

Humble & Hungry: You Want Me to Do What?

Aaron Brockett | Acts 8:26-40

Alright, how are we today? It's good to see you. How many of you stayed up to watch the fight last night? Nobody, so I expect you to be awake. I did and so you can pray that I get awake.

It's good to see you guys today. If you are new or if this is your first time to be here, I'm so glad that you could join us. If you're watching online, we're glad you could tune in as well. If you have a Bible would you go ahead and grab it and get to Acts, chapter 8. Acts, chapter 8 is where we are going to be. We're going to walk through verses 26 through 40 together.

As you already know we are in week number two of this series called *Humble & Hungry*. If you were not here last week, if you didn't catch the sermon, I'd encourage you sometime, hopefully today, to go back online or on the church app and watch last week's message because each one of these weeks is going to build upon the other.

We're calling it *Humble & Hungry*. That's a phrase that we have used around here in the past to describe the humble disposition we desire to have before God. It's this understanding that you and I have been saved by grace. That's a phrase that we throw out there so often that maybe we can become a little bit calloused to really understanding what that means. Basically, that means that we haven't done anything to earn it and we haven't done anything to deserve it. It's a gift given to us by God. Therefore, the only response to that kind of a gift is humility.

Ephesians, chapter 2, verses 8 and 9 puts it better than I ever could, "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no man can boast." In fact that I would go as far as to say that the one defining mark of somebody who has truly been converted, somebody who doesn't just say that they believe, and not somebody who has just altered their behavior, but somebody who has been converted—and we're going to get to this in a minute, that conversion means that your identity changes. One of the defining marks of a converted person is humility. They recognize that this is a gift that has been given to them.

But humility should never become a license for apathy. And sometimes that can be the case both in our individual lives and in the life of the church. Jake put it really well a few weeks ago. He said, "We have been saved from something for something." Many times we forget that last part. See Jesus didn't go to a cross and give us salvation so that we could be forgiven and have our consciences clear and then sort of ride the sleepy river to heaven. No, He said, "You're going to go on a mission."

In fact if you study through the Scriptures, the one common theme you see over and over again is that God is in the redemption business, that every time God redeems somebody His charge to them is always the same. He's like, "Alright, you can't keep that to yourself. You realize that, right? You need to move out. You need to go beyond your comfort zone. You need to overcome that barrier.

See that person over there that you don't have anything in common with? Yeah, become friends with them. You see that person over there that you despise, that person there that you have no political view

that is similar to theirs? Overcome those barriers and share the Good News that has been given to you.” Here’s the gut punch, “If you don’t then it just shows Me that you really don’t understand what it is that I have given to you.”

So last week I made this announcement that we are going multisite as a church. Some of you are really familiar with that concept. Others of you—maybe it’s a brand new thing. Really what multisite is is that we want to be just one church but in multiple locations. Technically, we really are that because we have people who drive from very different communities, some as far as 45 minutes to an hour away. And we recognize that discipleship becomes increasingly difficult the farther you live away from the place where you worship.

Instead of building bigger buildings or trying to gather in a larger venue, we said, “You know what? We need to decentralize and we need to actually go to where our people are driving from to help them in discipleship so that they can serve, they can get in the game, they can give, and they can invite friends.”

I said this last week. We’re going multisite as a church not because we think that we are God’s gift to the city of Indianapolis, but because we believe that God has given us a gift that we need to share with as many people as possible. And we don’t want any barriers to stand in the way of that.

See, I believe that Jesus promised this. He’s still in the business of changing people’s lives. And as dark as this world gets, and as crazy as everything gets, Jesus is still drawing men and women unto Himself. I see it every single week. I see it every single day; people who are hardened, and calloused. And even some of you as I look out across this room. I remember meeting you. I remember that you weren’t very nice when you came here.

Some of you said, “I don’t want to be here.” You were like, “I don’t want to talk to you. I don’t believe in this Jesus stuff. I don’t believe in the Bible.” Now, I saw your hands raised a minute ago because Jesus is still in the business of drawing people to Himself. It’s not my responsibility. I gave up the role of the Holy Spirit a really long time ago. I’m really, really bad at it. Trying to convince you, trying to convict you—Jesus is in the business of doing that.

Here’s the thing. As a church, we need to identify the unnecessary barriers. Now, there are barriers that keep people from Jesus. There are barriers that keep me away from Jesus—my pride. I enjoy my sin. That’s a barrier that keeps me from Jesus and I have to figure that out. I have to navigate through that.

But there are some unnecessary barriers that Christians—throughout the centuries—have unnecessarily put up between us and Jesus. We call that religion. We call that pride. We say, “Well, you have to look like me, and act like me, and you have to navigate through these hoops in order to be accepted here.” And Jesus went to a cross to remove those things.

So last week (if you were here) we walked through Mark, chapter 2—one of my favorite passages of Scripture. I say that about every passage of Scripture that I come to. But Mark, chapter 2 where these four guys take their paralyzed buddy to Jesus in Capernaum to this house that they hear that Jesus is teaching in and it’s full—they can’t get in. I love these guys. They are so innovative, they’re so bold, they said, “We’ll just go through the roof.” They just wreck the roof, they tear open this hole, and they lower their friend down to Jesus. He gets healed and he gets his sins forgiven.

We said that one of the ways that we want to wreck the roof, as a church, is to go multisite. See, eight years ago we moved up to this location. We moved into this facility. Many of you were here. Many of you were not. This building here, man it is just a tool. That's all that it is. And we desire for the church to gather here. This building is not the church—you're the church. And we gather inside of this building, we hear from God's word, we turn our attention to God in worship, we encourage one another, we try to lead people to Christ and then we mobilize to then leave this place and be the church out in our communities and around the world.

All this is a staging area. And God has used this place. As I said last week, we've baptized over 3,000 people since we moved into this building eight years ago. As amazing as this is, and with all that God has been doing here—it's still a barrier. It's a barrier in a sense that some people will never set foot on this campus and maybe some of you are related to them. Some of you have parents or neighbors, a spouse, or an aunt and uncle who say, "Why in the world do you go to that church? I just don't get it." And just because of the size they may be intimidated or maybe they don't want to mess with the parking lot.

See, eventually this place will reach a saturation point and we get little tastes of this on Christmas Eve and on Easter where we just say, "There are only so many services you can do in a weekend. There are only so many people we can get onto this campus." We want to allow God to continue to be at work. In fact, I would say this. God will continue to do what He will do on this campus. But we don't want to limit what He can do in the lives of those in our city to this campus. God's a much bigger God than this place.

Every now and then when people say, "Oh, that church is so big," I'm like, "This is like the waiting room in heaven." In comparison to what heaven is going to be like, this is nothing. So we want to go multisite.

I heard this question last week and I really want to clear this up. We are going multisite not to make it more convenient for people to go to church, not to shave 15 minutes off of people's drive time—we are going multisite to help people grow as a disciple because it's much more difficult for them to get involved the farther they live from the place where they worship.

Now, a few weeks ago, Jake and I both told you that we really feel that it was providential that God had us spend 30 some odd weeks in the Gospel of John this last year so that together, as a church, we might get to know Jesus better. This fall we're going to study through the Book of Acts together. We decided that a long time ago. And, once again, I see God's providential hand in it because, if any of you have ever studied the Book of Acts, if you know anything about it—then you know that Acts is all about how the church multiplied. The church has always been a multiplying movement.

So, this morning what I want to do is that I want to look at another kind of barrier that exists between people and Jesus. Last week we looked at a physical barrier. This week I want to look at a cultural barrier that often exists and how God uses ordinary people like you and me to go and to tear down those barriers.

Acts, chapter 8 starting in verse 26. Here we go. Are you guys awake? Alright, verse 26, "Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip," alright, let's just stop right there. This is going to take us a little while. Just kidding—I'll move quick. But I need to stop and just unpack this for you. Who is Philip? Sometimes we read through the Scriptures and we're like, "Okay, Philip. Who's Philip?"

Well, the Book of Acts is all about how the church gets started in a very hostile culture—much like our culture today—and yet it spread rapidly, here's the word again, through conversion. Now, Philip was one of the very first followers of Jesus. Some of you might be familiar with the Book of Acts, maybe for some of you this is the first time you've ever heard anything about the Book of Acts. Back in Acts, chapter 6 the church exploded. It was already a much bigger church than what this is.

Thousands and thousands of people had come to Christ and they had grown so rapidly that they were experiencing growing pains. People were having problems and they were beginning to complain. And, basically, the main problem was that there was a group of widows in the church who were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. It was a very practical ministry need that wasn't being fulfilled. So it says that the apostles reached out to the fuller number of disciples. That was, for all practical purposes, the congregation—the body of Christ. And they basically said, "We need your help. We need you to go feed the widows so that we can continue to preach the word of God."

And Phillip was one of the very first guys to raise his hands and say, "I'll go." He filled out a card and said, "Hey, count me in. I'll go and I'll help feed the widows." But what is interesting is that by the time we get to the beginning of Acts, chapter 8—look with me at your Bibles if you would—it says that there was this guy named Saul who was ravaging the church in Jerusalem to the point that they were scattered throughout the region of Judea and Samaria.

Now, if you go back to Acts, chapter 1—just before Jesus ascends into heaven He says to the disciples, "You will be My witnesses," where? "...in Jerusalem, in Judea, and Samaria and to the ends of the earth." What is fascinating is that by Acts, chapter 8 we see this already playing out because they were in Jerusalem and it says at the beginning of Acts, chapter 8—after they had experienced all of these growing pains—Saul comes and he starts to persecute the church and it forces the believers to be scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.

You want to know my opinion? They wouldn't have scattered without the persecution. They would have stayed in Jerusalem where it was comfortable. They would have stayed and said, "Hey, this is great where we are, right in this venue. This is fantastic." But God used a guy named Saul in more ways than one because his life is dramatically changed another chapter later. But before that, God's like, "Okay Saul, before I convert you..." That's just amazing. God could have just snapped His fingers and Saul could have given his life to Christ right then. But He says, "Before you give your life to Me, I'm going to use you to get the church out of their seats and to go to Judea and Samaria."

If you look at the first 25 verses of Acts, chapter 8 God is doing a tremendous work in the city of Samaria. All of these people are coming to know the Lord. And who is the guy that God is primarily using? Our boy Philip. Philip—the one who raised his hand and said, "I'll feed the widows." Two chapters later, God has him on the big stage and he's preaching and he's teaching.

In fact, I love this, in Acts 8 a guy named Simon the Sorcerer gives his life to Christ. Simon the Sorcerer was a street magician. He was like the First Century's David Blaine if any of you recognize that name—a couple of people. If you've ever seen David Blaine—that dude freaks me out. So Simon the Sorcerer listens to Philip and he gives his life to Christ. Now, all of that is set up to simply say this. God was working through Philip in an incredible way in the city of Samaria and that's why what God said to him next would have sounded completely strange and out of left field.

Look with me at your Bible. Let's finish verse 26. "Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." Now, Gaza was a city that would have already been in ruins at the time of this writing. Luke is the one who is writing the Book of Acts, by the way. This is what Luke says, "This is a desert place." Thanks, Luke, "...And he rose and went."

If I would have been Philip, I think my response to God would have been, "You want me to do what? God, I don't understand. You're doing this tremendous thing here in Samaria. God, this sounds like a demotion to me. Why would You send me over there? What have I done wrong? God, You are continuing to do an incredible thing here. Why don't You just let me stay here and build up the new converts in the city of Samaria? Let's just build a really great church right here."

But if you notice, Philip doesn't question God; he doesn't argue with God, he doesn't even ask for clarity. It says that he rose and he went. I think that's the first miracle in this passage because I don't know if I would have done that. I think I would have at least argued with God a little bit. I would have said, "Hey, would You give me at least a little clarity on this?"

You know, over the last seven days there has been a lot of excitement, and enthusiasm, and encouragement from so many of you about this announcement to go multisite. But I've had a few of you—and I'm sure that there are probably others of you I just haven't had a chance to talk to yet. Maybe you just haven't vocalized it or maybe it's kind of stirring in your heart.

When you heard the announcement that we're going multisite, your question was, "Why would we do this? Why would we go multisite? Why don't we just continue to keep doing what we're doing right here? I just don't understand. Aaron, why would we go to that desert place called Carmel? Why would we go to the land of the roundabouts? It's so confusing. Why would we do this? I get dizzy every time I drive through there. I don't understand." Look, that's an honest question.

Some of you in this room are visionaries. Some of you are like, "Hey, let's just go. Let's just charge hell with a water pistol." Others of you are grinders. Others of you are operators. Others of you are like, "I need to see this on paper. I need to see to understand exactly why we would do all of this." And that's perfectly natural and fine. I think I would have questioned God. I would have said, "God, I don't understand why you are sending me from Samaria, where all of the action is, to Gaza, a city in ruins. God, You're doing something here, why would You send me over there?"

Here's the thing you have to understand. Philip would have had no idea. God is sending him to Africa. This road would have led into North Africa which was hundreds of miles from where God was at work in Jerusalem and Samaria, where all of the action was, and Phillip wouldn't have understood it, North Africa during the First Century, was often considered the ends of the earth. Sound familiar? Jesus said in Acts 1, "You'll be my witnesses in Jerusalem but you won't want to leave so I'll have Saul persecute the church to get you to Samaria and then I'll send you to Africa—to the ends of the earth."

What Philip couldn't have possibly understood is, why? Here's the thing. When you step back and look at church history, there were a couple of really influential church leaders who came out of Africa. Maybe you might recognize the names, Tertullian and Augustine. And Augustine wrote this little devotional classic that I read in college and it completely altered my spiritual journey. It's a book called *The Confessions*.

Philip could have said, “God, I don’t understand why You are sending me to the ends of the earth. Why are You sending me to Africa?” And He’s like, “Well, there’s this guy named Augustine who needs to be converted to Christ so that he can write a devotional classic called *The Confessions* and it’s going to require you to go to Africa to meet up with this guy.”

Philip rises and he goes. He goes down to Africa and look what it says, “And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure.” So, understand that this guy is technically the CFO of the nation of Ethiopia. He was a really, really important guy, “He had come to Jerusalem to worship...”

So, who is this guy? Here are a few things that we know about him. Number one, he couldn’t have been more different than Philip. He and Philip probably would never have crossed paths because he was from Africa. And Isaiah, in chapter 11, verse 11—Isaiah is a book of prophecy—Isaiah says, “The Lord will extend His hand to recover the remnant that remains of His people from Assyria, Egypt, and from Cush.” And Cush was the name for Ethiopia during the First Century. So, in the Book of Isaiah, God prophesizes, “I’m going to reach the people of Ethiopia.”

We know that he is a eunuch. You know, for a long time when I read this passage I had no idea what a eunuch was. A eunuch is somebody who willingly has himself castrated so that he could work closely with the queen and other female royalty without the temptation or the accusation of infidelity. Now, if that sounds awful that’s because it is. Could you just imagine that job description? “Hey, we need you to answer the phones and run some errands. And we need you to keep the books but you’ll have to go under this little procedure before you can get started.” It’s just like, “Whoa.”

Here’s the thing. He was willing to sacrifice something really, really important for the sake of his career. And I meet men and women every day who are willing to sacrifice really important things for their careers as well. But, that’s too convicting so we’ll move on.

We know that he’s from Africa. We know that he’s a eunuch. Here’s the third thing. We know that he’s religious. He’s a religious guy. He’s a gentile and he’s on his way to Jerusalem to worship. This wouldn’t have made any sense because the people in Ethiopia probably thought, “Why are you going all of the way up to Jerusalem to worship? We have churches down here. We have gods down here.” Yet, this guy wanted to seek out the Jewish God. He had some questions.

So this is who this guy is. He’s a black man from Africa, a eunuch, and a gentile and God has zeroed in on him to be a recipient of the gospel. Verse 23, “... and was returning,” so it wasn’t a very good trip. He didn’t find what he was looking for. He went up to the temple in Jerusalem and we don’t have any details about this, but we know that there was no way that they let them into the temple. Why? Because he was a black, castrated man who was a gentile. He would have walked up to the temple and they would have said, “No way. You can’t come in here.”

Could you just imagine the embarrassment that this guy might have felt? He had taken months off of work to travel hundreds of miles up to Jerusalem and when he gets there, he’s seeking out, he wants to know God and they say, “You can’t come in.” That was a very real barrier. So now, he’s traveling back to Gaza and apparently there were two different roads back to where he was from. Luke wants to point out that he took the desert road.

Why do you think that is? I think it's because he wanted some time to think. I think it was because he was embarrassed. He didn't want to see anybody anymore. He was feeling rejected. So he takes the desert road. I think he was probably even tinkering on whether or not he would continue this whole spiritual journey. He was probably closer than what we might realize to just bailing on the whole thing.

It says he was, "...seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah." So, we know this about him, he's in a chariot—that means he's really wealthy. He's reading—that was really rare because not very many people could read in the First Century. And, he had a scroll with the Old Testament—that was even rarer.

Not to us today. You probably have several Bibles at home. We have Bibles on our electronic devices. But, in that day, people did not have copies of the Old Testament. Very, very few privileged people would have had one. This guy somehow got his hands on a scroll and he's reading. We know that he's reading the Prophet Isaiah in the range of chapter 50 so he would likely have come across chapter 56 and he's scrolling through verses 3 through 5 on his journey home.

I want you to read these words that this Ethiopian eunuch who would have just been rejected at the Temple in Jerusalem would have read. It says this, "Let not the foreigner," that would be him, "who has joined himself to the Lord say, 'The Lord will surely separate me from His people.'" Oh, that just happened. "And let not the eunuch say, 'Behold, I am a dry tree'" very literally, alright? "...for thus says the Lord, 'To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths, who choose the things that please me and hold fast to my covenant, I will give in my house and within my walls a monument and a name better than sons and daughters.'"

Friends, that's the gospel. That's the Good News. You get a monument. You get a name that is closer than sons and daughters. "I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off." Now, just think about this. Those words probably would have struck right to his soul and as he's reading this, and he might have said, "Now, wait a second. That wasn't my experience in Jerusalem. They told me to get lost. They told me to leave. They told me that I didn't look like them. They told me that I couldn't come in because of what had happened to my body."

See, here's the tragedy of this whole thing. He had been to Jerusalem to seek God but the gathering there put up a barrier that kept him from hearing and experiencing the gospel. Here's what I love about the God we serve. God chases the dude. The guy is in a chariot going back to North Africa and God takes Philip, the guy who volunteered to feed the widows, the guy who led David Blaine to Christ and He says, "You go and you take off after the Ethiopian eunuch."

Philip doesn't even question God. It doesn't make sense to him. It looks like a demotion but he's like, "Alright, God. I'll go. I'll trust you." Verse 29, "And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and join this chariot." So, Philip and this guy couldn't have been more different. This guy is a black man from Africa, he's a eunuch. Philip is a middle-aged, Jewish man. They would have never, naturally, crossed paths.

This is what God didn't say to him. He didn't say, "Hey, Philip. Go chase that guy down, and yell at him, and tell him he's going to hell." What did He say? He just said, "Hey, Philip. Go hang out by his chariot. Just get in close proximity with him, Philip.

Look at verse 30, “So Philip ran to him,” I don’t know what that looks like. I don’t know if he is just jogging by the chariot, “Hey, what’s up.”

“Just a little jog to Ethiopia.”

I don’t know what that looks like. But he gets close to the guy’s chariot. Close enough that he can hear the guy reading the scroll of Isaiah the prophet and Philip just, very naturally, asked this question. He said, “Do you understand what you are reading?” Brilliant.

Here’s just a little advice. It’s always better to ask questions than to offer unsolicited advice. Philip is just saying, “Hey, do you know what you are reading?” And the eunuch looked back at him in verse 31 and he says, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” You notice the sense of desperation and hopelessness in this? “I don’t understand this. How can I understand it? If somebody would just talk to me, I was just in Jerusalem and they told me to leave. And I’d really like to know but I haven’t found anybody who really gives a rip.”

“And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.” I love that picture. Philip is a complete stranger. He’s jogging out on the desert road, “What in the world are you doing out here?” Right? He’s a Jewish man—they wouldn’t have had anything in common. Here’s what I love about this Ethiopian eunuch. Philip always gets all of the credit but I want to give this eunuch a little credit. He invited him in. He didn’t have to do that. He could have said, “I don’t trust you. I don’t know about you religious guys.” But he invited him up into the chariot. He is acknowledging that he didn’t have all of the answers.

Here’s the thing. For many of us our pride gets in the way. And maybe you’ve been attending here for a while but, because it’s a bigger place, it’s easy to slip in a little bit late or maybe slip out a little bit early and not really get to know anybody, and actually, not trust anybody here or to say, “I’m just not going to open myself up too early to all of this.”

I’ve said this before around here. I should probably say it more often. But if that’s you, if you just need to come in and kick the tires, if you just need to sit back and kind of investigate to heal or to just work through whatever questions and issues you have, then by all means you are welcome here to do that as long as you need. But I’m just going to say this, eventually you have to let somebody in. Eventually you have to open the door. Eventually you have to swallow your pride. Eventually you have to say, “You know what? I don’t have all of the answers. I need somebody who is a few strides ahead of me, spiritually, to get me over the hump.” And that’s what the Ethiopian eunuch did.

And this is what he’s reading. It’s Isaiah, chapter 53, “Like a sheep He was led to the slaughter, and like a lamb before its shearers is silent, so He opens not his mouth. In His humiliation justice was denied Him. Who can describe His generation? For His life is taken away from the earth.”

Here’s the summary of what he just read. Someday God is going to send Jesus who will die for our sins and reconnect us back to God. So are you feeling cut off and rejected? Jesus was willingly cut off and rejected so that you and I could be accepted. That’s what he just read.

So, verse 34, “And the eunuch said to Philip, ‘About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?’ Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus.” What that means is that Philip knew this stuff so well he could

begin with the very passage of Scripture that the Ethiopian eunuch was reading and he told him about the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Understand, the eunuch is a religious man. It's not like he had no church experience at all. This is an important distinction to make. Just because you've grown up attending church, and just because you've had a religious experience, just because you would say that you believe in God, maybe you've altered your behavior—that doesn't mean that you're converted. Conversion is an altering of your very identity.

Sin is not just a list of bad things that you and I do to displease God. Sin is you and me substituting ourselves for God, being our own boss, acting as if we are in charge. But salvation is God substituting Himself for us. Putting Himself in a place that only we deserve. He was made unclean so that you and I could be clean. He put Himself on a cross and took our penalty. He was cut off so that you and I could be grafted in. That's what Philip would have explained to him.

See, the moment that you begin to recognize that the substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus is both intellectually clear and emotionally gripping, when you begin to feel your identity structure changing (and you are not converted until your identity structure changes)... And every one of us in this room, our identity is based upon something. The answer to that is, "Where do I find purpose, where do I find fulfillment, where do I find joy?" That's what your identity is resting up against.

Most of us in this room find our identity in our accomplishments; we find our identity in relationships, a career, financial position, or our sexuality. Nothing is wrong with any of those things. The problem with them is that they are all temporary. And Jesus died to give you a more durable identity, an identity that lasts into eternity.

So what conversion means is that I die to my old identity—here's how the Scripture says it—I no longer live but Christ lives in me. So instead of relying upon and trusting what I believe is right, I begin to believe that Jesus is right. When Jesus says, "This is a better way to live," I trust Him. I believe Him. And I'm like, "Whoa, it doesn't really make a lot of sense to me now but I'm going to die to my pride, I'm going to die to myself, die to my impulses, and I'm going to chase after You."

So get this. This middle-aged, Jewish man puts his arms around a castrated black man from Africa and calls him brother. And only the gospel has the power to do that, to break down those barriers. So verse 36, "...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?' And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him."

I think that it is fascinating that Luke would include that. Why not just edit that out? Is that really the most important part of that passage? Here's the thing. The eunuch heard the whole gospel, recognized that baptism is a part of our obedience to following Jesus Christ and he said, "Why in the world would I wait for that? This is an outward act. This is a demonstration to the world that I'm literally dying to myself in a watery grave and coming out. I don't want to wait on that. Philip let's do it right now. There's water right over there."

"Well, that's kind of like a cesspool over there."

“I don’t care. Let’s just pull over,” it was a desert place, “Let’s pull over and do this at the first chance I can get.”

Think about this for a minute. I’ve said this before. Baptism is so weird. It’s weird. Why would God invent baptism? When is it ever socially acceptable for an adult to walk up to another adult in a pool and dunk them? I did it all the time as a kid. But I would never go up to an adult at the neighbor pool and say, “Hey, what’s going on?” and then dunk them. I’d get kicked out. It’s so odd and weird.

And the thing is that—the thing that gives me the most push back, and I’ve talked to our other pastors on staff, the thing that irritates people more than anything is this suggestion, “Hey, have you ever been immersed? If you’re a follower of Jesus Christ, you should do that.” I think the reason why is because baptism requires vulnerability, it confronts our pride.

Think about it for a minute. You cannot do it to yourself. If you tried it would look weird, “I baptize myself in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit,” you can’t do it. It requires a great sense of trusting in somebody else. It requires vulnerability because who is to say that the person who is baptizing you won’t hold you under? Who’s to say that they won’t sucker punch you when you are on your way down? Who’s to say that you won’t come up and have a bunch of snot hanging out of your nose? And you’re like waving at everybody (I’ve seen it). It requires great vulnerability and it requires you... Here’s the thing. If you are holding out on that act are you really dying to yourself?

The eunuch was like, “I don’t want to wait on this man, baptize me right now.” It says in verse 39, “And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away,” I have no idea what that looks like. I don’t know if he just floated off saying, “Bye.” I don’t know. I don’t think it means that he sprouted wings and flew away. I just think that it means that Luke was saying that Philip was not necessary anymore. He just phased him out of the story, alright?

It says, “...and the eunuch saw him no more,” listen to this, “and went on his way rejoicing.” I love the change in this guy’s disposition. He’s feeling rejected, embarrassed, and lonely but, when Philip comes in and gives him the Good News, his identity changes. He rode away in wet underwear in the chariot and he’s rejoicing. He’s thanking God for what just happened. He’s thinking that God chased him down. And Philip was willing to go.

Verse 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.” I love the fact that Luke included that last part because it shows us that God isn’t finished with Philip yet. Just because he went to one location doesn’t mean that he stopped. He continued to go and he continued to move.

See, the church has always been and always will be (until Jesus returns) a multiplying movement. And the day we say, “No, this is Jerusalem. No, this is Samaria. God’s at work here. Let’s just continue to build up what God is doing here instead of being willing to say, “God, we’ll follow You lead and we’ll move,” will we continue to go.

Multisite is not a brand new vision for us. We didn’t think this up over the last several months. I had somebody come up to me last night and just remind me of this by saying, “Hey, I was listening back to some of your sermons. And back in 2011 you mentioned multisites.” We’ve been praying about this, and gnawing on this, and knocking on doors, and asking God to open them for a while now.

I think it's important for you to know this. As your pastor this is not the door that we are just kind of walking through. We've actually knocked on dozens and dozens of doors asking that God would lead us in a certain direction in the city. And He's kept many of them shut. This is the first time that we have felt that God has begun to open up a door and that we are positioned, as a church, to do this.

So, I just want to share with you the three things that I asked you, as a church, to do last week. This will be a reminder if you were here. If you weren't this will be brand new to you, you can write this down. I want to share with you a couple of really cool stories that came in over the last seven days as well as some common questions that I am hearing to try to bring some clarity to those if I can.

Here's the first thing: 1:07 p.m.—1:07 every day. Set your cell phone alarm and when it goes off just remember to pray for the people in our city. Pray for the multisite effort.

I have some really cool stories come in. Rob and Tony McCuen, they are members of our church who got transferred to England a few years ago for her job and they'll be back, hopefully, in another couple of years. And Rob Facebook messaged me last week and said, "Hey, we were listening online—so excited about what's going on with multisite. We think you might come to England." Well, maybe number two. But he said, "Hey man, count us in. We want to support in every way." And then he said, "We're setting our cell phone alarm for 6:07 London time so that way we can pray with our church family."

I was talking to some people and some said, "Hey, I was out at the gym," or, "I was out at a restaurant eating lunch and at 1:07 some cell phones went off around me. And I didn't know the people. I was just like, Traders Point?" How do you do the sign for "H"? I don't know. Somebody will figure it out. Anyway, I thought that was a cool way for people to kind of get to know each other. So, I'd encourage you to jump in and pray with us.

Here's the second: Go. Go—and some of you are going to be like Philip. I'm asking about 500 of you to go and to make the north side your Traders Point location, especially if you live closer to that particular region.

One of the questions I had over the last week is that several people asked, "Do you really think that 500 people will be willing to go? And the answer is, "Well, I hope so." It's really kind of up to you. It's a request. I think that you can pray about that. Here's what I know, 66 people filled out cards last week—that's 66 couples and families more than 66 people. And they said, "We want to go. We want to serve." And many of the people who said that they wanted to serve at that location—we looked at the data base—many of them are not serving here. So, these are brand new people jumping in to serve because they live closer and they can, which is part of the point of multisite.

I broke this down. We do three services every weekend, one Saturday night, two Sunday morning. Five hundred people equal 166 people per service. I think that it is very feasible for many to say, "You know what? We'll go. We'll become a part of that core."

Last week somebody sent me a picture of Creekside Middle School from the air and I thought this was kind of cool if we could throw that up on the screen. I don't know if you notice, it kind of looks like a cross or something. I don't mean to read into that. I'm not that kind of a guy, "Ew, that bush looks like Jesus eating a bowl of Cheerios." I'm not that guy, alright. But that's kind of cool. So, I don't know, look at that, that's a more holy building than ours. So, maybe you'll want to go. That was kind of cool.

Then, I had this email from this young lady last week. She gave me permission to share this. She said, “I started attending your church a year ago and instantly felt loved. I knew that I found my church home. Since then I’ve been working, I’m trying to get my family to attend with me but it’s been very difficult. They come occasionally but distance is the primary barrier.” I think they live in Fishers.

She said, “I’ve tried to get them to watch online in the very least. But today as you made the announcement, there was such an overwhelming joy and hope that filled my heart. I couldn’t make it to church this morning so I was watching online. I suggested that my family do as well. And as you were preaching I attached the text messages between us.” If we could throw those up there for us to take a look at, you can kind of read this.

Group Conversation

- You all should watch church first. It’s on right now traderspoint.tv.
- Looks like you’re getting an offsite church close at Creekside Elementry in Carmel!!!!!!
- I’m so excited!! Now we can all go together!!!! ...
- We are in! We are thrilled!
- I’ve been sobbing uncontrollably. This makes my heart so tremendously happy!!! I love you all so much!! This is the beginning of our path to continue to get closer to God together.
- Count me in!!!! God does work in his little subtle way!!!!!!

Basically they’re texting during the sermon and they are saying, “Finally there is a site that is closer to us. We can get more involved.” Guys, that’s a picture of what multisite is about. For some of you, this may not impact you but there are a lot of people that it really does.

Now, let me address a couple of common questions that I heard last week. These are really, really good questions. One question is, “Is Creekside Middle School too close to this campus? This seems like a lot of resource, a lot of effort for us to go 15 minutes away.” That’s a really good question.

Statistics and studies show that the first multisite should really be no farther than about a 15 to 20 minute drive. That’s a pretty good window away from the campus. And Creekside Middle School fits right into that. Now, admittedly, it’s as far west as we would ever want to go on the north side. But keep this in mind. It’s a temporary location. We can only be there 12 months.

As we were scouring the north side we were looking at every short-term venue that we could find to set up and tear down. And this was the best one that came up. In fact, when we walked into that building, you’re going to see, it was really made for a portable church. So, it’s going to be a good place for us to get started. We are looking for a permanent location that would be a little bit east of that location.

Another question that came in is, “Do you think this will dilute what is happening here?” Absolutely not—I don’t think so at all. When I came into the church eight years ago we had 1,200 adults between two services. And now we have something like 4,000 adults that show up between all of the services.

We have about 5,500 people who come on the weekend, 166 people per service—I think those seats will fill right back up again. And we're not trying to send our servers from here to go over there. We're trying to get people who have been sitting on the bench because of the distance involved to get in the game. And when things reproduce, it invigorates life through everything.

Here's the third and final thing: It's the word *give*. This may be where you have some questions. I want you to know this. I had this question come in last week, "Are we being the best possible stewards of the money that has already been given?" And yes, we are doing our absolute best to be the best possible stewards. As a staff going through each department and we're saying, "Is that a necessary expenditure? Can we fast from anything? Can we be as lean as we possibly can so that way we can continue to go multisite?"

We are not going to do a capital campaign. And a capital campaign is where you have your general operating budget and you have a separate fund to give to. We're doing something called one fund. You might have questions about it and you may need some additional clarity. There's a table out in the Lobby and you can stop and get questions answered. But basically, all that it is is that we say, "What am I intentionally giving?" For some of you, maybe that would be a tithe. For some of you it's working up to a tithe. Maybe it's more than that. And you're saying, "What am I giving one fund over the course of two years to this effort."

Now, here's the thing. Over the course of the next two years we're just asking people, "What's on your heart? How is God leading you to give in this?" And we're turning the responses in to see where we might be in all of this.

I want to share these numbers with you. On April the 30th our elders turned in their financial commitments for the next two years. That's what they are intentionally giving. All of our elders are tithing and some of them are saying, "Here's what we're giving above and beyond that." So, here was the number. Our elders have committed \$683,780. Forty-five staff commitments have come in right now. Not all of them have come in and they'll probably come in this next week. And out of the 45 staff commitments, we have \$626,080. And then we've had 10 members in our church who said here's what we'll give. Here's our financial commitment equaling \$725,000. So, 71 commitments have come in and the number is a little over \$2,000,000. That's how we'll eat this elephant.

I'm going to teach on stewardship in the next couple of weeks and I just need to share my heart with you in this. Every time we do this there are always people who may get their feathers ruffled a little bit. I'm not asking you to give anything. The Scriptures say that God loves a cheerful giver. And man, I would never want this to become a barrier for you and your growth. I'm not asking anybody to break their backs, all I'm asking is that, as a church, we would say, "What will we intentionally give so that we might go and remove as many barriers as possible?" And I believe that God is asking each one of us to just search that out within our own hearts.

I want to ask for your prayers for wisdom and pray that we, as a church, would be unified as we move forward together so that we can see as many people in our city come to know Christ and have opportunities for discipleship. If you have questions, ask them. If you want to see the budget, we'd love to show it to you so we can show you how we arrived at these numbers.

We're going to take communion together. We're going to worship.

Let me pray for us right now.

Father, we come to You right now and we thank You, God for Your grace and Your love and Your mercy. God, we don't want to keep it to ourselves. We want to wreck the roof. We want to go after those who may have walked away because they felt rejected or maybe they have faced some kind of barrier. God I pray that You would be at work in and through our church so that we might move together in unity to see more and more people come to know You. God, keep us humble. Keep us hungry as we desire to make Your Name known. We ask this in the name of Jesus. And the church says, "Amen."