**Sermon Notes April 25, 2021**

**God’s Greatest Mercy – Self-Revelation**

**Acts 8:26-40**

**Review:**

 **Acts 1:8 “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will**

 **be my witnesses it Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”**

 **Pentecost – Holy Spirit given**

 **Church empowered**

 **Explosive growth**

 **Persecution – Church scattered**

 **Gospel goes to Samaria**

 **Now – Gospel advances toward the ends of the earth**

**Scripture Reading: Acts 8:26-40 (NIV)** (1984 version if possible)

Exciting time – church is growing even with persecution… the Gospel is advancing, lives are being changed… but…

**What about those who don’t hear, who aren’t exposed to the power of the Gospel?**

Today’s passage will help our understanding of this troubling question.

**Romans 1:18-20 “The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For (ever) since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature - have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.”**

Unpack – Is creation enough? What else is needed? Does everyone have an opportunity?

 What/who does creation point to?

 Definition of a God-fearer

 How does God respond?

**Acts 8:26-29** (print out from scripture reading)

Angel of the Lord, the Spirit, Spirit of the Lord = signal God’s activity.

“Go…desert road…Gaza (noon) deserted

Ethiopian – prominent official CFO of the treasury of Candace

Returning from visiting Jerusalem where he was worshipping at the Temple

God-fearer

**This is the first a several accounts in Acts where God reveals Himself to those who seek Him – God-Fearers.**

Biblical basis…

**Jeremiah 29:13 “You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you, declares the Lord…”**

**Matthew 7:7-8 “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who ask receives; he who seek finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.”**

**Hebrews 11:6 “Without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.”**

God’s actions with the Ethiopian “God-fearer”

**Acts 8:30-35** (print out from scripture reading)

Chariot pulled by an Ox – walking pace – Philip can walk alongside

Hears him reading from the prophet Isaiah

Read Isaiah 53:7-8

Question – interesting – doesn’t ask for the meaning, but rather who the prophet is referring to.

 Possibly he knew of Jeremiah’s statements concerning himself that are similar (Jer. 11:18ff)

 Israel – is called “God’s Servant” elsewhere in Isaiah

Philip’s response – This is talking about the Messiah! Mind blow!

**Suffering Messiah? Unthinkable!**

**Zechariah 14: 1-9 “A day of the Lord is coming…On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives…it will be split in two from east to west…then the Lord will come with his holy angels with him…The Lord will be king over the whole earth. On that day there will be one Lord, and his name the only name.”**

**Daniel 7:13-14 “…I looked that there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven…He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.”**

Victorious, conquering – yes, suffering not a chance

Jesus more fully revealed

**Isaiah 53:3-6; 11-12 “He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom mend hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgression, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all...After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”**

Gospel – Jesus crucified, buried, risen and coming again!

Professor Rydelnik’s story of Isaiah 53

Amazing that today – believer and unbeliever alike recognize Jesus in Isaiah 53!

**Acts 8:36-40** (print out from scripture reading)

Salvation comes to the Ethiopian - baptized

He went away rejoicing!

Philip “translated” to Azotus

When we seek Him, he will reveal Himself to us

Today?

Sturgus – Red Vests

**We serve a revealing God!**

**He reveals Himself:**

 **In Creation**

 **Through the prophets**

 **Ultimately in Christ**

 **Uniquely to those who seek Him**

The amazing, initiating love of God – constantly pursuing relationship with us. You? Invitation

Today, as you leave:

**Rejoice in God’s amazing love for us; for how would we know Him unless He revealed Himself to us.**

**Be ready and obedient to be used of God to share that love in whatever way He may lead.**