**Finding Joy in the Man of Sorrows**

Acts 8:25–40

**“If our greatest need had been information, God would have sent us an educator. If our greatest need had been technology, God would have sent us a scientist. If our greatest need had been money, God would have sent us an economist. If our greatest need had been pleasure, God would have sent us an entertainer. But our greatest need was forgiveness, so God sent us a Savior” (Charles Swindoll).**

**The Providence of God**

A. The Lord cares for each and every soul that is lost, and he providentially works to draw them to himself – 1 Timothy 2:3; see Philemon 15–16.

B. Even though Philip was effectively preaching in Samaria, God sent him to a deserted place to meet a single person – Acts 8:25–28.

C. The knowledge of God and the obedience of Philip converged, allowing Philip to meet the Ethiopian at just the right moment – vv. 29–31.

**The Prophecy of Isaiah**

A. The Ethiopian had been reading from Isaiah, and he needed a teacher to help him understand the meaning – Acts 8:32–34; see Ephesians 4:11–12.

**“Three things are necessary for the salvation of man: to know what he ought to believe, to know what he ought to desire, and to know what he ought to do” (Thomas Aquinas).**

B. The prophecy of Isaiah describes a servant of God who gives his life to atone for the sins of the people – Isaiah 52:13–53:12; see Acts 8:32–33.

C. The New Testament reveals that Jesus is the servant of Isaiah 53, his entire ministry fulfilling the prophecy – see Matthew 8:17; John 12:38; Romans 10:16; Luke 22:37; 1 Peter 2:22.

**The Preaching of Jesus**

A. Philip preached Jesus from Isaiah 53, proving that Jesus was the Christ, seemingly without the aid of miraculous confirmation – Acts 8:35; see vv. 5–8.

**“[Isaiah] should be called an evangelist rather than a prophet, because he describes all the mysteries of Christ and the church so clearly that one would think he is composing a history of what has already happened rather than prophesying what is to come” (Jerome).**

B. The Old Testament Scriptures, including Isaiah 53, provided a necessary foundation for the good news about Jesus – 2 Timothy 3:14–17; Galatians 3:24.

C. Philip, no doubt, announced to the Ethiopian that Jesus is the perfect sacrifice for sin and that only the blood of Christ forgives – Ephesians 1:7; see Matthew 26:28; Revelation 1:5.

**“Unless we behold [God] in and through Christ, the mediator, the terrors of his majesty would overwhelm us. We dare not approach the Father except in Christ because of our sins.… If Christ does not bear our guilt and reconcile us unto God, we perish! Before any man can think to stand before the face of God’s justice or be admitted to the secret chamber of God’s mercy or partake of the riches of his grace, we must look to the mediator, Christ Jesus” (Stephen Charnock).**

D. Yet preaching Jesus as the only way to salvation does not preclude the necessity of obedience (e.g., baptism) – Acts 8:36–38; see Mark 16:16.

E. The Bible affirms that there is one baptism, that is, immersion in water for the forgiveness of sins – Ephesians 4:5; Acts 2:38; 2 Peter 3:21.

F. If we, like the Ethiopian, respond rightly to the preaching of the good news, we can rejoice in the Lord always – Acts 8:39; see 16:34; Philippians 4:4.

**“Joy is the flag that flies over the castle of our hearts announcing that the king is in residence today” (William Knight).**