



Essentials for a Healthy Church: *Devotion to Scripture*

March 17, 2019

The Power of Scripture to Convict

OPENER: When you travel, do you prefer... listening to music, reading a good book, catching up on social media, watching the scenery or what (assuming you are not driving)?

Without a doubt the early church was devoted to studying God's Word as the apostles taught. That devotion was born out in numerous ways throughout the story of the church. As the church was persecuted and disciples began to scatter, they took that Word with them, preaching the gospel wherever they went and spreading the good news all over the world. In ch. 8 we are told the story of Philip's encounter with an Ethiopian who decided to follow Jesus after reading the Scriptures. In ch. 17 we are given the example of the Bereans as a people who sought the truth in the Scriptures for themselves. Tonight, let's explore how an honest and open reading of the Scriptures convicted those who read it and brought people, such as the Ethiopian Eunuch, to faith in Jesus.

DIG: READ ACTS 8:26-40; HEBREWS 4:12

- What clues from the text give you any indication of this Ethiopian's state of mind as he traveled? How open do you suppose he was to what he was reading?
- What had led Philip to this man? Have you ever had the sense that God had put you in just the right place at the right time?
- What is the significance of the passage in Isaiah (**53:7,8**) that the Ethiopian was reading? Go back & re-read that section and discuss its connection to Jesus.
- Note (**vs. 35**) how Philip was easily able to begin with this passage and tell the man about Jesus. What specifically do you believe he would have shared as he shared "good news"?
- What was the man's immediate reaction after hearing this news explained? Why do you suppose it was important for the man that he do it right then and there?

- Did any new insight or thought jump out to you as you read this story again tonight?

Discuss:

- Can you think of a time when you were especially convicted by a truth you read in Scripture? What did you do about it?
- If you've never shared your story of baptism, share with your group the occasion and what prompted it at the time.
- Have you ever had the opportunity to share the gospel with someone? How did it go? Were there any 'helps' or resources which you have found helpful?
- It is obvious that the Ethiopian was open and searching, as he was already reading the Word with interest & curiosity. What can we do to encourage people we encounter who seem to have no interest or openness?
- We realize that devotion to God's Word is at the top of priorities for our church... but what can we do to strengthen this commitment or encourage it in a stronger way?

PRAY

Be sure to close with a time of prayer. How can we pray for you tonight?

- Keep the Arizona (Navajo Nation) mission team in your prayers this week! Jim & a team of 22 others from RCA are serving the church in Fort Defiance, Arizona and will be returning on Friday, the 22nd.
- Encourage your group to be praying through the monthly prayer & Bible reading guides being provided monthly for us as a way to encourage greater devotion to the Word of God.