

Soulwinning with Philip

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[0:00] Proverbs 11 verse 30 Just reading that to start with.

The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he that winneth souls is wise. I want to talk about winning souls. The Bible says he that wins souls is wise.

It's a smart thing to do. It's a great thing to do. And it's a privilege that we have as God's people to be his witnesses, to be witnesses for the Lord Jesus, witnesses of salvation, of his good news, and evangelism, it literally means good news, the gospel, the sharing of the gospel, the sharing of the good news of Jesus Christ.

What's the gospel? What is the good news? It means the life, death and resurrection of our Saviour from the dead and the possibility of his everlasting life being his gift to you, of his presence in your life, of that eternal life that you can receive from that relationship with him.

Good news. Good news. How much we'd love to hear good news. If you get the newspapers or listen to the TV broadcast, it's often bad news, isn't it? It's often news that is sad news or bad news.

[1:23] Well, the Bible tells us there's good news for modern man, the gospel, the good news that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners and to give us his everlasting life.

And it's a fact, people, today that 150,000 people die every day in the world. That's a lot, isn't it? Every single day, 150,000.

It's almost two every second. Two people die almost every second. What's so good about death?

We know that it's not a good thing. That's exactly right. Because especially if people die and they go to hell.

Because there's really two destinations, one or the other. And the Bible tells us that multitudes are lost. It says there's a broad way that leads to destruction, but there's a narrow way that leads to life, and few there be that find it.

So our hope, and I pray that in worshipping and being here tonight, you've got an interest in things eternal and things beyond this life. The fact is multitudes are lost.

[2:24] And it's the responsibility of every Christian. Every Christian here today, you've got a responsibility to be his witness. Not just the preacher or missionaries, but every Christian has a responsibility to share the gospel, to preach Christ, to witness the saviour of salvation to others.

And despite the huge need, the massive need of the world today, of people dying without salvation, it's astounding that the statistics tell us that it's only about 97% of the church has no involvement in any sort of evangelism.

So only about 3% of the church has some involvement in some sort of evangelism or reaching out of witnessing, of outreach. And witness, what does it mean?

Fact is, you are a witness. Fact is, you already are a witness. The term witness includes all your words and actions that make an impression on other people.

So whether you realise it or not, you are a witness. A witness. And you have been given the authority and the ability to be a witness. To be a witness for the Lord Jesus, for his salvation.

[3:42] And we're going to take a look at some key aspects of being a witness for Christ. Being a witness for Christ. We see this in the account of Philip and the eunuch.

If you'd like to turn to the book of Acts. In the New Testament there. Acts, chapter 6 to start with. To find a little bit about Philip. And then we're going to turn to the account of where Philip met the eunuch.

The Ethiopian official. And some of the key things about Philip. He was a great guy. He was a godly man. And we see how we can be a witness for the Lord through what Philip did as God used Philip.

And God's spirit uses the word and faithful witnesses to bring people to Christ. God used Philip to wrench the Ethiopian official for Christ.

So in Acts 6 we see in Acts 6 the word of God introduces us to Philip. This man Philip. Acts 6 verses 3.

[4:49] In Acts 6 verse 5. In part it says, Wherefore brethren, look ye out among ye seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word. And the same pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith, and of the Holy Ghost and Philip.

And it talks of others there too. The point that it shows us here about this man Philip is he was a man of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom.

He was chosen for the special role of being a deacon in the early church. And so we see the kind of characteristics of Philip's life. And likewise for us here tonight, how can we apply this scripture? What it means is that to be a useful Christian, live for God's glory. Be a faithful ambassador like Philip was. Philip was a faithful Christian and his life glorified God.

[5:52] Philip demonstrated, someone put it, that he demonstrated at least eight qualities in his life that contributed to his effectiveness for Christ.

The knowledge of the word of God. He had a knowledge of the word, the Bible. He had boldness that he went out and witnessed. He had compassion.

He cared about others to want to share the gospel. He had humility, obedience, a receptivity to the Holy Spirit, to God's guidance in his life.

He had tact. So he was wise in how he approached the situation. And he had enthusiasm. All of these characteristics were in Philip's life. And so we see, now we're going to turn to the account where Philip witnessed to the Ethiopian eunuch.

And you find that there in Acts chapter 8. So a couple of chapters on to Acts chapter 8. We'll refer to that in a moment. And the backdrop here is that Philip allowed the Holy Spirit to use him.

[6:56] And like that too, every one of you, young people, older people here tonight, the Holy Spirit, God's Spirit wants to use you, to fill you, to work through you, to work through your life, to empower you.

As we know in Acts 1, that they ask of the Holy Spirit to empower them, to be his witnesses on planet Earth. And the work of the Holy Spirit is essential to salvation.

And we need to pray that the Lord will lead us, that the Holy Spirit will lead us, that we can partner with God as he leads us to witness. And there's a couple of things the Holy Spirit does when we witness.

He leads us to witness, number one, and he convicts the sinner, number two. So both of those things are the working of the Spirit of God. And Philip went to evangelise a group of people who were traditionally off limits to the Jews.

He went to the nation of Samaria. He went to the Samaritans. And God used him mightily as there was a wonderful outreach there in the land where the Samaritans were.

[8:01] And then it goes on in Acts 8, verse 26. So we'll pick it up there in Acts 8, 26. And then it says, And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south into the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.

And then it says of Philip, it says, And he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace, the queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, was returning, and sitting in his chariot, read Isaiah the prophet.

Now from the account here, we can tell that where he was reading was in the very word of God, in the book of Isaiah, chapter 53, verses 7 to 8.

Because we know the quote there, that's what it was referring to. And the context there of Isaiah 53, it's one of the most gripping prophetic verses that speak of the Lord Jesus coming.

Isaiah saw the Lord Jesus at the eye of prophecy as he came. Some 500 years before the Lord Jesus actually came, Isaiah saw the events of that awful day, of that rugged cross, of that

gruesome crucifixion.

[9:33] He saw it there in technicolor as he's had that vision of the Lord Jesus as the lamb that was slain. As he sees all we like sheep have gone astray.

And that God had to lay on Christ, in Christ's body, the sin of us all. And this is what this man was reading about in the context there.

And the context there of this man from Ethiopia was that he was spiritually hungry. He was hungry and spiritually in tune. He had been to Jerusalem for to worship.

And he was reading there the very scriptures as he was driving along back home in the chariot. In the chariot. And then the spirit said unto Philip, verse 29, Go near and join thyself to this chariot. It's interesting, isn't it? Here was a roadway, likelihood. There was lots of people there. Maybe a caravan full of numbers of chariots and people walking or riding or driving, whatever they were in.

[10:41] And the Holy Spirit spoke to Philip and said, Join yourself to this chariot. Pray for the drug addict.

Pray for everyone and anyone that comes across your way. That God will open the eyes of the blind. That they can see the gospel. They can see their crying need of the Saviour.

They can see their vital need of salvation. And be led by the Holy Spirit. That's how Philip was identified here.

Philip was identified by having that leading of the Holy Spirit. Be led by the Holy Spirit when you seek to witness. It's the Holy Spirit, after all, who convicts the world.

He convicts men of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. The Holy Spirit will draw people to the Saviour. And be obedient too. Of course, as a Christian, we want to be obedient to the Word of God, to what God's truth tells us to do.

[12:01] Be obedient to the one who says, I am your Lord and Master. In John 13, verse 14, the Lord Jesus said, You call me your Lord and Master.

Sometimes we might call Jesus our Lord or our Master, but is he really? Is he really? If he is, then we will be obedient to our Master. We'll share the witness.

So firstly, the Spirit. The Spirit was what motivated and compelled Philip to constrain him. That love of Christ, the Spirit of God at work in his heart, as he was led by the Spirit, prayerfully he went and witnessed.

And secondly, we see especially evident in this account here, is the Scriptures were very evident too.

When you want to witness the Scriptures, the Word of God, need to be very evident and preeminent. So for example, from verse 30, it goes on in our account here, in Acts 8, verse 30 it says, And Philip ran thither to him, so he ran over to him, and he heard him read the prophet Isaiah, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?

[13:12] And the man said, How can I, except some man should guide me? Now it's interesting, this word guide, it's the same root word as the Lord Jesus used in John chapter 14, where he says, I am the way, the truth and the life.

No man cometh unto the Father but by me. This word way is the same word that this man was saying, How can I, except some man should guide me?

In other words, literally, How can I understand this Bible verse unless someone show me the way? He was asking, he says, I need someone to show me the way.

That's what you will do. As a witness for the Lord Jesus, you can show people the way. You can point people to the way. The Lord Jesus, the one way, the one who can save you, the one way to heaven, to eternal life.

And so he desired that filler, that he would come up and sit with him. And then verse 32, it goes on. Acts 8, 32. The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and like a lamb done before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth.

[14:32] In his humiliation, his judgment was taken away, and he shall declare his generation for his life is taken from the earth. And the eunuch answered Philip and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this, of himself or of some other man?

So the Ethiopian, as he was reading this Bible verse, he didn't really know who it was talking about. Who's he talking about? Who's this talking about? And he asked Philip, I need someone to show me the way.

I need someone to guide me. And people tonight, as God's witness, use the scriptures. Use the word of God. Use the scriptures and guide people according to the Bible, the word of God.

The Holy Spirit uses the scriptures that you quote, the scriptures that you use when you're witnessing to people. So it's important for you and I to try to memorize Bible verses.

Try to remember them. Try to commit them to your memory. Try to remember those Bible verses that you can use when you're witnessing to people, when you're talking to other people about the Lord. God can use you.

[15:38] As you've got those memory verses, you've got those Bible verses in your thoughts. And he can bring them to your mind. And the Bible, it convinces men of their need of salvation.

The Bible shows us that we're sinners, we're lost, we're Christless, we're doomed, we're damned without salvation. And the word of God also converts us.

It convicts us and it converts us. The word of God. So God's truth, it's vital. Get a hold of it. Try to read it and apply it. Try to search the scriptures.

Try to study and learn more about the word of God. And if you need help, sing out. Ask another Christian some different tools that you can use like Bible dictionaries and concordances and commentaries and different sources of information about the Bible so you can better understand it. And then God can use you to translate the Bible into words that people can understand. A gypsy smith, an Irish evangelist, said this. He said, there are five Gospels and some people will never read the first four.

[16:49] You may be the only Gospel they will ever read. It's true, isn't it? You've got Matthew, Mark, Luke and John and then there's the Gospel according to you because you are his witnesses.

You are an evangelist. You are his instrument to the world around you to be his witnesses. So we've seen, we've seen here that to witness we need the Spirit.

We need the Spirit, the Holy Spirit. As we prayerfully are led, the Holy Spirit will guide us. He will lead you to witness. He will use you to witness the Spirit.

Secondly, we need the Scriptures. The Scriptures is this man was reading, he was open, he was spiritual, he was going to worship and he had the Scriptures in his hands.

He was open, he was hungry for spiritual truth and God used Philip to translate the Scriptures to him, to interpret them, to guide him, to show him the way. So the Scriptures and thirdly, the Saviour, the Saviour.

[17:48] Then Philip opened his mouth, verse 35, and he began at the same Scripture and preached unto him Jesus. So he started from the Scripture and he preached unto him Jesus.

When he preached, he didn't preach about all kinds of theology and doctrine and viewpoints and latter-day ideas and events and all kinds of man-made ideas and ideologies, what he preached to him was Jesus.

That was the Saviour. That was the one that this man needed. And it's interesting too, in verse 35, what does it say? Philip opened his mouth. Something simple, isn't it?

And yet, something that sometimes we clam up, we don't open our mouth, it's easy to say nothing, it's easy to clam up. But God wants you, he wants me, to open your mouth.

Open your mouth. Philip had a passion for Jesus, he opened his mouth. He had a passion for the message. His message was not religion, it was Jesus. It was the Saviour.

[18:49] And like that too, people, Christians here tonight, let God use you to focus on that which really matters, what the Scriptures say about the Saviour.

And gain strength and boldness. As God uses you, you'll become bolder. As you witness, he'll use you more. You'll become more confident. You'll become more practiced at it.

And he'll be able to use you more and more as you learn by doing. It's really how we learn everything, isn't it? It's by doing. And so learn to witness by witnessing.

And Acts 8.36, what happened? And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water and the eunuch said, See, here is water. What doth hinder me to be baptized?

He was so spiritually hungry and thirsty and seeking to be everything that he could be in Christ that he didn't want to delay. He wanted to be baptized. He wanted to take that visible step of witness, of testimony.

[19:52] And Philip, what did he say in verse 37? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest and he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

It's a shame that some modern Bibles take some of these verses out because this is really the most telling verse in the account where Philip asked the question. He asked the question, Where are you at?

Do you believe? Have you got faith? Have you trusted him with all thine heart? Trusted that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

And sometimes we don't ask the question. We don't provoke that question, that challenge. Philip gave a challenge to this man. Do you believe?

Have you put your faith? Have you put your heart's trust in Christ and his dying on the cross for your soul? Have you trusted him as Lord, as Saviour? That's the intention of this here.

[20:57] He challenged him of his standing with Christ. And it's like to what the Lord Jesus himself did in John 11 where the Lord Jesus talked about, I am the resurrection and the life.

He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

What the Lord Jesus did again, he asked the question as the great evangelist himself, our Lord Jesus himself, as the one who came to the woman at the well and in different ways he challenged people like Nicodemus.

He was a great testimony, a great example of how we are to witness. How did he witness to Martha? He said, do you believe this? Do you believe? And it's interesting that her response is exactly the major purpose statement of John's gospel itself.

He said, she said, yes Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of the living God. She testified of her faith too in response to Christ's question.

[22:04] And that was really a testimony of saving faith. I believe that you are the Christ. like to what the eunuch said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

It's that faith, it's that commitment of trusting Christ for your salvation. And it's that repentance, that turning around of your life, that you've got to stop going your own way and you're going to turn your life over and surrender to Him.

And so, just to think this through, what happened next? And he commanded the chariot to stand still and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him.

There's a wonderful evidence of that salvation through that testimony of that baptism. And this story shows us, it shows us how God can use you.

Just like God used Philip, just sent out into the desert, the Holy Spirit led him to this chariot and He gave him the words to help bring understanding, to guide this one, to show the one the way, the truth and the life, the Lord Jesus, and to bring the message of salvation.

[23:19] He opened His mouth. He opened His mouth. That's how simple it is, that you can be used by God. As God is angry at sin, there's a wrath, and yet there's a wonderful love story too, that the Bible gives us that contrast.

There's the shadow of Calvary, the wrath of God vented on Christ's body, and then there's the sunshine on the other side of Calvary, the resurrection and the life that He brings to us as He gives us eternal life through the death of His Son.

And so, Philip found a spiritually hungry soul, helped him to understand the Scriptures, and Philip met the man where he was. He used the Scriptures to point him to Christ.

Do you want to be used by Him? I pray that every Christian here tonight, you want to be used by God. Think of it, if you can, to illustrate what sometimes happens in churches is that you've got to, someone pictured it as being like a group of firefighters polishing their fire engine outside of a

burning building.

So consumed in making their fire engine nice and shiny and clean, and just so, and everything in its place, and all the buttons nicely cleaned, and all the hoses nicely tied up on the fire engine while there's a burning building.

[24:39] That can be sometimes what happens in church, in the church world, that we, as church people, as church attending people, we can want to have everything just right with our church services, and everything just so with how we practice our faith, and yet evangelism is a neglected essential commission that we all have.

It's an essential command that our God has invested His life in you to be His witnesses, and whilst it might be all nice and dandy to have a nice shiny fire engine, the fire engine needs to get the hoses out and start putting the hoses where they're needed to quell the fire that burning building and to save the people that are trapped in the burning building, and sometimes as Christians we neglect that absolute essential task that we have that Christ has given to you to be His witnesses.

We can neglect that, and the majority of the church are doing just that. As I say, 97% of church activity has nothing to do with evangelism, with reaching out.

A great preacher said this, Oswald Smith, he said, Oh my friends, we're loaded down with countless church activities while the real work of the church, that of evangelizing the world and winning the lost, is almost entirely neglected.

And as a church, I pray that every one of you, every one of us will be stirred and encouraged that everything we're about will have an eye to the lost, to reaching out.

[26:21] As we have a men's outreach, as we have a children's outreach, a youth outreach, that everything is geared to be thinking about. How can we present the gospel by any means, in whatever fashion, in whatever method we can, that the word of God can be declared, that the salvation of souls can be made possible, as we are obedient in preaching the gospel.

And we're motivated to evangelize because men are lost. They're without hope, they're under condemnation, and they're destined for destruction. And we're motivated too because of His lordship.

evangelism is God's will. It's His will. The Lord Jesus says, My meat, or my food, is to do the will of Him that sent me. And evangelism brings joy, great rejoicing.

We know at the end of the account in Acts there, they went on their way rejoicing. There was joy. And there was joy in heaven too. Because the Bible says that if one sinner repents, there's joy amongst the angels of heaven.

And yet, one closing thought is that evangelism has limited time. We can't do it in heaven. You know, you might get fired up and think you can serve God, and yet you don't do it.

[27:39] Evangelism has a limited time. When you get to heaven, you can't evangelize anymore. There's no lost souls there. And so there's a matter of urgency. While we're alive, let's do our part.

The Lord Jesus came to seek and to save that which is lost. And it should be our primary responsibility as a Christian. Just one quote to close.

Here's a quote. Someone said this, Sharing the gospel is a joy, not a job. It's a delight, not a drudgery. Think of the joy in the presence of the angels over one sinner who repents.

That's Luke 15, verse 10. Remember the joy when you received the Lord Jesus as your saviour. One minister says, I've seen a whole church suddenly come alive with joy as we had people receiving Christ in the services.

And even as Christ did not come into the world to be ministered unto, but to minister just so, the greatest joy in the Christian's life is the joy of sharing your personal faith in a way that another person can find Christ for time and eternity.

[28:47] Friends tonight, think of what Philip had. He had the Spirit. He was led by the Spirit. He was moved by the Spirit to obey the Word of God. He had the Scriptures.

He had the Scriptures in his heart, in his understanding so he could help the man to find Christ through the Word of God, through the Bible. It's good if you can get a little workers personal New

Testament that you can carry around with you when you've got a spare moment. Read it and put the Scriptures into your heart, into your memory. And then we see that he had the Saviour. That was the focus of what he was about. It wasn't about all kinds of jargon or Christianese or religious words and doctrines and ideologies. He preached Jesus. He opened his mouth and he talked about Jesus. That's really how simple it is. How simple it is. And then ask the question, do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God?

[29:49] Do you believe with all your heart? And perhaps the song here tonight, you're not a Christian yet. You might have some interest or maybe a passing thought about what's going to happen to me when my number's up.

If today was the day that it was your last day on earth, would it be a day that finds you ready? Does it find you ready?

Do you know how you can be saved? The Bible's very clear that he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, but he that believeth not shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him. The anger of God. God's angry. He's angry at our sin, at our disobedience, at our rebellion. The whole human race is in direct disobedience to God from Adam down. Every man, every woman, all have sinned and come short. Not one is good. No, not one, it tells us. And the only way we can be saved is finding that one good one, the Lord Jesus, the only man who is good as the perfect man, as the God man, to die in our place on the cross, to take our sin and pay for it there.

[31:15] And if you put your trust in him to pay your account for you, the wages of sin is there to pay that sin debt of death for you, he can wipe the slate clean and take every sin, every guilt, every stain, every bit of shame and condemnation and pay it in full.

Stamped with a stamp that says paid in full because of the blood that he shared. And that's really the wonderful, beautiful thing that Jesus did for you in dying on the cross for your sin and mine. He paid the full price for it there so we can have life because of his death. And of course he's alive now. He's resurrected. He's living in our hearts by faith. And if you're unsure tonight, if you're not certain tonight that you're saved, please seek counsel and speak to someone who you know is a Christian tonight that they can guide you and help you to come as Philip guided the unit to come to that point, to come to that personal realisation of how you can be saved tonight.

Let us pray. Lord, we thank you for Philip's example, for the story we've heard of how he witnessed to that man. Help us too, Lord, to be obedient to your scriptures and your spirit, to be led by you, that we can point people to the saviour of man's souls.

And Lord, we thank you that we have that privilege as your people by your grace. We thank you, Lord, in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

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