

Empire Church of the Brethren

## *Sunday Service Sermons*

**22 October 2023**

Obeying the Leading of the Holy Spirit

Text: "And the Spirit said to Philip, 'Go up and join the chariot.'"

Are you good at obeying?

I never was good at obeying my parents, siblings, teachers or any other authority.

I was once told, by one of my pastors, that I had a problem with authority.

I had never seen it that way before.

I just did not agree with what I was being asked to do.

I never had trouble with laws.

Well, maybe speed limit laws.

But laws in general are for the welfare of all citizens and I agree with that.

God's law is life giving.

I am not sure when I realized that and started working with God.

Let's see the first big thing that I needed God's help with was when I purchased the ranch.

No one thought I could pay it off when it had old trees and did not produce much.

Of course telling me that I could not do it was just the right motivation for me.

Then there are the numerous occasions when, without God's intervention, I would not be here.

I wish I had kept a record of those times.

My mother said that I was wearing out my guardian angel.

I did keep him alert.

God has always been a vital part of my life.

He rescued me on many occasions beginning when I was rather young.

And once I began driving and riding motorcycles there were several occasions that could have been fatal and the one that was fatal for a few minutes.

Jesus left us with a command.

Besides loving others as he loved us he asked us to take the message to the ends of the earth.

We call this the Great Commission.

What does this commission have to do with each of us?

Some people believe they are obeying the Great Commission when they attend Sunday School and worship services.

Some believe it is when they sing in the choir or teach Sunday School class.

Some believe that it is when they give a tithe and offerings or when they pray for missionaries.

All of these are but a partial response to the Great Commission of our Lord.

Philip provides us with a dramatic demonstration of how we are to obey the Great Commission on a one-to-one basis in our personal lives.

The Holy Spirit can call us to do things for the Kingdom of God.

We need to be open to his leading as was Philip.

Philip was sensitive to the Holy Spirit's indwelling presence.

Many of us never respond to the Holy Spirit because we do not recognize that he is within us and that he is seeking to do the work of God in us, to us, and through us.

Philip was listening to the voice of the Holy Spirit.

"An angel of the Lord said to Philip, 'Rise and go toward the south.'"

The remarkable thing is that Philip arose and went.

He was obedient to the messenger of God.

"And the Spirit said to Philip, 'Go up and join this chariot.'"

The Scripture then reads that Philip ran to him.

Philip received an impulse from the Holy Spirit and had the wisdom to be responsive.

God's love was active in this whole experience.

God loves all people.

God guides his people who will obey him to witnessing opportunities.

God supplies obedient witnesses with interested seekers.

God gave Philip a proper approach to share the good news with this needy man.

God gave Philip a message, the good news of God's grace.

God brought about conviction of sin and conversion.

God won a great victory.

When God seeks a sinner, and that sinner seeks God, they get together, particularly when one of God's children is listening and obedient to the Spirit.

Philip had a heart surrendered to God.

Philip believed that God is love and that you can trust him without fear.

Philip had a sensitive spirit that was open to God.

Philip had his spiritual receiving set turned on.

Philip had a heart that was obedient because of love.

Philip shared the good news.

The Ethiopian official became spiritually rich.

As a representative of his queen, he was: privileged, powerful, and popular which gave him opportunities to share the Gospel.

As a human being the Ethiopian official had: An empty heart, a hungry heart, a needy heart, and an open heart.

The Ethiopian official responded with a believing heart and experienced happiness and joy through faith in Jesus Christ.

A loving God and a needy heart got together because one of God's children was sensitive to the presence of the Holy Spirit and responsive as the Holy Spirit moved him to witness.

What if Philip had been too busy?

What if he had been spiritually lazy?

What if Philip had been untrusting and consequently to fearful?

What if Philip had been spiritually dull and disobedient?

God would have missed the privilege of saving a man, and a man would have missed the privilege of coming to Jesus Christ.

Be open and ready and see how God can use you.

Another response to the Holy Spirit is allowing him to guide us away from evil.

We ask God to lead us away from temptation which then delivers us from the influence of evil in our lives.

Jesus knew just how weak humans are when it comes to the influence of evil in their lives.

Had you realized that the prayer Jesus gave to his disciples had seven petitions?

Seven being the perfect number.

Jesus covered our needs in these seven petitions.

This last petition is for us to be delivered from evil.

The leading and delivering from evil is how we do not walk in evil.

Help us to see the temptation and give us the power to resist it.

Open our eyes to the temptation and empower us to not walk in it.

Is this referring to the one who tempts, Satan, or the various temptations that come our way?

How about both?

We should realize that there is an evil force behind our temptations.

That there is a being who wishes for us to fail and fall.

Separating us from God now and forever.

Pleading for God's help in all of this is a wonderful idea since we need help in recognizing and resisting evil and the evil one.

We must admit that there is an evil force against us.

That Satan is working for our defeat and that we need God's help in standing strong and resisting opportunities to sin.

Standing firm on the foundations of faith is not easy and we need God's help to be victorious.

We want and need to be rescued from the evil influence in our life.

To ask for help is to acknowledge that we cannot keep or preserve ourselves from the presence, power, and person of evil.

We need God's help.

We pray that God will daily deliver us from the design that the evil one may have on our lives.

It is renunciation of evil in every form and a genuine petition to be kept by God from every form of evil.

In this petition we look to our heavenly Father for his daily protection and intervention on our behalf.

Only God can save us from evil.

It is also a prayer for God's final act of salvation, which will be inaugurated by the second coming of our Lord Jesus "The Christ".

The Holy Spirit will lead us into places we can witness for God and away from places where we will be tempted to stray away from the path that leads to salvation.

Release the Spirit and allow Him to be an active part of your daily life.

He will be the means to fulfilling the petitions of the Lord's Prayer in each of our lives.

Father, help us to be all that you created us to be.