



WEEKLY STUDY

WEEK 4

We continue our look at the way songs inform and bring life to our faith. Angela Reiss shared how the same family stories are shared every time the family gets together. When we share the story of Jesus we express the story of our salvation. The message led us to consider the words of the hymn *I Love to Tell The Story*.

Peace of Christ,
Dr. Mark Youngman
Pastor of Discipleship

If you are studying with your Providence Small Group or Discipleship Group, you can share from daily readings as well as the additional questions at the bottom of this guide. If you would like to get connected visit prov.church/smallgroups.

Find a time each day to read the passage of scripture and follow the daily prayer prompt.

DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: ACTS 8.26-29

Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza."²⁷ So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of the Kandake (which means "queen of the Ethiopians"). This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship,²⁸ and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the Book of Isaiah the prophet.²⁹ The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it."

- The man that Philip encountered on the road to Gaza was a high level leader from Ethiopia. Not just anyone would be able to hire a chariot to ride the great distance to Jerusalem. Interestingly, he was not from a region known for its adherence to Judaism. Yet somehow the faith had been shared with him and he was drawn close to God. In the same way, Philip was guided by the Spirit in this encounter. Seems like a divine appointment! **Have you ever experienced an otherwise inexplicable draw in a particular direction? How did God use such a moment in your life?**
- *God, guide me with Your angels and direct me with Your Spirit today. Amen.*

TUESDAY: ACTS 8.30-31

Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. “Do you understand what you are reading?” Philip asked.

³¹ “How can I,” he said, “unless someone explains it to me?” So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

- The Ethiopian man was reading scripture out loud. How did he get his hands on a scroll containing the words of the prophet? (There weren't Gideons standing on the street corner handing out bound copies of Scripture!) And why was he reading it out loud? The story contains a lot of mystery, but what is clear is that Philip recognized the words being read and was prompted to engage in conversation about God's word. As we'll later see, the conversation led to conversion. **Do you suppose you would recognize the sound of God's word being read in your presence? Do you think of God's word as an invitation to conversation? Have you had someone like Philip to explain and teach you about God's word?**
- *God, tune my ears to your voice. Teach me and use me to teach others about Your Good News. Amen.*

WEDNESDAY: ACTS 8.32-35

This is the passage of Scripture the eunuch was reading:

*“He was led like a sheep to the slaughter,
and as a lamb before its shearer is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.*

³³ *In his humiliation he was deprived of justice.
Who can speak of his descendants?
For his life was taken from the earth.”*

³⁴ *The eunuch asked Philip, “Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?”³⁵
Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.*

- The whole Bible points to Jesus. As author Sally Lloyd-Jones put it, *Every story whispers his name.* Before God sent Jesus to walk the earth, these words of prophecy were future-oriented. “One day, there will be a savior who will give his life for the sake of others.” Philip knew intimately that these words had been fulfilled in Jesus. It was good news for everyone, even a man from a far-off country. This was one of those open door moments where God has made a way for a disciple to share about Jesus. **What would help you to recognize and prepare you for an opportunity to share that good news?**
- *Jesus, may your story and your song be on my lips today and everyday. Give me the words to proclaim your salvation to a hurting world. Amen.*

THURSDAY: ACTS 8.36-39

As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptized?”³⁸ And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him.³⁹ When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing.⁴⁰

- Some ancient manuscripts of Acts included a short dialogue between Philip and the Ethiopian man in which the man clearly professed Jesus as Lord. It was most likely added later, but even without these words, his profession was made clear by his request for baptism. Jumping in the water in order to participate in the salvation of God through Jesus Christ is a loud “yes!”. After the baptism, Philip left the scene. Surely the two men thought of that moment many times during their lives, but the purpose of the moment had been accomplished. **How do you know when the purpose of a moment or of a particular season has been accomplished?**
- *God, Your purpose and your timing are perfect. May I be faithful to your will and purpose for my life. Amen.*

FRIDAY: ISAIAH 53.7-9

*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 its shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.*

⁸*By oppression and judgment he was taken away.*

Yet who of his generation protested?

*For he was cut off from the land of the living;
for the transgression of my people he was punished.*

⁹*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.*

- These are a few more of the words that the Ethiopian man from Acts 8 was reading. We know stories of innocent people who are wrongfully accused. When told that this unjustified suffering was accepted so that we might not receive the justice due him, the man was drawn to the waters of baptism. **How do you respond to these words of the Isaiah and what they say about Jesus?**
- *Jesus, you took on the suffering and shame that should have been carried by this fallen world. May your sacrifice produce humility and gratitude in me. Amen.*

SATURDAY: ISAIAH 63.7

*I will tell of the kindnesses of the LORD,
the deeds for which he is to be praised,
according to all the LORD has done for us—
yes, the many good things
he has done for Israel,
according to his compassion and many kindnesses.*

- Pastor Angela shared a few of the standard stories her family tells when they get together. **What are some of the stories that you hear every time your relatives or friends get together? Do your stories point to God in any way? In what ways do you tell of God’s kindness? Consider how you can share about the good things He has done for you.**
- *Lord, you have done great things for me and I will give you praise! Amen.*

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Read through (or listen to) the words of the hymn [I Love to Tell The Story](#)

*I love to tell the story
Of unseen things above,
Of Jesus and His glory,
Of Jesus and His love.
I love to tell the story,
Because I know 'tis true;
It satisfies my longings
As nothing else can do.*

*I love to tell the story;
'Tis pleasant to repeat
What seems each time I tell it,
More wonderfully sweet.
I love to tell the story;
For some have never heard
The message of salvation
From God's own holy Word.*

*I love to tell the story;
More wonderful it seems
Than all the golden fancies
Of all my golden dreams,
I love to tell the story,
It did so much for me;
And that is just the reason
I tell it now to thee.*

*I love to tell the story,
'Twill be my theme in glory
To tell the old, old story
of Jesus and His love.*

*I love to tell the story;
For those who know it best
Seem hungering and thirsting
To hear it like the rest.
And when, in scenes of glory,
I sing the new, new song,
'Twill be the old, old story,
That I have loved so long.*

- What are the core teachings of this hymn?
- What does it tell us about ourselves?
- What does it tell us about God?
- Underline a phrase that particularly stands out to you today. How can you carry it with you as the song of your heart in the days to come?