



**Sunday, January 10, 2010: The Great Conversation**

**Scripture:** Acts 8:26-40

**Speaker:** Joe Boot

**Sermon Notes:**

1. The Holy Spirit empowers Philip the evangelist as he goes abroad with the message of Jesus.
2. We must be prepared to encounter biblical illiterates, like Philip who had to explain the Scriptures to the eunuch.
3. It is the task of all of us to be ready to give a defense, if asked for a reason for our hope, using our individual gifts and abilities.
4. We must contend for the faith we have received. Jude 3.
5. The bedrock of Philip's evangelism was the Scripture.
6. The New Testament is a missional document, written by missionaries about God's work reconciling all things to Himself.
7. The NT is about Christ's servants delivering and spreading the good news about the Lordship and Kingship of Christ.
8. The voice of God in Scripture reasons with us, and persuades us of His ways. He warns us (Genesis 4:6-10), He cross-examines us (Job 40:7); He appeals to us (Deuteronomy 30:19).
9. Against the rationalism of his time, Pascal noted that no writer of the Canon appealed to nature to prove the existence of God.
10. Paul, however, asserts that the testimony of God is all over nature and in people's hearts (Romans 1-2).
11. God's truth is evident to all people but we suppress the truth in our rebellion.
12. God is a rewarder of those who seek Him. See Matthew 7:7-8.
13. In Acts 17 Paul talks of the absolute, necessary character of the God who gives life to all. We are all His offspring.
14. In evangelism, the first thing we need to do is to engage in conversation: Philip asks the eunuch, "Do you understand?"
15. Jesus engaged in conversations with people; God had conversation with Abraham (Genesis 18); et cetera.

16. God is always interested in a two way conversation with His people.
17. Conversation is necessary for clearing up misunderstandings and misconceptions.
18. Asking questions is important to discover the assumptions and needs of those we seek to evangelize.
19. As when Jesus was asked about His authority, sometimes the right answer is to give no answer.
20. We must reject false assumptions in the questions put to us.
21. In sharing the gospel we're offering Christ as the lens by which people can make sense of their lives.
22. The task of apologetics is not to brow beat people with our arguments, but it is to get them to face themselves, and to offer the Lord Jesus as the solution for their sin and alienation.
23. We must not settle for an abstract analysis of the universe in our apologetic encounters. Rather, people need to be introduced to the living God through the person of Jesus.
24. People need a new birth, to have the blinders removed from their eyes, to see the world as it really is.
25. Nietzsche realized that everything without God is futility and absurdity, and he concluded with nihilism.
26. In the Matrix pure existentialism is portrayed – the deification of self-will ("I choose") and staring at the abyss with pride.
27. Without Christ man could only be sinful and wretched. - Pascal
28. As God prepares the hearts of our hearers, so we must follow the leading of the Holy Spirit in our evangelism.

**Application Questions:**

1. Am I appealing to God in prayer for the salvation of our city?
2. Like Philip, where is the Holy Spirit leading me to evangelize beyond my comfort zone?
3. How can we make the voice of God in Scripture central to our evangelism approach?
4. Am I tempted to make evangelism just a quick conversation?
5. Do I tend to give long answers to questions people didn't ask?
6. How can we focus our conversations on people's real needs?
7. Do I have any contacts where it is appropriate to share the full gospel and to call the person to repentance immediately?
8. How should we respond when asked a question we don't know the answer to?