct our broken ways of valuing people**
- **Share the good news**
 1. **Pray** and listen for the Spirit's guidance
 2. **Listen:** Learn what the Spirit is already doing
 3. **Speak:** The Good News in Christ
 4. **Invite:** Come and see

WITH CHRISTIANS TOO!

AND IN YOUR OWN HEART

**(THOSE WHO HAD BEEN SCATTERED
PREACHED THE WORD
WHEREVER THEY WENT." ACTS 8:4**

The Big Idea

**The Kingdom grows
as the Spirit orchestrates and empowers
SOMETIMES NATURALLY AND SOMETIMES SUPERNATURALLY
BOTH CHRISTIANS AND NOT-YET-CHRISTIANS
and God's people help others
know the mystery of the Gospel
INCLUDING THOSE WE JUDGE AS 'FAR AWAY'**

**"THOSE WHO HAD BEEN SCATTERED
PREACHED THE WORD
WHEREVER THEY WENT." ACTS 8:4**

1. Pray and listen for the Spirit's guidance
2. Listen: Learn what the Spirit is already doing
3. Speak Good News
4. Invite: "Come and see"