

STORY 10: SPREAD

As the number of Jesus' followers continued to grow, a great wave of persecution began, which forced many of them to move out of Jerusalem. They scattered to other towns and cities and told people the good news about Jesus everywhere they went. One of these was a guy named Philip, who was well-respected and he was full of God's Spirit. Philip went to a town north of Jerusalem and began teaching the people there about Jesus. Because of his teaching, many men and women decided to follow Jesus.

One day an angel from God came to Philip and said, "Philip, I want you to go down to the desert road, that one that goes south from Jerusalem."

So Philip got up, left the town and set off on this journey. After a while, as he was walking along the road, he saw a chariot approaching. In the chariot was a government official from Ethiopia, who worked for the Queen; he had just been to Jerusalem to worship, and was on his way back home. God's Spirit said to Philip, "Run up to that chariot!"

So Philip ran up to the chariot, and as he got close he heard the guy reading out loud from the book of one of God's prophets, Isaiah. He heard him reading, "He was led like a lamb to be slaughtered, but he didn't say a word. He was humiliated and treated unfairly. He didn't even have any descendants, because his life was taken away."

When Philip heard that, he called out to the man, "Do you understand what you're reading?"

And the guy said, "How can I, unless someone explains it to me?" And so he invited Philip to come up and sit with him in the chariot.

The man asked Philip, "Is Isaiah talking about himself here, or someone else?" Then beginning with that passage, Philip explained the good news of Jesus.

Soon they came to some water by the side of the road. The Ethiopian saw it and said, "Hey, why don't we stop here so I can be baptized*!" So he stopped the chariot, and the two of them got out, walked down to the water, and Philip baptized him right then and there. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away. The Ethiopian never saw him again, but he went on his way rejoicing.

**Note: Before telling this story, you want to be sure that your audience understands the concept of baptism. For example, you could say, "In this story, the Ethiopian man asked to be baptized. Baptism was/is seen as an outward sign of an inward change, an act of obedience to signify new life."*

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- **review:** re-tell the story

- **dialogue:** discuss the story
 - What do you like or not like about this story?

 - Why does Phillip share with this man? What can we learn from the way in which he shared?

 - What can we learn about God from this story?

- **application:** live the story
 - God calls each of to play a part in the spreading of His story. What part do you feel like He has called you to play?

 - What keeps us from spreading God's story here and around the world?

 - If every Christian were to commit to being a vital part of fulfilling the spread of God's story, what would it look like? What would our lives look like?

 - What is one action you can take to apply this story to your life?

- **notes:**