

## INSPIRED HUMILITY (Acts 8)

As persecution broke out and Christians in Jerusalem heard of Stephen's martyrdom, they scattered throughout Judea and Samaria, carrying with them the good news of Jesus.

Their response to Saul's murderous threats?

Just as Jesus had promised in Acts 1:8, they became his witnesses not only in Jerusalem, but also in Judea and Samaria, even to the ends of the earth.

In Samaria, full of the Spirit, Philip went to work healing the sick and driving out evil spirits. The defining response as the Spirit worked through Philip beyond Jerusalem? Great joy.

But as Luke continues telling us the story of the Spirit's work in this new way, he presents two men juxtaposed representing two very different approaches to the power of the Holy Spirit. Simon the Great and Philip the Humble.

Simon could draw a crowd, dazzling them with his sorcery.

The people even called him the Great Power of God

But, Simon could see there was something greater about the Spirit in Philip.

He was baptized along with many others, but when Peter and John came and placed their hands on the people that they might also receive the Holy Spirit, Simon misstepped.

Misunderstanding the gift of God,

Misunderstanding the nature of this new Way,

Misunderstanding the point of life in the Spirit, Simon offered Peter and John money, so he might also have this ability to impart the Spirit to everyone he might lay his hands on.

Peter's rebuke was forceful, a cautionary word repeated verbatim by Luke for a reason.

What happened next painted Philip as a humble servant in stark contrast to Simon:

At an angel's direction, Philip made his way to a desert road running south of Jerusalem.

Then, at the Spirit's direction, Philip ran alongside a chariot belonging to an Ethiopian eunuch.

As Luke relays the story, his intentions are clear.

He wants Theophilus to appreciate the profound nature of this moment.

Philip is a Jew // this man is an Ethiopian, a people who lived at the end of the earth

Philip is a man of unrestricted access to God // the eunuch would have spent his time at the Temple as an outsider looking in, forbidden entry by ritual purity law as a foreigner and a eunuch

Philip is on foot // the official travels in a chariot with authority

Philip wears no title & carries no purse // the official oversees the vast wealth of the royal treasury

But, running alongside his chariot, Philip heard the man reading from the scroll of Isaiah a Messianic prophecy painting the portrait of the suffering servant who would surrender his life to bring salvation. Philip asked the man if he understood what he was reading, and the man admitted his ignorance, then invited Philip to join him on his journey and explain the passage to him.

Philip climbed up, and shared the good news of Jesus with the man. They rode together, read together, talked together, and then they both climbed down and entered the waters of baptism together.

Philip, taking the very nature of a servant, brought to fulfillment the promise of Jesus that his disciples would be his witnesses to the end of the earth, but Luke detailed the account meticulously so we might understand another important truth.

The Spirit of God works powerfully through those who humble themselves & surrender to His lead. Inspired humility leads to life-altering, world-changing mission.

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

Historically, how has humility impacted humanity's relationship with God?

How did Jesus live so differently?

As the disciples became apostles and this new movement scattered to carry the gospel into Judea and Samaria, how was humility key to the spreading of this good news?

Honestly, can any part of you identify with Simon the Great?  
Have you ever longed for a more important position in the church, a more powerful role?  
Have your motives always been pure?

How does Philip model for us a God-honoring, humble way in the Spirit?  
How does Philip demonstrate inspired courage in his humility?

Listening proves critical for Philip's mission to the eunuch.  
How is listening related to humility?  
How routinely do you humbly listen for the Holy Spirit's guidance for your day?  
Philip humbles himself to hear where to go and whom to approach?

How can we practically live like this?  
How can we grow as humble people God can use to change the world?

Pray for the Spirit's help living humbly and listening intently for His lead as people of purpose.