

DIVINE APPOINTMENTS Transcript

By Dr. Ron Jones

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I'm reading from Acts 8 beginning in verse 26. "Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, 'Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.' This is a desert place. And he rose and went. And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah. And the Spirit said to Philip, 'Go over and join this chariot.' So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, 'Do you understand what you are reading?' And he said, 'How can I, unless someone guides me?' And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this: 'Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter and like a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he opens not his mouth. In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth.' And the eunuch said to Philip, 'About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?' Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, 'See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?' And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he preached the gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea."

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Nicholas Herman never set out to become known worldwide by the Christian community. He was born in poverty. And for that reason he chose to enter the military, where he was guaranteed daily rations of food and a small income. He fought in the Thirty Years' War and was injured. And after the war he served for a short time as a valet, and then later joined the Carmelite Monastery in Paris, where he took a name for himself. He called himself Lawrence of the Resurrection. His friends knew him as Brother Lawrence. And maybe you recognize that name in church history. Brother Lawrence is famous for living his life in the presence of God and practicing the presence of God. While he served at the monastery, he mostly served in the kitchen doing what we would consider to be menial tasks. Later in his life and ministry he repaired sandals. But in 1691 Herman Nicholas died in relative obscurity, but we know about him today. He is famous in church history because of the letters that he wrote to people who asked him for advice and for counsel. And from those letters we get some sense of Brother Lawrence's intimacy with God and how he practiced the presence of God.

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I would say that Brother Lawrence lived his life *coram deo*. Do you know what I mean by that? It's a Latin phrase that means "in the presence of God" or "before the face of God." To live your life *coram deo* means to embrace every moment knowing that you are in the presence of God and under His watchful gaze. It means that whatever you are doing and wherever you are doing it, you know that you are in the presence of God and you are under the watchful gaze of an

omniscient God. And I believe living life that way, like Brother Lawrence did—in the presence of God and doing everything, every task of every day, every moment of every day, realizing you are in the presence of God, under the watchful gaze of God—living your life that way will produce an intimacy with God. It did for Brother Lawrence. And as people read his letters that he wrote to other people, they just got a sense of a communion and a union and an intimacy that Brother Lawrence shared with the Lord, even as he did his tasks in the kitchen and mended those sandals later in life.

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But I believe that living your life *coram deo*—in the presence of God and before the face of God, where you are, whatever you are doing...not just when you are in church, no, but wherever you are and whatever you're doing, because we serve an omniscient and omnipresent God—living your life that way will also produce what some people call and I'm calling today divine appointments. Philip lived his life that way. The text that I just read in Acts 8:26-40 tells the story of a guy named Philip who, in my estimation, reminds me of Brother Lawrence in the sense that he lived his life in the presence of God and made himself available to go and do whatever God told him to do at any given moment. And he answered what we are going to discover today to be a divine appointment.

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What is a divine appointment? I define it this way. A divine appointment is a meeting with another person that is supernaturally and unmistakably scheduled by God. Remember, Philip was one of the original seven deacons that we read about in Acts 6. And when the persecution came to the early church, he along with many others were scattered from Jerusalem. And Philip ends up in Samaria. And following his ministry in Samaria, the Bible tells us that the angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." Philip was up here in Samaria. And ministry was booming. I mean, people were coming to know the Lord. And things were going great. I mean, the gospel had come to, of all people, the Samaritans. Peter and John made their visit from Jerusalem to verify all of this and to verify that the Holy Spirit came to rest on even the Samaritans. And this was kind of place and the kind of ministry that a guy like Philip would say, "Man, I just want to settle down here and do life and od ministry here, maybe even plant a church, become the pastor of the church or, at best, the chairman of the deacons." A great place to serve.

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But this strange request comes from the angel of the Lord to leave that place in Samaria and travel south past Jerusalem and then toward this place called Gaza. Now, we hear about Gaza all the time in the news, the Gaza Strip. When we go to Israel, we don't go anywhere near the Gaza Strip because of all the terrorist activity in and around there. There are terrorist organizations lobbing rockets from Gaza. It's just a short distance into Jerusalem. You don't go down there today. But in Philip's time this was a beautiful place along the Mediterranean coast. But it was a desert place. Who is in Gaza? That's like saying, you know, the difference between Dallas and Waxahachie, Texas. I mean, who is in Waxahachie and who wants to go there? I always pick on the Waxahachians. I know that. But, I mean, Gaza was just this out of the way place here. And it didn't make human sense or any human rationale for Philip to leave a place where ministry was booming to go to Gaza except that he lived his life *coram deo*, in the

presence of God and under the watchful gaze of God. And Philip remained sensitive and available to follow the Lord at any moment and at any time.

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I want to suggest to you, friends, if you and I live our lives *coram deo*, two things will result. Number one, we'll develop a greater intimacy with God just like Brother Lawrence did. But also if we live our lives that way we will experience the Christian life as the adventure it was meant to be. Because when you're living your life in the presence of God, every moment, every day yielded to Him before the face and the gaze of an omnipresent God, who knows where He is going to send you next? Who knows what conversation He might have for you? A divine appointment over here where the watchful eye of the Lord—the eye of the Lord that goes to and fro across the whole earth, a God who is always at work to bring people to faith in Christ—He sees somebody over here. He saw an Ethiopian who was traveling by chariot from Jerusalem to this desert place toward Gaza. And He said, “Hey, Philip, you available? I've got an appointment for you down here.”

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And what I want to talk to you about today is what it looks like to live your life *coram deo*, in the presence of God. Wherever you are, whatever you are doing. Not just when you are in church. Oh, I know we all understand we're in the presence of God at church. But I'm talking about tomorrow morning when you go to the office. I'm talking about whatever you're doing this week that you are living in that constant awareness and that constant sense of yieldedness to the Father, who at any given moment would nudge you in some way and say, “I have a divine appointment for you.” How do you do that? What does that look like?

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Well, as we go back through the story here, I wrote down five words that kind of characterize this *coram deo* life I'm talking about and the divine appointments, how we respond to a divine appointment. And the first word that comes to my mind is the word sensitivity. It takes a sensitivity to the spirit of God and, as we'll find out here in a moment, even to perhaps the angel of the Lord nudging you in a direction. Acts 8:26 says, “Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, ‘Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.’” Again, an unlikely, unusual request from a human perspective. But God was at work. God had scheduled an appointment for Philip, and it was an appointment with this Ethiopian man who was traveling from Jerusalem down to Gaza. And this man had some questions. But I find it interesting it was the angel of the Lord that said this to Philip.

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Now, I don't know what you're theology of angels is, but it's a fascinating study in the scriptures. We know from a reading of scriptures that angels exist and that they are created beings that exist in heaven and are part of God's worship team, if you want to call it that. But Hebrews 1:14 tells us that angels are also ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation. God dispatches His angels across planet earth. We read about some of those experiences at various places throughout the Bible. Certainly, the angel Gabriel shows up to Mary in the Christmas story and so forth. But God is still in the business of dispatching His angels and, as I understand it, probably in human form.

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Hebrews 13:2 says, “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers,”—listen to this—“for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.” That’ll just send chills up and down your spine. What’s that all about? Makes you think twice about being rude to that stranger, right? You never know. Maybe God has sent an angel to nudge you in one direction or the other. I don’t want to get too deep into this. I actually wrote two chapters in my book, *Mysteries of the Afterlife*, about angels and related two stories of my own where I think back over the last 20 or 30 years where I wonder, *was that an angel of the Lord*, because it was a really interesting experience that I went through. It could be. The scripture certainly gives us the room to be able to envision that we might have encounters with angels just like Philip did 2000 years ago. It was the angel of the Lord who said to Philip...now, we don’t know whether he heard an audible voice. We don’t know what kind of manifestation of an angelic being it was. We don’t know much more about the experience other than the fact that it was the angel of the Lord who said, “Philip, we have an appointment for you. Need you to rise up from Samaria here, and there is a guy down there somewhere between Jerusalem and Gaza who is riding a chariot. He has been in Jerusalem worshipping the Lord, and he has some questions. And we need you to go down there.” Actually, Philip didn’t get that kind of detail. I’m pulling in detail from the rest of the story here. It was just, “Rise and go.”

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And what I’m suggesting here is there is a sensitivity, a sensitivity that we need to the leading not only of the angel of the Lord, but also to the Spirit of God. Look at verse 29. “And the Spirit said to Philip...”...now he is down near Gaza. “The Spirit said to Philip, ‘Go over and join this chariot.’” Do you have the kind of sensitivity to the Spirit of God where, if the Spirit of God would nudge you in some way...I call them the inner promptings of the Spirit. I’m not talking about, you know, hearing the voice of God or something like that. I’ve never heard the audible voice of God. But has the Spirit of God ever nudged me or urged me to go here or there or yonder? Absolutely. And when you’re living your life *coram deo*, when you’re living your life in the presence of God, when there is not a single moment that passes that you are not walking in the Spirit, in step with the Spirit, abiding in Christ, life becomes an adventure this way. When the Lord, who is always working, and His eyes are running to and fro across this whole earth, they call upon you or you or me and say, “I have an assignment for you down here. I see something that you don’t, but I need you to go from here to here.” Or, “I need you to walk across the street to your neighbor who is cutting the yard and being a conversation with that person.” Or, “That person who is sitting next to you on the airplane who is reading that book, you need to begin a conversation with that person.” Are you living your life with that kind of sensitivity? If you’re quenching the Spirit, grieving the Spirit, resisting the Spirit, you’ll never have that kind of sensitivity. But if you’re walking by the Spirit, living by the Spirit, keeping in step with the Spirit of God, not only do you enjoy an intimacy with God, but the Christian life becomes the kind of adventure that, when you’re sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit, this is fun stuff. You never know what’s going to happen. You may have scheduled your day, and I may have scheduled my day. But a divine appointment...not a divine interruption, but a divine appointment comes that maybe you never anticipated on your schedule today. It takes a sensitivity to the Spirit. Philip had that.

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Secondly, it takes availability. Look in verse 27. It says, “And Philip rose and went.” Again, Philip...he could have argued. But we have no indication of that. He didn’t sit down and say, “yeah, but, Lord, you know, things are going so well here in Samaria. Why don’t I just stay here and settle in? I mean, ministry is booming here.” He didn’t negotiate. He didn’t resist in any way. It just simply says he went. He was sensitive to the leading of the Spirit, in this case the angel of the Lord as well. And he willingly obeyed because he had already settled the matter that, “Lord, I’m yours. And I’m available to go anywhere, any place, any time You’ve made an appointment for me.”

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I remember when I was in seminary. I was finishing up my master’s degree at Dallas Seminary. And Cathryn and I married in August, and I had one more semester left, a fall semester. And we began the process of saying, “Lord, all right. Where would you have us to serve in our first ministry?” And we had that attitude that we’re available to go anywhere. And I give my wife credit because she is a Texas girl. And she had been in Texas all her life, in Dallas, Texas. She went to Baylor University. She was as Texas as Texas can get. And you can take the girl out of Texas, but you can’t take the Texas out of the girl. But the first church that invited us to come and meet with the search committee was located in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. And it was December. And we got on the plane. And with great enthusiasm, as much as we can muster up, we said, “Lord, all right, here we are,” heading out on this trip to Sioux Falls, South Dakota. We met the search committee at the airport. All 10 or 11 of them showed up. Nicest people you could ever imagine. Looking back...and we hadn’t had much experience with search committees and all of that, but they did a (0:19:00.1) great job introducing the church to us and courting us and all that kind of stuff. But I remember sitting out in the parking lot at the Sioux Falls airport. And they were all huddled up. And they were talking about the heat wave that had just come through. It was 10 degrees, and my wife and I are just shivering over there, all right. We had a great weekend.

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Now, it didn’t turn out that the Lord confirmed a call to this place, but we were available. And we were willing to go. In time He took us to Houston. We packed up a U-Haul, and my wife cried all the way from Dallas to Houston. She’s not only a Texan, but a Dallas girl. And to go to Houston, oh my. Ten years later when He called us someplace else, she cried leaving. Because when you put parameters around where the Lord will lead you and you say things like, “Lord, I’ll follow You wherever, but just don’t send me to Africa,” here is what I’ve learned. (0:20:00.1) The Bible says God gives us the desires of our heart. It doesn’t mean that your desires are aligned to His will yet. But in time, when your desires and my desires align to His will, then He gives us the desires of our heart that He has placed in our heart. And if it’s Africa or Gaza or South Dakota or wherever it might be, you’ll be so excited about going there by the time you get there.

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And that’s the way it was for me when I went into the ministry. I resisted it for a long time. I said, you know, “God doesn’t need another professional. He needs a few good laymen, and I’m happy to serve that way.” And I had my hands out like this, giving God the Heisman,

you know. And over time I said, “Okay, I’ll entertain a conversation.” By the time it came I was running toward it. And I’ve been doing this for almost three decades. I can’t imagine having a desire to do anything else but this. But there was a time when I resisted that.

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It could be as simple as resisting...“Lord, You want me to go across the street and have a conversation with my neighbor about Jesus? Are You kidding me?” Are you grieving the Spirit? Are you resisting Him? Are you quenching Him? Or are you living your life *coram deo*, in the presence of God, under the watchful gaze of an omnipresent God who, at anytime, anywhere can say, “I need somebody over there. Now, who is available? Who is available?” Are you sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit? Are you living your life yielded to Him and available, even to go to Gaza of all places to talk to one person about Jesus?

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The poet once described this struggle this way. “Disappointment? Oh no. His appointment. Change one letter, then I see that the thwarting of my purpose is God’s better choice for me.” And that’s a wonderful way to live.

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Sensitivity. Availability. Now we head on down to Gaza. And the next word that comes to my mind is initiation. Philip has traveled that route from Samaria down through Jerusalem and on this desert road to Gaza. And he sees an Ethiopian man. He is described in the text here as an Ethiopian eunuch, “a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all of her treasure.” Probably the treasurer for the queen of Ethiopia. A very high-ranking man in the Ethiopian government. And he was traveling in a chariot, which meant he was probably very wealthy, or he had such a high ranking position that he got a great company car because not too many people traveled this way.

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And Philip overheard him reading from the prophet Isaiah. It says in verse 30, “So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, ‘Do you understand what you are reading?’ And he said, ‘How can I, unless someone guides me?’” And the Ethiopian invited Philip to come up and sit with him. It seems like a simple exchange here. But because Philip was sensitive to the leading of the Spirit, because he was available, now he finds himself down in Gaza and he has to initiate a conversation with the man.

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I remember years ago Dr. Bill Bright wrote a book called *Witnessing Without Fear*. And he landed upon something. Because sometimes one of the greatest fears for us as followers of Jesus is to initiate a conversation with somebody about Jesus. We fear that maybe the conversation will go in a direction that we’re not trained or able to handle. Or maybe they’ll get mad at us and reject us. But, friends, back it up here. When you’re living *coram deo*, when you’re sensitive, when you’re available and when you respond to the Lord...the Lord has already been preparing the heart. The Lord is already doing something over here. He sees what you and I don’t see. He just needs an available person to go. And you can initiate a conversation about spiritual things and about Jesus without fear. Why? Because the Lord has already gone ahead of

you. He had already gone ahead of Philip. Here is this Ethiopian. He's got his Bible open. He must have bought a scroll somewhere in Jerusalem, another indication that he was probably a wealthy man. He had a copy of the scriptures, a scroll. And he was reading from Isaiah.

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And here is how Philip initiated the conversation. He asked him a question. "Do you understand what you are reading?" Friends, never underestimate the power of a question. I was thinking about that this week. And I was reminded of all the questions that Jesus asked people to initiate a conversation with them about spiritual things. There are over a hundred, maybe hundreds of questions that Jesus asked. Like, "why does this generation seek a sign? Do you not yet perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened? But who do you say that I am? For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? And which of you, being anxious, can add one cubit to his span of life? Where is your faith? What do you seek? Do you love Me? Do you know what I have to you? Why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not what I tell you?" Jesus asked all kinds of questions, didn't He? It's a fascinating study in the Gospel accounts, all the questions that Jesus asked people as a way of initiating a spiritual conversation with them. And that's all you have to you. That's all we have to do is start the conversation.

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Sometimes we're afraid to start the conversations and initiate it because we're afraid they'll ask us a question that we can't answer. You know what my favorite thing to do...favorite thing to say if I don't know the answer? I just say, "That's a great question. And I don't know the answer. It's not on the tip of my tongue, but I have some places I can go to do a little research for you. How about if we meet again and we talk about the answer to that question?" There is not a question that anybody has asked or is asking today about the Christian faith that hasn't been asked over the last 2000 years. There aren't any new questions. And somebody has probably answered that question or a form of it. Okay, you go back and do a little bit of research, and you make a second appointment with the person. And you continue the conversation. Don't feel like you have to have three seminary degrees to begin the conversation. Just ask the question. Find a question to ask. If you're sitting down next to somebody on an airplane and their reading a book that you know is written by maybe a pastor or an author, "Hey, what book are you reading? Tell me about it." And you're into the conversation. You can find all kinds of ways. When you're sensitive, when you're available, you can find all kinds of ways to initiate the conversation.

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The fourth word I wrote down is explanation. The story goes on to say in verse 32, "Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this: 'Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter and like a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he opens not his mouth. In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth.' And the eunuch said to Philip, 'About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?' Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus." Well, where was this scripture located? Well, we know it was in Isaiah, and specifically it was Isaiah 53, the great messianic prophecy. And the Ethiopian was asking the question of the ages that Jews and Christian have been discussing for 2000 years. Who was the prophet talking about in Isaiah 53? Somebody in his

time? Maybe himself? Or was this a prophecy concerning the coming of Messiah? And did Jesus Christ fulfill this prophecy? That's a pretty deep theological question to get around. I'll grant you that.

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But here is what I want you to notice. Philip kept the conversation about Jesus, and he started with this passage. Did you know you can start a conversation about Jesus anywhere in scripture and make a beeline to the cross? Because this entire book we call the Bible from Genesis to Revelation is about Jesus Christ. I could even take you to Genesis 3 and give you a gospel presentation. Because the first gospel is found there, or at least allusions to it. And I know that may involve a little bit of study. My point is simply this. Keep the conversation about Jesus. And wherever they are in the text of scripture, make it about Jesus. And get to the cross as quickly as you can. They may want to take off in different tangents. And you don't want to be rude about that or dismissive about that. But always bring the conversation and the explanation back to Jesus. That's the starting point from anyplace in scripture.

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So we go from a sensitivity and availability to initiating the conversation, having a time of explanation. And there may be some time where you go and do some study. And you come back with an explanation. That's fine. It continues the conversation. You made a second appointment.

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And then finally there is implementation. Let's pick it up in verse 36. "And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, 'See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?'" And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him." Here this Ethiopian heard about Jesus. And the assumption here is that he expressed faith in Christ. He knew enough that baptism was a first step. And he says, "What prevents me from being baptized?" And Philip takes him down into the water and baptizes him right there on the spot.

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Now, if you're reading the text carefully and depending on your translation, verse 37 isn't there. Some translations insert verse 37, which says, "And Philip said, 'If you believe with all your heart, you may.' And he answered and said, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.'" The translation that I'm working from, the English Standard Version, doesn't have verse 37. Why? Because scholars have indicated that the earliest of manuscripts don't have verse 37, probably inserted by a scribe later to help explain why we jump from the conversation to baptism. And usually in your Bible that verse is in brackets. And there is a little notation there to let you know that, through what we call the science of textual criticism—that is, studying the manuscripts that we have as far back as we can go...we want to be honest and upfront about this—verse 37 typically isn't there. But the insertion there doesn't change the story. It doesn't change any theology. It was inserted to help with the flow of the conversation here.

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That said, Philip takes him into the water, and he baptizes them. I call it an implementation step because this Ethiopian has believed and is now taking what I call one of the first steps of the disciple. Whenever you see people baptized in the New Testament, they're baptized immediately after they believe. Why? Because Jesus said in Matthew 28, "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit." Baptism doesn't save us, but baptism is the public profession of your faith. It's the first step that you take as a believer in Jesus Christ to say, "I believe in Jesus Christ. I have decided to follow Him. There is no turning back. There is no turning back. And I'm going public with my faith." I always like to tell baptism candidates every Christian needs to preach at least one sermon. And it's not a verbal sermon. It's a pictorial sermon. It's your public profession of faith. And we talk about the death, the burial, the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Buried with Christ unto death, rise again to newness of life. Shortest sermon you'll ever hear, but the most gospel-centered one. And it needs to happen as soon as you believe.

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Now, some of you maybe have never been baptized as a believer in Jesus Christ. Okay. What are you waiting for? We have a baptism service a little bit later this month at the beach. And we're going to be baptizing people at the beach. People who have professed faith in Jesus Christ who are going public with their faith, unashamedly saying, "I have decided to follow Jesus." And maybe you grew up in a tradition where baptism was practiced in a different way. Maybe you were sprinkled as an infant or something like that. Did you know that baptism by immersion was the practice of the church for the first 1200 years of church history? And then we started debating about what baptism meant and all of that. Even the translation of the word "baptize" comes from the word *baptizo* in the Greek. There was so much debate over how we did baptism and what it meant, they didn't translate the word. They transliterated the word. Because the word *baptizo* literally means to dip, to sink or to submerge. So that's why we practice believer's baptism by immersion. Again, a gospel presentation, a sermon. Buried with Christ unto death, rise again to new life. You're identifying publicly with the death, the burial and the resurrection.

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And I say this is a step of implementation that Philip was involved in. He didn't stick around to fully disciple the Ethiopian. We assume that God had other plans and other people to be involved in the disciple-making process there. But Philip got the process started. He implemented. Now he's got a believer in Jesus Christ. What are the first steps? Ah, the first of the first steps is baptism and going public with your faith. And the Ethiopian did that.

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It says in verse 39, "And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he preached the gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea." And Philip makes this kind of large sweeping movement through Jerusalem down to Gaza and then up the Mediterranean coast. And he lands in Caesarea. Elsewhere in the book of Acts it looks like Philip stayed there for most of his life in Caesarea, which is not a bad place to hang out. It's right on the Mediterranean coast there. Those are some nice digs. A lot better than the desert place in Gaza, so God took care of Philip here, a man who

was sensitive and available to take the divine appointment. And then the Lord moved him up the coast, and he preached his way all the way to Caesarea. Just like John and Peter came from Jerusalem to Samaria and then preached their way all the way back through the Samaritan villages all the way back to Jerusalem.

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It's *coram deo*. It's living your life in the presence of God, before the face of God, not just for an hour every week, but every moment of every day, whatever you're doing where you're doing it, saying, "Lord, what do You have for me today," keeping in step and in stride with the Spirit of God, who may nudge you with one of those inner promptings of the Spirit that says go talk to this person or that person. What an adventure life becomes. What an exciting adventure the Christian life is. Because you never know who God is going to send you to today. You never know what divine appointment He's made for you when you're sensitive and available and willing to initiate a conversation.

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Before I finish, you know, some of you may be here today, and maybe you identify more with this Ethiopian. You've come to a place of worship like he did to Jerusalem, and he walked away with some questions. No doubt he had heard all the buzz about the early church in Jerusalem. Maybe he had some initial conversations, bought himself a Bible, started reading it, but just didn't understand some things. And you're like that Ethiopian. You need somebody to sit down with you and maybe clarify some things about Jesus and about Christianity and the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is a good time and a good place to do that. And in just a few moments we're going to give you an opportunity to do that, to have a conversation with somebody before you leave today that can clarify some things.

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Philip was sensitive and available to this divine appointment, and because he was, it changed this Ethiopian's eternal destiny. And that's what is at stake, friends. Whether you identify more with Philip today or the Ethiopian, what's at stake in all of this in this *coram deo* lifestyle, in this thing that makes you available for divine appointments, somebody's eternal destiny is at stake. And that makes me want to take all of my plans and submit them to the Lord, all my scheduling. You know, the Bible says in Proverbs 16:9, "A man plans in his heart, but the Lord directs his steps." And I don't know about you, but I'm one of those planners. I plan my work and work my plan. And if I'm not careful, sometimes I'll see a divine appointment as an interruption in my day. No, it's not an interruption. It's an appointment that the heavenly Father has said is more important than whatever appointment I have on my calendar and in my schedule. And the same is true for you and for me. For every divine appointment there is somebody's eternal destiny that hangs in the balance. Let's be sensitive to the Spirit's leading, even open to the ministry of angels among us, and be available for God to send us anywhere, anytime at any moment to carry out the Lord's work and embrace that as the adventure that it is.

0:40:25.0