

# Enthusiasm for Evangelism

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I am a huge Star Wars fan. I still have all the action figures, spaceships, and accessories that I got while growing up. Sometimes, I even bring them down from the attic and let my kids play with them. Under close supervision, that is.

But I enjoy watching other people be fanatic about it, too. I remember when the new movies came out, some followers would camp out for days to get tickets to the first screening. Others would spend countless hours and dollars decorating their faces and securing costumes to match their favorite characters. It was their passion, and they were unashamed of their devotion to it.

After watching the news coverage, it occurred to me, "Wouldn't it be wonderful if folks were as excited about the gospel as they are about being entertained? What if we could get people as interested in eternity as they are about something that will last about two and a half hours?" But perhaps the world is not enthusiastic about the Lord because the Lord's people are not passionate about their devotion to Him. How sad to think that the reason some never come to the feast is because they are never extended an invitation.

The conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8 not only teaches us what a man must do to be saved, it shows us how to be more enthusiastic in our evangelism. Let us use this account to make us accountable in recommending the Savior to a starving world.

**Listen to the Lord.** Philip was told to go. So he went. "Arise and go south" (Acts 8:26); "go up and join this chariot" (8:29). He didn't make excuses. He didn't put it off. He went. And because Philip went, he taught and baptized the eunuch. According to history, the eunuch went home to Ethiopia and converted his queen, Candace. Who knows how far the story went all because Philip listened to the Lord when He said, "Go."

We've all been commanded to go (Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16). There's a reason it's called personal evangelism; it takes persons to do it. The Lord sent the angel to Philip, but he sent Philip to the eunuch. He could have easily cut out the middle man and had the angel talk to the eunuch. But He desires that the gospel message be communicated person to person. And that includes you. If we don't go, it's because we're just not listening.

**Look out for those who are looking.** Philip didn't have to go very far. He found the eunuch on the road from Jerusalem while "he was returning and sitting in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah" (8:28). What an opportunity! All Philip did was ask the eunuch if he understood the passage he was reading. But he started a conversation that ended in conversion.

Be on the lookout. You won't have to look too far. There are people all around us who are searching for something. Perhaps their family has just gone through a tragedy. Maybe some event has occurred in their life to make them think more about God and eternity. Sometimes, they visit our services, an indication of their interest in spiritual things. You never know how you can make a difference in a situation like that. There are a lot of different ways you can "go." Just be looking while you're going. People are certainly going to be looking at you.

**Be prepared to preach.** The eunuch asked Philip, "Please tell me, of whom does the prophet say this? Of himself or of someone else?" (8:34) What if he was not ready to give an answer? What if he was having a bad day? What if he thought, "Well, there's no use getting into this, he'll never believe it anyway?" But such excuses would not excuse him of his responsibility.

Your next opportunity may be your most important one. "Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you yet with gentleness and reverence" (1 Pet. 3:15). With some people, you may only get one chance. You have to go and look, and "always be ready." You have to be prepared to preach. And you have to be prepared to preach it right.

**Begin again.** Philip stayed on the "go." The eunuch went on his way rejoicing after being baptized, "but Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through, he kept preaching the gospel to all the cities until he came to Caesarea" (8:40). He had been to Samaria. He had preached Jesus to the eunuch. But he wasn't through yet. Wherever he went, he was just getting started.

Preaching is a work that never ends. It's easy to go back out there when you've encountered some success. But what about when you're met with failure after failure? We must not allow that to diminish our enthusiasm for evangelism. We can't afford to quit. Souls are at stake. Get started. And then begin again.

"When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; and the eunuch no longer saw him, but went on his way rejoicing" (8:39). Philip may have never seen the eunuch again, but he made a permanent impression on his life. One that would carry over into the next life, in a world that is far, far away...