

Acts 8 (Part 2): 26-40 • Sharing the Good News one heart at a time

Teacher: Pastor Paul LeBoutillier
Life Bible Ministry

We are in the Book of Acts. We are going to finish the eighth chapter today so open your Bible there, please. Acts chapter 8, this is part 2.

And Acts chapter 8 is pretty much devoted to the ministry of Philip, a man who was originally chosen to be in charge of a group of men that were overseeing food distribution. And a lot of these men moved out into other areas of ministry. Philip is one of them. He became an evangelist.

And so we're going to read beginning at verse 26 through the end of the chapter. Follow along with me. I am reading from the ESV, the English Standard Version. Here we go.

“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." (ESV)

That's where we stop. Let's pray.

Father, open our hearts to this, the ministry of Your Word. Lord, we just want to be open as You minister to each person. And You know where everybody's at, spiritually.

And I just pray, Lord, that You would speak to hearts. I pray that each one of us, Lord, would humble ourselves before You that we might hear your voice. Respond, Lord, to what You have to say.

Guide us and direct us, we pray, Lord, in the name of Jesus, our Savior, amen. Amen.

All right. So last week, again, we started here on the ministry of Philip and he made his way we found out in the first part of this chapter up into the area of Samaria where he began to share the gospel with the Samaritans. You'll remember, I told you the Samaritans were essentially half breeds. They were part Jew, part Gentile, and for that reason, most of the Jews avoided the area of Samaria. They didn't want to go there. They didn't want anything to do with those people, really, in any way, shape, or form.

But Philip had no such issues related to those people. He shared the gospel. And there was just a resounding response. I mean, people were getting saved all over the place to the point where Peter and John were eventually sent up to that area to see what was happening there. And it was just a real powerful field of labor.

But what we read about here in this latter part of the chapter, is that Phillip is directed by the Lord away from that fruitful field of labor. And the Lord just simply told him to travel on the road down to Jerusalem and then eventually toward Gaza.

It's interesting, isn't it, that, all these things are named the same, still. I mean, we hear a lot about Gaza today and this is where a lot of war, battle, unfortunately

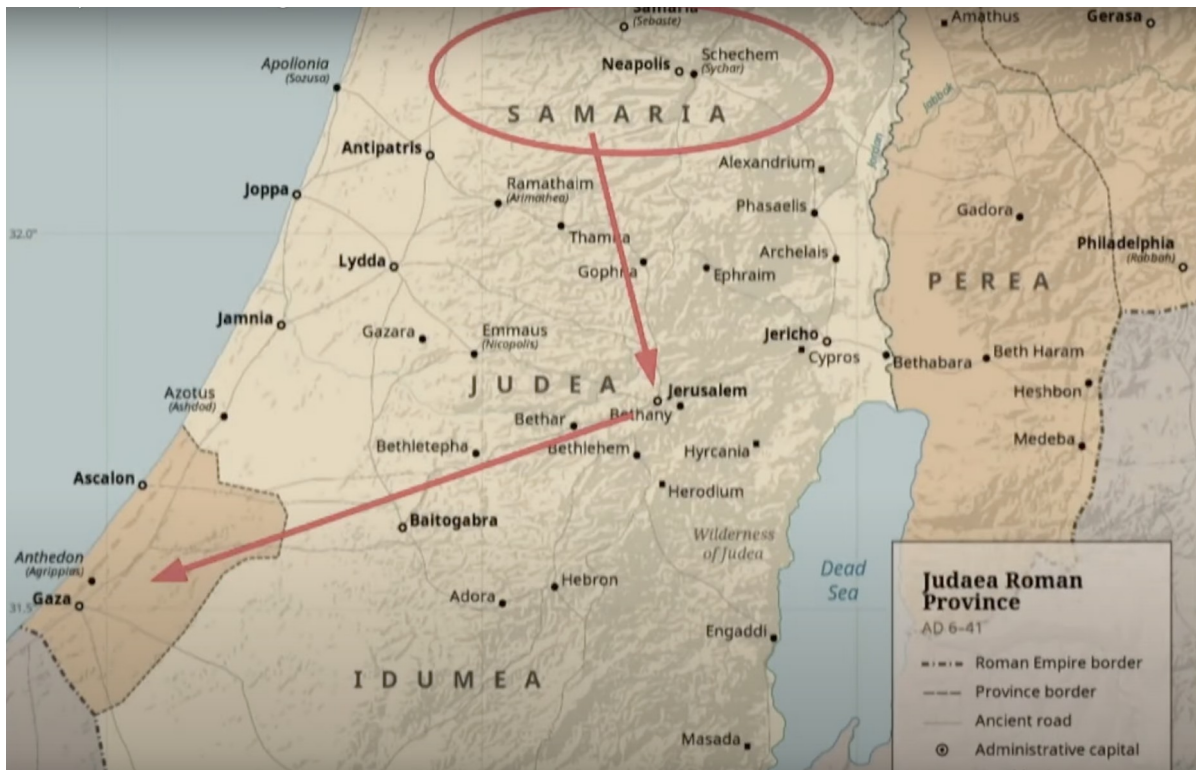
is going on. But this was no small trip, really, for Philip. It was a fairly good piece when you think about the fact that most people traveled by foot back then. People who were more wealthy might be able to afford a chariot or something like that like we know this Ethiopian was doing.

Let me put a map up on the screen here. So first of all, you can just see the layout. Let me circle the area of Samaria up there so you can see.



That's the field of labor, if you will, where Philip has been serving and sharing and ministering the gospel. And what the Lord told him to do was first make his way down to Jerusalem.

We'll put an arrow, that's essentially the direction he had to go down to Jerusalem. And then the Lord told him to start on the road to Gaza, which the second arrow shows you where that is.



Now, we don't know how far he went because this Ethiopian eunuch had come to Jerusalem to worship there at the temple. And now he was making his way back to Ethiopia. And by the way, the borders of Ethiopia have changed, as you can well imagine, in a couple of thousand years. The Ethiopia back then is not really where the Ethiopia today is located. It has shifted. Ethiopia back then is where Sudan is today, which is directly south of Egypt, if you know your continent of Africa.

We don't know how far he had gotten along this road to Gaza but that's just simply all that he was told. Leave the place where all these people are getting saved, make your way back to Jerusalem, and then just start walking on the road to Gaza. Just start making your way that direction and there you go.

It says in verse 27 that as “...*he rose and went. And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, ...*” Whatever, tells us, that he was in charge of her treasury. Interesting about... Originally, eunuchs were men who were responsible for guarding concubines of a king, and that's why they were eunuchs.

But this particular man was in charge of the treasury of this queen of Ethiopia. Anyway, we assume he was a convert to Judaism, and he had come to Jerusalem to worship.

And then it goes on in verse 29, and it says, “...*the Spirit said to Philip, “Go over and join this chariot.”*” Here's the deal, guys, we don't know how long it took for Philip to get down to Jerusalem. Probably, I don't know, at least a day or two, and then he's making his way on the road to Gaza.

And we don't know how long he walked before he sees this guy in a chariot and the Holy Spirit says to him, just go walk, go get close to that chariot right over there. This is the first sense of direction that Philip has gotten really since the Lord told him to leave Samaria. I mean, he doesn't really know what God was calling him to do.

We know the story, and so we're all comfortable reading it, and we just think, okay, this is the time when Philip, got called to evangelize this Ethiopian guy, and da, da, da, and we know the story. But Philip didn't know the story. He's just following orders.

And can I just tell you, it's tough to follow orders when you don't know what the end result is going to be. When you don't really know what the direction is that the Lord is going to take you, or you don't really... The Lord didn't elaborate. And that's the thing about this God that we serve, He doesn't always elaborate on things.

He sometimes will just give you a directive and just say, now go. And we're all going, why? What do you want me to do? You just go, you just go, I'll fill you in along the way. Well, I don't like that. Some of us really like to have our lives planned out and we want to know what's going to happen, and the Holy Spirit just isn't always that tremendously forthcoming to be completely honest with you. This is the first he hears of it.

Verse 30 tells us that, he ran up to this chariot and he hears this guy reading from the prophet Isaiah and I love this opening question. He says, “*Do you understand what you are reading?*” Which is really a great opening statement because it puts the ball in the court of the other person to figure out whether or not there's an openness here, right? To talk about this and discuss what the gospel or what this passage is particularly about.

Thankfully, he accepts Phillip's offer and he says to him, how could I know what this is about if nobody explains it to me? He's just reading the scripture. And he's reading this portion of Isaiah that is taken from a couple of verses, verses 7 and 8. Let me put this on the screen for you. And this is the essence of what he was reading that whoever this is about, according to the Ethiopian. He was,

Isaiah 53:7-8 (ESV)

...like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living...

...like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, (doesn't make any noise) so he opened not his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away; (and then it goes on to explain that whoever this is talking about, he was killed) and as for his generation, who considered that (and that's what it means in that rather poetic language when it says) he was cut off out of the land of the living...

That's just a poetic way of saying that he was killed he died. Now some of you know what Isaiah chapter 53 is all about. You've read, and studied through Isaiah chapter 53 and you know how amazing it is as it relates to just its prophetic foretelling and accuracy of the sacrifice that Jesus made on the cross for us. And we're going to, by the way, I'm going to finish off here today by reading through that chapter just because it is so incredible, so powerful, so wonderful.

But it's a perfect setup, obviously, for sharing the gospel for Philip. This guy says, well how do I know what this is about unless somebody explains it. Well, let me tell you, I can do just that. And so he invites Philip up into the chariot and they begin talking.

And in verse 35, it says, *“Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture...”* In other words, he began with Isaiah 53, those couple of verses. Remember, back in those days, there were no verses and chapters and anything like that. That didn't come until hundreds and hundreds of years later.

He's just reading from this passage and he begins to explain, it says *“the good news about Jesus”* from the Old Testament. Now remember, that's all they had was the Old Testament to work from. We have that... Here we are studying the New Testament. This is what we do on Sunday morning. We're going through the New Testament from the Book of Matthew to Revelation. And we enjoy our study of the New Testament, but they didn't have it. Philip, this is what he has to work with.

Now it's good stuff don't get me wrong. I mean if I had to pick a passage from the Old Testament to use to share the gospel with somebody, I'd probably, if this was all I had, I'd be very happy that this was what I had, because the chapter is

simply amazing. They're "...going along the road (verse 36, and) they came to some water, (and it says)... the eunuch said, "See, here is water!"'"

Now this all tells us that as Philip is sharing the gospel with this man, he's gotten around to talking about water baptism. Because the eunuch knows about the element of what water baptism means and why it's important and so forth. And I'm sure Philip had gotten into the whole concept of being identified with Jesus by water baptism in His death, burial, and resurrection, and so forth.

And so here they are they come upon this water and the eunuch says, hey, how about me getting baptized right here, right now? And they stopped the chariot, they both went down into the water, and it says that Philip baptized this guy.

Now it's interesting and serendipitous, I guess, that I got a question just like 2 days ago from someone who asked me a question. And I get a lot of questions about water baptism, but this was the one I got. Let me put this on the screen for you. This person wrote me and said,

Question:

Does it matter where I get baptized and does it matter who baptizes me?

Does it matter where I get baptized and does it matter who baptizes me?

And I thought, that's a good question. I like good questions and this was a good one, I thought. And so I'm just curious, and I'm not asking you to speak out, but I'm going to ask you, how would you respond if someone asked that question of you? Well, here's how I responded. I said,

Question:

Does it matter where I get baptized and does it matter who baptizes me?

Answer:

The Bible doesn't specify where a person must be baptized or by whom.

The Bible doesn't specify where a person must be baptized or by whom.

You know why I said that? Because it's true. Because the Bible doesn't specify. It doesn't say where you should get baptized, and it doesn't say by whom.

There's a whole lot of things in life that we just assume have to be done by an ordained person or something like that. I mean, there's just a lot of things and

we just assume. I've had people... People make assumptions, they make statements all the time.

I want you to look at the simplicity, though of this water baptism. I mean, how simple can you get? It's performed out on a desert road, right? There's no church present and there are no apostles who are there to witness this or to perform this particular water baptism? It's Philip.

Philip was one of the first deacons. And we talked about this when we dealt with the issue of the raising up of deacons. We told you that deacon means servant. It's not a leadership position necessarily in the church, it's a servant. It's somebody who gets down on their knees and works. And he's doing the baptizing.

Does that mess with you a little bit? Well, I don't know if it does. Because there are some people that might read this or whatever, or hear the answer that I gave to this person about this water baptism and they might say, well, I don't think that was legit. I don't think that person was really truly baptized because they didn't get baptized correctly. I mean there are some churches that they have a particular recipe for the way it's got to be said.

I get people sometimes on our YouTube channel, we get people making comments, all kinds of comments because people come from all different, yeah, backgrounds. And they'll say, when you got baptized, what did they say? Did they say, I baptize you in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit? Or did they say, I baptize you in the name of Jesus? Because there are people who distinguish, and they'll say, if you don't get baptized with the right formula, you're not really baptized. Yeah, it happens all the time.

Can I just tell you something? We love making up rules. We, Christians. Well, we people. We just love making up rules. But can I just tell you something else? It doesn't mean the rules are biblical.

One of the things I love about studying through the Bible is you get to, when you start learning what the Word of God says, you can start separating the wheat from the tares as it relates to what the Bible says, and what we've added to the Bible. Or what we say, well now this is the way it's got to be done. Why?

We need to start asking the question more. Why? And I got to tell you, a lot of people, I mean a fair amount of the questions that I get from people, are wanting to know if something they've been told is biblically accurate. In other words, is this in the Bible?

Now you might ask the question, is it important that it's in the Bible? I think so. I think it's important if it's in the Bible. If it's not in the Bible, then I'm not going to really mess with it. I'll be honest with you. Because I consider that to be man-made religion. And I've told you guys many times before, man-made religion isn't going to get you anywhere. Because man has just loved making up rules over the years. And that's what I call empty religion.

I want to get back to what the Word says, don't you? I want to cut through the garbage. I want to move away all this other tradition and all these other things that just gets in the way of understanding what the Bible says.

Back to the simplicity of what God's Word says, because I believe that the Bible is the only authority. I don't believe man is an authority. God is the authority. And if we, man, start heaping our own thoughts and rules, and regulations and things on top of what God's Word says, we're just going to end up diluting the Word of God.

Finishing up, it says, “...*when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away,...*” What? Do you mean like He beamed him out? Is this Star Trek? He doesn't explain. He says He carried him away. What do you mean carried him away?

It says, “...*and the eunuch saw him no more,...*” These guys come up out of the water and Philip disappears. Would you be freaked out? Me too. And it says, “...*and went on his way rejoicing.*” I don't know if that sort of thing happened every day to him, but it is pretty amazing.

And it says in verse 40 that, “...*Philip found himself at Azotus,...*” Azotus is another name for the city of Ashdod, which was a capital city of the Philistine region, which is modern day Gaza. Okay.

And it tells us here at the end of verse 40, that “...*as he passed through he preached the gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.*” And Caesarea was a port city on the Mediterranean coast.

And that's apparently where Philip decided to settle, because by the end of the Book of Acts, or getting toward the end of the Book of Acts, we find Philip still there, and this is like 20 years later. And by the way, the port city of Caesarea is not to be confused with Caesarea Philippi. The Caesars loved naming towns after themselves and that's what was going on there.

But anyway, as we close this morning, I want to go back and I want to, we're going to read through together, the entirety of Isaiah chapter 53 because it is so beautiful and is so powerfully prophetic.

Now, I want to remind you about a couple of things. First of all, Isaiah chapter 53 is referred to as, The Chapter of the Suffering Servant. All right. Now, the Suffering Servant is Jesus, and you're going to see that very clearly here.

But the thing I want you to understand is that Isaiah chapter 53 was written 700 years before the birth of Christ. All right. 700 years. And we know that to be factual. And I am going to put this on the screen. You can follow along in your Bible.

But I'm just going to tell you right now, we're going to read it from out of the NIV. And the reason we're going to do that is because I like it. And that's it. I just like it that way. Here we go. Ready? It says,

Isaiah 53:1-12 (NIV84)

Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.

Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the LORD (in other words, the strength of the LORD) been revealed? He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.

Stop there for a minute. Notice that it says that He grew up “*like a root out of dry ground.*” And what that refers to is, the previous 400 years were silent prophetically. We call that the Intertestamental Period. It was the time between the testaments, between the Old Testament and the New Testament. There was no prophetic revelation that was given to Israel. It was quiet, it was dry.

And so it says that when this One who came, He came as “*a root out of dry ground.*” There had been no revelation. Now it goes on and it says,

Isaiah 53:1-12 (NIV84)*He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.*

He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Isaiah 53:1-12 (NIV84)

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 transgressions, 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.

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 transgressions, 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.

Isaiah 53:1-12 (NIV84)

He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away. And who can speak of his descendants? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken. He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.

He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away. And who can speak of his descendants? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken. He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.

Isaiah 53:1-12 (NIV84)

Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand. 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.

Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand. After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life (speaking of the resurrection) and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities.

Isaiah 53:1-12 (NIV84)

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.

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.

Isn't that powerful? I mean, that is about one of the most amazing chapters in the whole Bible, particularly when you realize it was written 700 years before the birth of Christ.

I mean, how incredible can you get, getting into such amazing detail, even to say that, “*He was pierced for our transgressions.*” He was nailed on a cross, you guys. He was pierced through His hands and feet.

It literally tells us how He would die, and then that He would be returned to life. “*He would see the light of life and be satisfied.*” This is the Suffering Servant. This is the One whom God prophesied would come and suffer for you and be raised on the third day.

This is Jesus. This is our Savior. This is our Redeemer. This is the One who gave His life for you. And this is the One whom we put our confidence in. And by placing our confidence in what He did on the cross, we are saved.

I had a guy write to me, said that he was working with patients, I don't know where. And he was sharing this simple good news with one of the patients that

he was, I think he said he was wheeling her into like get x-rays or something like that.

And he was talking to her about heaven. And the woman said to him, well, satan was kicked out of heaven, what's to show, what's to prove that I won't get kicked out of heaven someday? He said, I wasn't really sure how to answer her. He said, what would you say?

I told him, well, first of all, Jesus didn't die for angels, He died for human beings. But second of all, this whole idea about being kicked out of heaven is predicated on the fact that somehow, someway, I deserved to get in there in the first place, but maybe later on I might not deserve to be there and I might get kicked out. Well, the whole thing is a fallacy.

You see, none of us deserve heaven. Not one of us and none of you will ever get there because you deserve to go there. And because you didn't do anything good to get there, you can't do anything bad to get kicked out. Okay, that's it.

There's this idea that somehow I've got to be good enough. People, you will never be good enough. You will never be good enough to go to heaven. Stop trying.

The reason we get to heaven is because He was good enough. He was sinless, in fact. And because He was sinless, He was eligible to bear your sin and my sin on the cross. There was no deceit in His mouth. There was no sin in His life. And so He was able to go to the cross and bear yours and mine and that he did.

And the Bible simply says, if we put our confidence in what He did, we will be saved. I don't know about you, but that's about the best offer I've ever had.

And I accepted that offer when I was about 15 years old. It took me about 10 years to start walking with the Lord. I continued to just live my own life and do my own thing from age 15 to about age 25. And then my life fell apart and God got my attention and I started walking with Him.

But that acceptance is what we all need to do at some point in time in our lives. I hope and pray that all of you, every single one of you, have simply accepted that free offer of forgiveness and eternal life that comes through Jesus Christ. But if in fact, there's someone here who hasn't and we just need to deal with that right now. And so I'm going to ask you to pray with me right now. Just everybody just bow your head and pray.

And this is going to be mostly for those who haven't, and that's okay. And we're just going to pray and in our hearts, and I just encourage those of you who just either don't know if you're saved. Don't know if you're forgiven, that you would just in the quiet of your heart, pray along with me as we come to the Lord and we just say, Lord, I just, I confess to you that I have lived a life of selfishness and sin and I've gone my own way.

And that's what we just read. Each has turned to his own way. We all like sheep have gone astray. And I confess that to You, Lord. And I confess to You that I'm not worthy of heaven and I never will be. I confess to You, Lord, that there's no possible way I could ever be good enough for You to let me into heaven. But I believe that Jesus was good enough.

I believe that He went to the cross with no sin except bearing mine. And I confess that He is my Savior. This day, I put my hope in Him for forgiveness and eternal life.

My hope is not in myself. My hope is in Him. And I accept what He did for me on the cross. And I pray that You would fill me with Your Holy Spirit. That You would teach me Your Word. That You would guide me through life. And that You would direct my path.

And I determined this day that I'm going to serve the Lord. And I know that I don't have the strength to serve You, but I know also that You are able to give me that strength that I lack. And so I put myself in Your hands and I ask you to do a work to change and transform my life. I lay my heart before you in the name of Jesus Christ.

Now let's all stand together. We're going to just close our time in prayer.

Father, we've heard the Word today. We thank You for it. We praise You for Your goodness. We love You. We pray that You'd continue to fill us with grace, insight, and understanding. And go as we go from this place. May You guide and direct our steps.

We thank You and praise You in the name of Jesus, our Savior and all God's people said, amen.

God bless you. Have a good rest of your Sunday.