

KEY VERSE:

Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptised?
Acts 8. 36



THE PARISH OF CHALFONT ST PETER

Encounter God, Encourage Others, Engage our World
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The Church Grows & Spreads 3:

Philip and the Ethiopian



**CHALFONT
ST. PETER
PARISH CHURCHES**

KNOW WHAT:

- Today we continue with our theme: The Church Grows and Spreads. After Jesus' disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit, they met together, prayed together, and saw God use them to spread the good news of Jesus to all kinds of people in many different places.
- Last week we heard how Peter escaped from prison when an angel came to rescue him.
- This week we look at Philip, a 'deacon' in the church who was told to go into the desert. There he met a very important man from Ethiopia who was returning from worship in Jerusalem. He was reading a scroll from the prophet Isaiah who had foretold things about Jesus many hundreds of years before.
- Philip asked if the man understood what he was reading and, when the man said he needed help, Philip explained about Jesus. As they were travelling the man saw water and asked what would prevent him being baptised then and there. They stopped and Philip baptised him. The man went on his way and we know that soon after Christianity was established in Ethiopia.

SO WHAT:

- When people listen to the Holy Spirit he will give them opportunities to share the good news that Jesus loves people. He will have prepared people's hearts to receive the truth.
- The Ethiopian knew he had to obey God publicly and be baptised.
- One person being obedient to God can change a whole country.

NOW WHAT:

- Let's ask God to help us to listen to the Holy Spirit and share the good news this week.
- If we or our children have not been baptised let us ask what stops us.

JIM'S JOTTINGS: I've got a really important job for you.

How often does someone say that to us or we say it to our children? How do we respond, willingly, grudgingly, swiftly, slowly etc.

In today's story, as we look at the early church growing and spreading, we meet Philip, a leader of the church in Jerusalem who had an important job there overseeing logistics, particularly the distribution of food to the poor, elderly and hungry. Then God told him to leave the city and head off into the desert, but without giving him a destination! Philip went and, as he travelled, came across a chariot with an important man inside, almost certainly accompanied by guards. Putting aside the risk of embarrassment or conflict Philip ran up and heard the man reading a prophecy about Jesus written by Isaiah hundreds of years before Jesus was born. The man wanted an explanation and Philip got into the chariot and told him about Jesus and how to become a Christian. The man, who turned out to be one of the top Government officials from Ethiopia, listened intently and, when he saw water, asked to be baptised. He then went on his way. History tells us that Christianity took root in Ethiopia at an early stage, presumably through this man.

Philip and the Ethiopian each had important jobs to do. Both needed to step up to the task with courage and faith. God has plans for each of us and wants us to listen and obey. As you think this week about choices you have to make, may I encourage you to listen to God. You never know how important or unexpected the results might be. We can all be world changers.