

# Sunday, May 2, 2021 – Fifth Sunday of Easter

## Acts 8:26-40 - Philip teaches and baptizes an Ethiopian

<sup>26</sup>An angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Get up and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” (This is a wilderness road.) <sup>27</sup>So he got up and went.

*In John 12: 20 ff. Philip, the disciple with the Greek name, is the one whom some Greeks who had come to Jerusalem for the Passover approached with the request, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.”*

Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship <sup>28</sup>and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah.

*Many Bible scholars believe that the Ethiopian, being a eunuch, may not have been able to worship in the Temple once he got to Jerusalem.*

*He was reading the prophet Isaiah – Whom do you know who might have recently experienced a disappointment or a setback and/or who is searching who might be particularly receptive?*

<sup>29</sup>Then the Spirit said to Philip, “Go over to this chariot and join it.” <sup>30</sup>So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” <sup>31</sup>He replied, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. <sup>32</sup>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 silent before its shearer, so he does not open his mouth.

<sup>33</sup>In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation?  
For his life is taken away from the earth.” (*Isaiah 53: 7-8*)

<sup>34</sup>The eunuch asked Philip, “About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?”

*Do you know the Bible and Jesus well enough so that when God gives you an opportunity to share Christ with someone, you are able to do it?*

<sup>35</sup>Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. <sup>36</sup>As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?” <sup>38</sup>He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him.

## Psalm 22:25-31 - All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD

*Of the seven last words of Jesus, three of them are addressed to God the Father – “Father, forgive them” – “Why have you forsaken me?” – and “Into your hands I commend my spirit”*

*Of the three addressed to God the Father, the latter two are quotations from the Psalms – Psalm 22: 1 – My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*

*Psalm 31: 5 – Into your hand I commit my spirit*

*Psalm 22 contains many words of lament, which reflect the experiences of Jesus on the cross – Verse 6 – I am scorned by others and despised by the people*

*Verse 7 – All who see me mock at me; they shake their heads*

*Verse 8 – “Commit your cause to the Lord; let him deliver and rescue the one in whom he delights!”*

*Verse 14 – I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint*

*Verse 15 – My mouth is dried up like a potsherd*

*Verse 18 – They divide my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots*

*But Psalm 22 ends with strong words of faith and assurance*

<sup>27</sup>All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD;  
all the families of nations shall bow before God.

<sup>29</sup>Indeed, all who sleep in the earth shall bow down in worship;  
all who go down to the dust, though they be dead, shall kneel before the LORD.

<sup>30</sup>Their descendants shall serve the LORD, whom they shall proclaim to generations to come.

<sup>31</sup>They shall proclaim God’s deliverance to a people yet unborn, saying to them, “The LORD has acted!”

## **1 John 4:7-21 – God is love**

<sup>7</sup>Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God.

<sup>8</sup>Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love.

<sup>9</sup>God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. – *Cf. John 3: 16*

<sup>10</sup>In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.

<sup>11</sup>Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another.

<sup>12</sup>No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.

<sup>15</sup>God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God.

<sup>16</sup>God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.

<sup>19</sup>We love because he first loved us.

<sup>20</sup>Those who say, “I love God,” and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen.

## **Gospel: John 15:1-8 - Jesus is the Vine**

<sup>1</sup>“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. <sup>5</sup>I am the vine, you are the branches.

*Did Jesus and His disciples pass through a vineyard on their way from the Last Supper to Gethsemane?*

<sup>2</sup>He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit.

*Some translations have “lifts up” instead of “removes.”*

*Are you producing no fruit, fruit, more fruit (verse 2), or much fruit (verse 5)?*

*How has God pruned you? How does God need to prune you?*

<sup>4</sup>Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me.

<sup>5</sup>Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.