

SENIOR BIBLE FELLOWSHIP ASSIGNMENT: AUGUST 25, 2026

BACKGROUND:

>After the apostles were beaten and released, they rejoiced that they were worthy to suffer dishonor for the name of Jesus. Bold in their faith, they continued to teach and preach that the Christ is Jesus.

>So, the disciples of Jesus were increasing in number. A complaint arose from the Hellenists (vs the Hebrews) because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. Although sympathetic the apostles knew that it is not right for them to give up preaching the word of God to serve tables, so they told the brothers to pick 7 men of good repute, Spirit filled, and wise for the duty of serving. The gathering selected Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus. In agreement, the apostles prayed and laid their hands on them.

>Stephen, one of the 7 and being full of grace and power was targeted by the synagogue of the Freedmen (Greek Jews). They instigated men who lied and said, they heard Stephen blaspheme against Moses and God. When the high priest asked Stephen if these accusations were true, Stephen gave an answer using the Old Testament history starting with Abraham, and then to Joseph, Moses, the Exodus from Egypt, David, and Solomon. He concluded by telling them that it was they who should be on trial for violating the spirit of Judaism, not he:

“You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered, you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it.” (Acts 7:51 – 53).

Enraged, the Freedmen stoned Stephen. As they were stoning Stephen, he called out..

“Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.”

>The death of Stephen was the beginning a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem and all the disciples (except the apostles) scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria.

>Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed the good news of Jesus and there was much joy in that city when they heard him and saw the signs that he did.

ASSIGNMENT:

For our next meeting, please read Acts 7:14 – 40 and come prepared to discuss the questions.

ACTS 7:14 - 40

¹⁴Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, ¹⁵who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, ¹⁶for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the

name of the Lord Jesus. ¹⁷ Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit. ¹⁸ Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, ¹⁹ saying, "Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." ²⁰ But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! ²¹ You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. ²² Repent, therefore, of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you. ²³ For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity." ²⁴ And Simon answered, "Pray for me to the Lord, that nothing of what you have said may come upon me."

²⁵ Now when they had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans.

Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch

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. ²⁷ 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 ²⁸ and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah. ²⁹ And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and join this chariot." ³⁰ So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" ³¹ And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. 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.

³³ In his humiliation justice was denied him.
Who can describe his generation?
For his life is taken away from the earth."

³⁴ And the eunuch said to Philip, "About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" ³⁵ Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. 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?" ³⁸ And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. 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. ⁴⁰ But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he preached the gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

QUESTIONS:

The Holy Spirit is working in the lives of the apostles and disciples to get the new church of Christ off and running. The increasing numbers joining the church, drives the religious leaders to jealousy and persecuting the disciples. They use the stoning of Stephen to step up their persecution and all the disciples (except the apostles) flee Jerusalem.

1. Philip went to the city of Samaria to proclaim the Christ. Through the power of the Holy Spirit he healed many...the paralyzed, lame, and demon possessed. The power of God was undeniable and with this many believed and were baptized. When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God they sent Peter and John.

> When Peter and John arrived in Samaria what did they discover about the Samaritans who were baptized and what did they do?

2. Simon the magician offered to buy the power of the Holy Spirit. Why did this anger Peter and what was his response to Simon?

3. In Acts 8:26 – 40, Philip encounters an Ethiopian court official. The Ethiopian was on his way back to Ethiopia from Jerusalem. I love Luke's narration of this encounter as it shows God's hand throughout. God's providence is on full display here.

> List some things where you see God's hand in this passage.

4. When Philip came up to the Ethiopian and asked him if he understood what he was reading, the Ethiopian said, "How can I, unless, someone guides me?" This was a very insightful comment from him.

> When you read the Bible do you seek help from "someone" to understand God's will? Who do you go to for this kind of help?

5. The question the Ethiopian asked Philip was interesting. He didn't just ask what the passage was about, but focused on whether the passage (Isaiah 53:7 – 8) was about the prophet or someone else. With this lead in, Philip began with the passage and worked his way to share about Jesus.

> Share a time where God opened a door so you could share the gospel of Jesus with someone.

6. When Philip meets the Ethiopian, he is reading a passage in Isaiah and is confused.

However, by the time Philip leaves, the Ethiopian is rejoicing. His rejoicing and our rejoicing in the Lord are very similar.

For the Ethiopian, he was clearly a man seeking God, but would have been refused the ability to worship fully in Jerusalem due to his physical limitations. Deuteronomy 23:1 states, "No one whose testicles are crushed or whose male organ is cut off shall enter the assembly of the Lord."

Take a look at Isaiah 56:3-8:

³ Let not the foreigner who has joined himself to the LORD say, "The LORD will surely separate me from his people"; and let not the eunuch say, "Behold, I am a dry tree."

⁴ For thus says the LORD: "To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths, who choose the things that please me and hold fast my covenant,

⁵ I will give in my house and within my walls a monument and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off.

Not sure if Philip pointed this out to the Ethiopian, but I believe after the encounter, the Ethiopian understood it. The good news of Jesus Christ is for everyone and includes those who are outcast in society. Like Paul, who pleaded with the Lord to remove the thorn in his flesh, the Ethiopian realized that God's power is greater than his physical limitation. I think he could hear Jesus say to him, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." (2Corth 12:9)

All of us need the grace of God. Grace with leads to faith and a freedom to worship God fully and without reservation. This is a major reason why the Ethiopian went on his way rejoicing...rejoice you thank the Lord for what he has done for you.

>We all come to Jesus because we realize we need him. Share a weakness you have and how God's power is made perfect in your weakness.