

Evangelism with A Seeker

By: Josh P. Yonts

An Exposition on Acts 8:26-40



Introduction

There is no doubt about it that one of the joys of carrying out the great commission is engaging the seeker. The seeker understands that we are not here by accident, and there is life after death, thus, the seeker is interested in spiritual matters. Although the seeker often explores other belief systems, the seeker can potentially be persuaded to accept the truth of Christianity and reject the fallacy of other worldviews and false belief systems. One great Biblical account that we can draw principles from to engage the seeker is found in **Acts 8:26-40**. In this account, we see some necessary elements needed in engaging the seeker.

On Open Door

An open door begins with the Christian being spiritually sensitive. The angel of the Lord (v.26) spoke to Philip and the Spirit said to Phillip, indicating divine guiding. Although the angel of the Lord will not likely appear to us to give divine instructions, all baptized believers have the indwelling Holy Spirit who will give us inner promptings as divine guidance concerning the seeker. We must constantly seek to be on our spiritual “A” game to be spiritually sensitive to the still small voice of the Holy Spirit. We can do this through the spiritual disciplines of fasting, prayer, series study, and devotional reading of God’s word. The apostle Paul stated regarding spiritual disciplines, “discipline yourself for godliness” (1 Timothy 4:7). The spiritual disciplines are a prerequisite before personal evangelism can be effective. It does need to be noted that these disciplines do not just work robotically, as though a mere iron-fisted legalistic performance of them will produce personal holiness. But as Donald S. Whitney states, “the Holy Spirit will

work through the biblical disciplines to make us more like Jesus. There is co coasting into Christlikeness. The spiritual disciplines are the God-given means by which we experience God and grow like Christ.”

Now it also needs to be noted that an open door includes the seeker. In verse 27 Luke informs us that the eunuch had been to Jerusalem to worship. In verse 30 he reveals that the eunuch was reading a scroll of Isaiah the prophet. These two verses indicate that the eunuch was seeking the truth regarding spiritual matters. It seems in the text that Philip was eager to respond to the open-door opportunity prompted by the Holy Spirit. In looking at the technique of Phillip in regards to his response it began with a question, “Do you understand what you are reading?” (v.30). This simple question or one that is related to it has I believe the potential to yield powerful; results. It is showing a compassionate concern for the one you are seeking to engage.

An Open Book

Important to consider that the eunuch responded to Philips’s question with a question: “how could I unless someone guides me? (v.31). True seekers usually have a genuine interest in understanding what they are reading, and often are open to guidance or assistance. The eunuch asked Phillip who the prophet was speaking of, referring to Isaiah 53:7-8. Phillip was theologically prepared to engage the seeker and answer his question. Spiritual preparedness and readiness are a requirement for evangelism. This is a spiritual discipline that must be exercised within the Christian. Regarding spiritual disciplines, Donald Whitney states, “Spiritual disciplines don’t work automatically, as though a mere legalistic performance of them will produce godliness. But when we practice them sincerely and with Christ at the center of them,

we can expect the Holy Spirit to work through the biblical disciplines to make us more like Jesus.”

The scriptures must be opened and considered if a person is to be won to Christ; the seeker must understand that salvation is not on their terms, but God’s. The Holy Spirit makes His deepest impression by His written word and through His ambassador that is serving as a Bible expositor. Phillip preached Christ to the seeker from the scriptures. As Adolph Saphir said, “We receive the Bible because of Christ, and we receive Christ through the Bible.”

An Open Mind

In Acts 8:34 the text reveals that the eunuch had an open mind, this is evident by his question to Phillip: “of whom does the prophet say this? Of himself or someone else?” we must always take note of any hint of interest that one may have toward the scripture. A person who is honestly questioning shows that he or she is being open-minded and is a good candidate for teaching. Unless a person displays an open mind toward the word, attempting to proceed with the plan of salvation will probably prove fruitless. In this case, it would do us good to remember the old saying, “Only the hungry mind can become educated.”

Open Mouth

In verse 35 the text says, “then Phillip opened his mouth.” If the Christian has the attitude that living the Christian life is all he has to do then he is dead wrong. No doubt it is true one must live the truth but also speak the truth. There is no other way to carry out the great commission one must speak. Phillip began where the eunuch was at which was in Isaiah 53:7-8. This is important because both Old Testament and New Testament point to Jesus Christ. In

regards to turning conversations to Christ Will McRaney Jr. states, “A key role involves being able to steer conversations to spiritual matters and ultimately Christ. The more conversations you start, the more times you will communicate the full gospel message.” Sadly many Christians allow golden opportunities to slip away, largely due to not being spiritually prepared. But in some cases, many believe simply living it is enough. Finally, in even more cases the Christian does not care about their God-given responsibility regarding the lost. These things should not be so.

Open Pool

The last necessary element needed to engage the seeker is found in verse 36 the eunuch said, “Look! Water!” What prevents me from being baptized?” How did the eunuch know to ask anything about water? The only logical answer is found in Phillip preaching Jesus to him, he must have been told about baptism when Phillip was preaching to him. As Phillip began with Isaiah 53 and preached Jesus to him, baptism had to have been a necessary condition for the eunuch to respond with such intensity (v.38). The mode of his obedience was immersion. It was the cause of his rejoicing as well. It was the cause of his rejoicing as well since we are not told of any rejoicing until after his immersion (v.39).

Evangelism’s Ultimate Purpose-Reconciliation

As we come to our conclusion, I want to point out two important truths to remember as we seek to evangelize the lost. *First*, the work of the Holy Spirit in evangelism. Jesus Himself promised that the Holy Spirit would be sent to the world upon His arrival back to glory with the Father (John 16:4-15). There was no need for the Spirit on earth so long as Jesus was here.

While an exhaustive study of pneumatology is not possible here, we must understand the important aspects of the Holy Spirit in regards to conversion, the new birth, and evangelism. That is the root of conversion, a *'turning again'*. It involves a change of life, thinking, attitudes, state, relationships, and behavior. The Holy Spirit convicts the sinner of sin (John 16:8-9). The Holy Spirit convicts the sinner of righteousness (v.10). The Holy Spirit convicts the sinner of judgment (v.11). Just as the devil has been judged, so will men. It would do us all good to remember that the Holy Spirit works primarily through the Word, so in the sharing of appropriate Scripture, He brings men and women under deep conviction. Without the Holy Spirit's role in engaging the culture with the gospel, we are left to our own mere autonomous human efforts. Those who rely on the Holy Spirit in evangelism must be walking in the Spirit and not walking in willful sin.

Second, evangelism's ultimate purpose. The ultimate purpose in sending Jesus Christ to earth, the ultimate purpose in calling the church to ministry, the ultimate purpose in laying the guilt of the sins of all sinners on the back of Jesus on the cross is so that sinful man might be reconciled back to God ((2 Corinthians 5:11-21). So go and be a witness!

Bibliography

1. The Holy Bible, *NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE*, The Lockman Foundation.
2. Whitney S. Donald, “*Truths You Can Trust*”, Copyright 2019 by SBTS Press. Chapter 13, *Truths You Can Trust for The Christian Life*, pg. 131
3. Whitney S. Donald, “*Truths You Can Trust*”, Copyright, 2019 by SBTS Press, ‘*Truths You Can Trust for The Christian Life*, pg. 131
4. Miller J. Graham, “*An A-Z of Christian Truth and Experience*”, The Banner of Truth Trust, Copyright 2003, J. Graham Miller, pg. 11
5. McKenzie E.C., “*14,000 Quips and Quotes*”, Copyright 1980 by Baker Books, pg. 336
6. McRaney, Will Jr. “*The Art of Personal Evangelism*” Copyright 2003 by Will McRaney, pg. 69