

MARKET STREET



"And this is the message we have received of Him, and declare unto you..." (1 John 1:5)

MESSENGER

**Market Street
church of Christ**
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The Ethiopian and His Bible

Tom Hamilton

Many observations have been made about the anonymous Ethiopian to whom Philip taught the gospel in Acts 8, and indeed many elements of the story quickly suggest aspects of the man's character which are worthy of imitation. For example, the man must have possessed the necessary discipline and trustworthiness to oversee the Ethiopian queen's treasure (8:27). He had an obvious devotion and reverence for God, as seen from his commitment to making the long, difficult journey from Ethiopia to Jerusalem (and back) in order to worship at the Temple (8:27). The man displayed a desire to know the scriptures, because he spent his time on the return trip reading from the book of Isaiah (8:28). The man apparently had a humble open-mindedness which enabled him to ask for help in understanding the scriptures and to accept the truth when it was presented to him. Finally, the man discovered joy in his new-found knowledge and obedience to God (8:39).

However, there are other aspects of the Ethiopian's character which are revealed in the story, but which may not be as readily obvious. These should be considered as well.

First, we should note that the Ethiopian didn't simply evidence an interest in the scriptures or a desire to do some Bible study. More than this, the text reveals to us a far greater depth of devotion to the Word of God. The first clue of this is the man's possession of a copy of the Bible. In his day, such copies were much more difficult to come by and even when they were available, they would have been quite expensive. Yet the Ethiopian had made the difficult effort to acquire a copy.

However, the real indication of the Ethiopian's devotion to the Word of God is in his perceptive reading of the scriptures. Sadly, many people often read Acts 8, especially verses 31 and 34 where he asks for help, and then conclude that the man must have been a little on the slow side or at the best, reading without any perception. The truth is just the opposite. His question as to whether the Servant Song of Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12 was

Schedule of Services

Sunday

Bible Classes..... 9:45 a.m.
Morning Worship..... 10:30 a.m.
Evening Worship..... 5:00 p.m.

Wednesday

Bible Classes..... 7:00 p.m.

Elders

Marty R. Adams..... (256) 233-5147
Tommy Coblenz..... (256) 232-3312
Jerry McGlocklin..... (256) 232-7620
Kenneth Smith..... (256) 777-6737
Bonnie Sutton (256) 232-2081

Deacons

Joel Hamm (256) 278-1977
Danny Holt (256) 206-2746
Larry Mitchell (256) 230-0185
Marcus Morris..... (256) 232-8871
Russ Wulfekuhl (256) 683-9396

Evangelists

Buc Chumbley (256) 777-1065
David A. Cox..... (256) 233-8910
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Market Street church.*

David A. Cox, Editor

to be applied to the prophet or someone else revealed that he understood that the crucial question in Isaiah 40-53 is the identity of the Servant of God. I dare say that he had a far greater perception of what Isaiah was talking about than most of the brethren I know!

The fact is that the Servant Songs of Isaiah are exquisitely crafted prophecies which are intended to develop the theme of the Seed of Abraham being the Servant of God and doing the work of God, but at the same time allow the application of the Servant's role to many different people. This is why the Servant can be characterized by the three major paradoxes: (1) he can be described as a plurality or as a single individual; (2) he may be described as good and faithful or blind, deaf, and worthless for service; and (3) he may be identified as the nation of Israel itself or one who will save Israel. Indeed, "Who is the Servant?" is the most perceptive question a reader of Isaiah 40-53 could ask! Only one who had read carefully and pondered the paradoxes could have appreciated the dilemma of Isaiah's intentional ambiguity and veiled speech, and only one who had meditated strenuously would have been equipped and prepared to understand Philip's explanation of the dilemma. Philip's presentation of Jesus as the ultimate fulfillment of the passage-in-deed, the whole theme in Isaiah – gave the Ethiopian the missing key which made everything make sense, but that "everything" had to have already been placed into his mind awaiting the final piece of the puzzle.

Second, the depth of the man's conviction and devotion to God are evident from his other question in Acts 8:36, "Look, here is water! What prevents me from being immersed?" Why does the Ethiopian ask this question instead of Philip? In our common (mis) conception of how conversion should occur, shouldn't Philip have been putting the pressure on the Ethiopian, twisting his arm, or some other sales pressure to ensure compliance with God's will? In the same way you can talk people into buying an \$1800 vacuum cleaner they don't need, you can by the use of such mind games and mental manipulation get people into the baptism and plunge them beneath the water, but is this true conversion? Once one has been presented with the truth and genuinely had his heart turned to God, obedience will be immediate and self-initiated. The force of the truth and one's desire to obey God should be the only pressure required in a case of genuine conversion.

Let us not look down on the Ethiopian with an

attitude of superiority. I dare say he would put most of us to shame in the area of Bible study and knowledge of the scriptures. Instead, let us be more like the Ethiopian, possessing both a devotion to God's word and God Himself that moves us to deeply study the scriptures and make immediate, personal application.

~via *Focus Magazine*, April 2009.



Bearing Fruit

Edwin L. Crozier

Why are we doing good deeds? Is it so people may be helped? Is it so we may have meaningful lives? Is it so we can grow? No doubt, each of these happens when we are zealous for good deeds. These things, however, are byproducts of our good deeds; they are not the goal. The goal, as seen in John 15:8, is to bear fruit that glorifies God. This goes along with Matthew 5:16, which says we should let our lights shine so people may see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven.

You see, the issue is that our Father is in heaven. Our neighbors cannot see Him. Our co-workers cannot witness His work ethic. Our friends cannot watch His care and concern. Strangers with whom we come in contact cannot look at God's love. They can only see how God acts through us. They can only see how following Him impacts us.

I certainly recognize the general principle often expressed saying, "Folks don't care how much we know, until they know how much we care." The real point however is we are not trying to glorify ourselves. We aren't trying to let others know what wonderfully caring people we are. We want them to know what a wonderfully caring God we serve. We do that by modeling for them the care of God.

Don't misunderstand; this is not saying the local congregation's work should suddenly become social welfare to let folks know how much God cares. Rather, each of us as individuals must live in ways that shows God's concern, care and love. That doesn't always equal material welfare or financial handouts. Most often, it equals words of concern and love. It sometimes means

weeping with those who weep and rejoicing with those who rejoice. It means showing patience as we work with someone in the gospel. It means demonstrating joy when others have good times in serving the Lord, but also mourning when others disregard serving the Lord.

I heard a story about a guy who runs a rock climbing gym. On Saturdays, he gives a half-off discount for the individual price, but rates for groups over 7 are regular price. One Saturday, 5 guys came in and asked if they could get the half-off price for a group of 15. He explained the rules. The guys then said they thought the others weren't going to show up anyway, so he charged them half price. Then another group came in later. As the evening went on, he began to pick up that these multiple small groups who acted like they were separate, were actually there as a group. When he asked one of them about it, he was convinced they were separate. The gym owner dropped it. The next morning, however, the guy who had told him they were separate came back, confessed that he lied, apologized and then single-handedly covered the amount they had ripped the gym owner off plus more. The group was a Sunday School class.

I'm not suggesting we lie so we can repent and make up for it. But the penitence and amends said a great deal about this man's God. May we always bear fruit that shows what a wonderful God we serve.

~via *The Franklin Church Bulletin*; Franklin, Tennessee.

News & Notes...

THE SICK:

Jimmy Johnson	JoAnn Gilbert
Wayne Vaughn	Patsy Thomas
Donna Wright	Doris Lovell
Ann Bush	Wayne Gooch
Cindy Glass	Linda Jones

Those Undergoing Treatments or Chronic Illness:

Joe Leopard	Irene Inman
Janice Cagle	Jeanette Weir
Priscilla Tucker	Phillip Harwell
Jenny Pickens	Ella Melvin

Daniel Ogles	Everette "Bud" Dollar
Linda Ordonez	Wayne Wooldridge
Cindy Walker	Brittany Bates Carter
Gene Carpenter	Charles Burns
Betty Christopher	Una King Currier
Al Pollard	Ava Brooke Campbell
Elizabeth Howard	Matt Poff
Bobby McLemore	Phillip Christopher

In The Hospital/Rehabilitation:

Norman Hamm; Millenium Rehab - Huntsville

Athens Rehabilitation & Senior Care:

Helen Trousdale, rm. 43	Nelva Reed, rm. 61
Matty Murray, rm. 2	Dorothy Draper, rm. 73
Oneal Martin, rm. 81	Evelyn Hogan, rm. 36
Joyce Martin, rm. 73	Mable Crafts, rm. 39
Valeria Dalton, rm. 7	Christine Hudson, rm. 77

Limestone Health Facility:

Bobbie Adcock, rm. 112-A

Shut-In or Away From Home:

Robert & Mot Beasley, at Riverside Sr. Living, Decatur
 Gwen Bullock, at granddaughter's in Huntsville
 Marjorie Dunnivant, at Brookdale Farms, Huntsville
 Mary Ruth Gardner, at Merrill Gardens, Madison
 Carl Hargrave, at granddaughter's home in Hartselle
 Ruby Jean Tinnon, at home

Updates:

Jimmy Johnson was released from the hospital on Tuesday after spending several days there ... *JoAnn Gilbert* is at home and continues her out-patient therapy. She is to go back to the doctor on October 17th ... *Wayne Vaughn* continues to recover from his surgery last week ... *Heath Dollar* had an injection in his back on Wednesday afternoon in Athens... *The Coblentz, son-in-law, Al Pollard*, has not been doing as well as of late. Keep him in your prayers.

AWAY AT SCHOOL: Remember our young people that are away in college:

Brettlyn Currier, at Auburn University
Keenon Currier, at the University of Alabama
Austin Hobson, at the University of North Alabama
Griffin Holt, at the University of Alabama
Drew Ogles, at Auburn University
Christian Usery, at LaGrange College
Elizabeth Usery, at Mississippi State University.

WORK GROUPS: Work Group Three will be meeting this evening after our evening service. If you are in group three, remember to meet with your group tonight.

CONFESSION: On Sunday morning *Terry Andrews*

came forward confessing that he had been distant from the Lord and wants to draw closer to Him. I appreciate Terry's good heart and desire to please God... On Sunday evening, **Charles Browder** came forward stating that he had obeyed the gospel, but had not been living as a Christian should. May we encourage Charlie as he strives to be what God wants him to be.

OUT OF TOWN: *The Adcocks: Paul & Dale* have been out of town in Indiana, but are now back home... *The Bradleys: Steve and Marilyn* are in Texas... *Harvey Nixon* has been in Ohio this week with his work... *David & Kerry Cox* are in Belgreen this morning where David is preaching in a meeting beginning today... *Jim Whitt* has been in Seattle, Washington this past week; he will be in Oklahoma this week.

GOSPEL MEETING: The **Belgreen church** is beginning a gospel meeting today. The speakers are as follows: *Sunday morning—David Cox; Sunday evening — Steve Tidwell; Monday — Stefan Richardson; Tuesday — Colby Junkin; Wednesday — Justin Roberson...* The **Carriger church** is beginning a meeting today and it will continue through Wednesday. The speaker in the meeting will be *Randy Barnes...* The **Oneal church** is beginning a meeting today and it will continue through Wednesday. *Everett Conn* will be the speaker.

HURRICANES IN THE CARIBBEAN: This past week, the word from the brethren in the Eastern Caribbean has been limited, but what has come speaks of great devastation and chaos. **Brother Ernest Roberts**, who we support in Grenada, has a son in Dominica and has received word that his son is well. Let us remember the brethren throughout the British Virgin Islands, U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.

THE RECORD: *Attendance for the week of Sept. 24th*

Sunday: Bible Classes 142
Morning Worship 187
Evening Worship 151
Wednesday: Bible Classes 101



Men Privileged To Serve:

Sunday, October 1st:

Morning Worship

Announcements..... Kenneth Smith
Song Leader Joel Hamm
Prayer..... A. J. Price
Preaching..... Buc Chumbley
Lord's Supper
Presiding..... Dwaine Allfrey
Assisting Larry Holt
Serving Keenon Currier..... Kenneth Adams
..... Steve Usery..... Tony Thomas
Closing Prayer Roger Hammonds

Evening Worship

Announcements..... Kenneth Smith
Song Leader Ashton Gatlin
Prayer..... Nathaniel Adams
Preaching..... David Cox
Lord's Supper Dwaine Allfrey
Closing Prayer Marion Mitchell

Other Assignments for Sunday, October 1st:

Ushers..... Keith Hinkle/Marty Adams
Work Sound System..... Landon Adams

Wednesday, October 4th:

Song Leader Marty Adams
Bible Reading 2 Thessalonians 2:13-17
..... Clayton Hamm
Prayer..... A. J. Price
Invitation..... David Cox
Closing Prayer Mike Ogles

Sunday, October 8th:

Morning Worship

Announcements..... Marty Adams
Song Leader Hunter Cox
Prayer..... Larry Mitchell
Preaching..... David Cox
Lord's Supper
Presiding..... Tommy Coblentz
Assisting Mike Ogles
Serving Roger Hammonds .. Clayton Hamm
..... Matthew Usery..... Danny Johnson
Closing Prayer Danny Holt

Evening Worship

Announcements..... Marty Adams
Song Leader Tommy Burns
Prayer..... Joel Hamm
Preaching..... Buc Chumbley
Lord's Supper Tommy Coblentz
Closing Prayer Landon Adams

Other Assignments for Sunday, October 8th:

Ushers..... Kenneth Smith/Heath Dollar
Work Sound System..... Terry Andrews