

God's Search for Men and Women

by Peter Brandon

God is actively seeking men and women to be saved, and the key to effective preaching is a personal experience of salvation, passion, and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Duration: 43:54

Scripture: Acts 8:26

Topics: "God's Pursuit", "Salvation"

Description

Peter Brandon emphasizes God's relentless pursuit of individuals, illustrating this through the story of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch from Acts 8. He highlights that God is more invested in our salvation than we often realize, and that the call to follow Him can come in unexpected ways. Brandon stresses the importance of preachers being passionate and empowered by the Holy Spirit to effectively communicate the Gospel. He encourages listeners to respond to God's call, just as the eunuch did, by believing in Jesus and being baptized as a public declaration of faith. Ultimately, the sermon serves as a reminder that every soul is precious to God, and He actively seeks out those who are lost.

Transcript

The subject under discussion tonight is God's search for men and women. Wonderful thing to know that God is far more concerned about saving us individually than we are to be saved. And it's lovely to know that he's going to search tonight and that's the subject.

I'm going to read from Acts chapter 8 and I shall commence reading at verse 26. And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip saying, Arise and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza which is desert. And he arose and went.

And behold a man of Ethiopia a eunuch of great authority and the Kandese queen of the Ethiopians who had the charge of all her treasure and had come to Jerusalem to worship was returning and sitting in his chariot read Isaiah the prophet. Then the spirit said unto Philip go near and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran there to him and heard him read the prophet Isaiah and said understandest thou what thou readest.

And he said how can I accept some man should guide me. And he besought Philip that he would come up and sit with him. 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. In his humiliation his judgment was taken away and who 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.

Then Philip opened his mouth and began at the same scripture and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way they came unto a certain water and eunuch said see here is water what doth hinder me to be baptized. 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. And he commanded the chariot to stand still. And they both went down into the water both Philip and the eunuch and he baptized him.

And when they would come up out of the water the spirit of the Lord caught away Philip and the eunuch saw him no more. And he went on his way rejoicing that Philip was found at Azotus and passing through he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea. And the Lord will bless to us the reading of his word.

A London city missionary was holding a children's mission in the heart of the East End. And he noticed that there were a few boys coming every night. And he turned to one lad that was about 12 and said to him Tommy have you found the Lord Jesus yet? The little boy with a twinkly in his eye said didn't know he was lost mister.

But I know this that I was lost and he found me. Now that boy was a brilliant little theologian. In the Old Testament Israel was told as a nation seek the Lord while he may be found.

Call ye upon him while he is near. But in the New Testament that kind of language is not used. For the scripture and the Lord himself sums up the whole of his ministry when he said for the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

Now in gospel preaching you need a preacher. The preacher must be a man who has experienced salvation personally. He must be a man that knows all the facts of the gospel.

And he must preach the gospel clearly and plainly so that people can understand it. And ever in his mind he will bear the fact I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. It is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes.

And therefore he preaches a message that he loves dearly. Secondly he must be a man with passion. When the apostle speaks of himself as an ambassador he says a remarkable thing.

That the love of Christ constrains me. Now what did he mean? The word constrain is exactly the same word as malarial fever. And that means when a person has malarial fever and when that patient is in the vortex of the fever every part of the body is gripped by it.

Now says the apostle. The love of Christ is so gripping that I'm seized with the love of God. Now let's pray as I go on with this mission that the Lord fill me with the love of God.

So that right the way through the preaching will come the warm love of Christ to the people. We need that desperately. When we preach the gospel don't lecture it.

Don't preach it mechanically and legally. Ask God to warm your heart for the people to whom you preach. And immediately you love them they will know it and feel that love.

And then thirdly the preacher must have power. When Paul was writing to the Thessalonians he said when I came to you I came not with word only but in power and in much assurance and in the Holy Ghost. As you know what manner of men we were among you.

In other words all that he said publicly was worked out privately in his life. Now let's pray that the vehicle that God uses will be like that. Now Philip was a man like that.

He went down to Samaria and he preached Christ. And he preached Christ as a herald would blow a silver trumpet. So that all the people could understand the reason why Christ came.

The reason why he died on the cross for their sins. The reason why he was raised from the dead. And he preached it with such power that hundreds and thousands turned to the Lord Jesus.

It seems to be the first great movement of the spirit apart from that wonderful moment when Peter preached on the day of Pentecost in the book of Acts. Would you believe it? Right in the midst of this great blessing when there was great joy in the city. Because not only were people being saved that means made right with God.

Many bodies were being healed. There was great joy and happiness and that's the result of revival. It always brings joy to the people of God.

God called him and it was an angel that called him. And the angel said emphatically arise and go to Gaza and to the way that goes down from Jerusalem and to Gaza which is Jesus. Well that was where Jesus was.

Just think of it. Here is a man preaching to hundreds and thousands of people. The whole city was being swept with liquid.

All kinds of people were being saved. And then right in the midst God called him to go to this place. What would the new convert say when he says I'm going to Gaza? Who will you find in Gaza? It was like the Sahara.

What would the apostles think when they had come down and laid their hands upon the convert so that they might receive the Holy Spirit when they hear that he's gone to Gaza? When he gets there who will he find? And how will he get there for it was about 35 miles? And when he gets there who would look after him? But this man of God gets the call of God and he goes. Now why? There was one man that God was after. Just one.

And he took this man right away from the milling crowds. He put him right down there into Gaza that he might eat the one man. Beloved, I know this seems contradictory, but God may send me to Australia from Bedford for one person and it would be worth it.

One soul is worth more than the world. What shall it bother the man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul? Now tonight, I don't know who you are, but I believe there's one man, one woman here speaking the Lord like this Ethiopian unit that I read about. And that's why God has brought me to Australia.

And I must be prepared to leave the crowd and come for one precious soul. Now for me. Secondly, he goes there to Gaza.

When he gets there he looks around and all he can see is bush country and desert. Not a soul to be seen. For instance, there were two roads to Jerusalem that went to Gaza.

One was the main road, the other was the lone road. And this man was told to go on the lone road. So you can see it was a lonely path.

And when he got there, he wasn't depressed. He didn't say, just imagine a public preacher like me. An international evangelist being put right down here in the desert.

Not a bit of it. He was there waiting to see what God would do. I shall never forget on one occasion I got up late.

Didn't have no read and prayer. Got in a train at Paddington station to go to Reading. And there was a Royal Air Force young man in the corner.

And God said to me, speak to him. But I couldn't, did he feel like it? Three times it came, speak to him. And then he got out of the station and I missed the soul.

I was in the right position in the wrong condition. Not this man. He was waiting, waiting, dreadless.

Let's pray that all of us may not only be in the right position, but in the right condition. Then all of a sudden, he sees in the distance a cloud of smoke. Hmm, something's there.

He may have said with the songwriter, to come all together. And then suddenly a chariot comes. Then another chariot.

Suddenly there were about fifteen chariots in this terrain. He was a frightened man. Suddenly, the spirits came.

Not the angel now, the spirits in the middle. The angel puts them in the right place. Spirit sends them to the right person.

And the spirit says, go nearer. Don't touch a thing. Don't call a thing.

Go nearer, and join my part of it. And he heard it. The word pillock is a German word for horse.

It means a lover of horses. And what does a horse do? It runs. It runs.

This he wrote a letter. And here is God's heaven. The moment he says, go nearer, he wasn't talking and walking.

He was coming. Now, it was God's heaven. The man that he was to speak had a throne.

He had a throne. It was a throne of anxiety. And in those Hebrew souls, now I know it may seem, I know it sounds reversing.

That means that you're going to be orphaned. That's who it says. He was leaving the Holy Spirit.

And it was on a rocket. And once you rolled yourself past a structure, you couldn't get back until you landed the whole soul. And this man came right to the point where he was leaving.

He was made as a lamb to the slaughter. And he was nothing to himself. He came straight to God.

He was nothing. As a lamb to the slaughter. So it says, go nearer, and join thy part of it, God.

Now, he runs and waits. The engine room of the Lord is so meticulous that the runner and the hopper meet each other right at the topological moment. That's the real thing.

There's ten men sitting here, and I don't know you, but the Lord knows. And that's the central problem of the Lord, is to teach the man that the spirit of God is living. Who's put you on this earth? Who's giving you this life? And it's a matter of feeling.

Just as you're sick, so am I. Isn't that right? Come on. Isn't that right? So as Philip is running, he's coming, and he doesn't go at him like a bullet at least. He's controlled by the information of his breath.

He doesn't want to stop. Philip, as far as we know, was unarmed. This man was armed.

He was a brilliant man. He was a cancer obvious get-up for one of the greatest things that ever went over Ethiopia. Brilliant man.

And he had a tremendous responsibility. I can't go into all of his details. In fact, it doesn't really matter.

All I wanted to know is this, that God was interested in him. And here apparently, with an unarmed man, coming to an educated man, you understand what Philip is saying. The natural man, no matter how brilliant he might be, will never understand the Spirit.

It means someone looks for the Spirit. And when Philip told him this, he said a very interesting thing. He wondered, damn, what was that? And should I say this? When preaching the Gospel, don't use language that the people cannot understand.

We have to learn to preach the teachings of the Gospel, to a twenty-first century society of people in a twenty-first century world. And that's not easy. Now note what I'm saying.

We mustn't water down the Gospel. We must preach the Gospel. We must learn thoroughly and put it in a language that people can understand.

In fact, you understand what he's saying. He says, how can I? It's a matter of guidance. Now the word guidance, isn't it? It's the idea of the blind leading the blind.

And he was saying, look, this is all confusing to me. I've travelled three hundred miles to a church service to find God and all I found was ritualistic religion. Someone told me to read the prophecy of Isaiah and I bought a scroll and I've been reading it and it's been taking me.

But I've come to this point. He was nearer the land of the slaughter and I was deep before I flew as the sun. So he opened up his mouth.

And who speaks the prophecy? Of himself? Or some other man? Some other man. Now the Hebrews at this time and all the rabbis believe that this referred to Israel because they were under the Roman yoke. And they had been under the Gentiles.

Therefore they were a suffering nation. So he got nearer to them. Is the prophet speaking about himself? Or some other man? You see, God was leaving.

We are what we were brought together of the Gentiles. He didn't fall low. He kept on listening and listening and listening.

And my dear friends, we, his disciples, we must listen to what the prophet said. And when the opportunity came, he gave faith in it. He didn't say, Oh dear, I am not sure of this.

It's not sure of this. But I can say he believed it. He didn't have the means to work it.

And I'm just a kid. You can say it. You have your exercise.

It's not a big deal. He opened his mouth. And the scripture, the scripture says, Open thy mouth wide, and I will salute thee.

And then beginning at the same scripture, he preached unto him, Jesus. How did he do it? He would say something like this. You are confused about the Lamb.

Seeing Christ. Seeing God. When you were in Jerusalem, did you hear of a man by the name of John the Baptist? Did you hear what he said? He said, I did not hear.

You know, he would tell the fellow that he was seeing God. Well, he kept telling them to repent. And when they repented, Christ with them went.

And they were baptized. And that was a national. But he kept on telling them that the Messiah was coming.

Oh yes. Then he told them one day, there are signs among you, the Messiah that you may know. Then came the moment when he introduced the Messiah.

And do you know how he did it? He called the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. Now he could only be that Messiah, number one, if he were a prophet. He could only be that Messiah.

And he was the one that, when you were at the temple, did you offer up an offering? Yes. I offered a bullet. Hmm.

What for? It's a praise and worship offering. What else did you offer? Well, they gave me the Ten Commandments and I took, and I realized that I had sinned again and again. And I think I offered about six ten offerings.

When you offered up those ten offerings, what kind of lamb did you take? Oh, it was a lamb. And when I took it to the priest, he was loving it so dearly. Do you know why? Because of the Messiah.

Then what did you do with the lamb? Well, I laid my hands upon its head and confessed my sins. And then I thought, I don't know. But it didn't.

And then what happened? Well, he collected all the blood very carefully and he thwarted it. And then he split open the lamb and he took the image out so the little lamb died instead of the other. Yes.

Do you know what that was? And there would be tears in the eye. Then he said, what did you do with your little lamb? Five times I carried my lamb and every time I said, little lamb, I thought it was a waste. And then I came to that roaring fire and then it seemed as though something said, you should be in the fire because of your sins.

And then I threw the little lamb in. Philip would say quietly, When the Messiah was on the cross from the sixth to the ninth hour there was darkness and God's judgment fell upon him like the lamb going in the fire. And the Messiah said this, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Can I look at you for your sins? For your sins.

Go on reading. He shall feel the trouble of his soul and shall be satisfied. What does that mean? Well he was there at, this will give you a shot.

Are you ready? God has raised him from the dead and God has taken him back to glory and he sees hundreds and thousands of people trusting him. Look at the millions that have trusted him since he died. He shall feel the trouble of his soul and then he would be muttering something like this, But how can I know him? I see it.

It's all clear now. It's opening to me just like light from heaven. I see it.

But how can I know him? You read the last verse. He made intercession for the transgressor. He bared the sin of many.

What does that mean? There was a malefactor on the cross. His hands were pierced. His feet were pierced.

He could do nothing. But he saw that Jesus was dying for his sins. He couldn't even pray a proper prayer and he said, Lord remember me when you come into thy kingdom.

And do you know what the Messiah said? Today thou shalt be with me in paradise. And then it dawned upon him. I could be there too.

If he saved that malefactor he can save me. Then Philip would go on. Immediately people trust him just like that malefactor.

It's baptism. Then they go on trusting and they're to share their faith with others. You can't be a secret disciple and the way to share your faith is baptism.

What's that? Well everyone that comes to Christ must hear the words of Christ. And this is the commission that he's commissioned me. And I must tell you that we are told by the Lord Jesus and we are told by the apostles and this is all written down in the word of God or will be that we are to make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

Why the Father, Son and Holy Ghost? Well it was the Father that sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. Right? Yes. It was the Son who died and when you believe and trust like that penitent malefactor the Holy Spirit comes into your life and you're born of God.

You're a new creation. It all comes. And because you are a member of a new creation you're taken out of the Adamic family and you're put in a new family and when you're taken out of the Adamic family you die to a sinning life.

Yes. You die to a selfish life. Oh yes.

You die to a legal life of trying to get to heaven by work. You die to it. And that's why you're placed right under the water.

It's the old life gone. And then you go right under the water. It speaks of your burial.

And then you're raised up from the water. Why? And Philip would have been excited. You're linked with a man in the glory.

You're no longer a member of this world. You're linked with a man in the glory. And you're going to live in the glory of Christ all your life.

He lost interest. And as he was listening to Philip he was looking and suddenly he got excited. He said, see! Not S-E-A, we're miles from that.

See, here is water. What does it mean to be baptised? Oh, I want to be baptised. And he'd just been saved.

So Philip didn't know he had been saved. So what happened? God enlightened him. He had trusted the Lord without Philip knowing.

Beloved, you could have been saved in this meeting hour. You could switch off from these. And say, I see it all now Lord.

Like that Ethiopian union. I'm going to trust you to be my saviour. And the next step is baptism.

Don't wait. Philip didn't say I'll come back with you and give you seven lessons on baptism. And the man said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

It was as clear as a bell he had been saved. So Philip wanted to make sure that if thou believest with all thine heart, it must be a half-truth. And then he let out the whole truth.

I believe that Jesus is the Son of God. He has passed from death unto life. And because God had commanded him to be baptized, what does he do? He commands the chariot to stand still.

And you hear him. Stop. Don't miss this water.

Now there would be at least two hundred men. Now this is not found in the Bible. The historians tell us this.

And they would all gather around that box. And then they would see their master. The sponsor of the exegetical.

Just brought to Christ. Just so. Philip would go down into the water.

And he would say something like this. Sir would you come. And then in all his refinery, he would leave out of course his outward clothes.

And he would go in, in linen garments. All would be watching. Now note this.

Once a man in his position, became public with his outward confession of Christianity, he could have lost his job. Just like that. He was willing that everything would go.

Now he found Christ. Down into the water he would go. And all the servants and the officials would have their mouths wide open.

He's turning his back on paganism. Turning his back on icons. Becoming a real, I think it's a Christian.

Yes, that's right. And then Philip would say in a clear voice. Have you received Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord? I have.

Would you now confess him as with your mouth and believe in your heart that he is your Saviour and your Lord? Jesus Christ is my Saviour and my Lord. Upon this clear confession of your faith and according to the inspired words if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead thou shalt be saved. On this confession I now baptise you in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

And down he went. Symbolising that he had died to us in England. A selfish life.

Died to the world, the beggary elements of the world. Died to the legal way of getting holiness through us. And then he disappeared.

And after a second he came up to show he was connected with the risen Lord in the glory. And when he came up he was radiant with the joy of the Lord. He didn't say my word I'll be in serious trouble now.

He was rejoicing. Oh I think it's beautiful. So was Philip.

But then something happened that was miraculous. Like a flash Philip disappeared. And he saw him no more.

Hallelujah. He wasn't trusting Philip. He wasn't trusting the preacher.

The Lord took him away. And he went on his way rejoicing. And that man started an apostolic church that spread all over Ethiopia.

One there. Now I'm going to ask a question. I believe there's a man here tonight.

And a woman. Just like the Ethiopian unit. And in that seat probably the Lord has saved you.

Don't linger. Show it to the world as quickly as you can. Get baptized.

So that the world may know that you are a true follower of Christ.

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