

## ***LESSONS FROM PHILIP & AN ETHIOPIAN***

*David Halbrook*

By reading Acts 8:26-39, where Philip taught the man from Ethiopia, you should learn these important lessons:

The Holy Spirit spoke through words not feelings The Spirit told Philip where to go. Today, many people say the Holy Spirit guides them by inner feelings or “illuminating Scripture.” The Holy Spirit has always used clear words to direct men and does so today by Scripture. His words there are sufficiently clear, not requiring constant “illumination.” When some part of Scripture is not understood, we can learn by studying with others. That’s why we print these articles, offer to study with you, and want your feedback.

Philip preached Jesus How did the Ethiopian know he needed to be baptized? Philip preached Jesus to him! Today, “preachers” talk about Jesus, sin, and salvation but leave out this baptism that saves (1 Pet. 3:21). Examine what you hear!

What is baptism? Philip could pour or sprinkle water on the Ethiopian inside the chariot, but baptism required them both to go down into and come up out of the water. This helps us see that pouring or sprinkling water is not baptism.

Editor’s Note: This week’s article pairs with the last article. The previous article was textually focused while this one is topically focused. If you would like a copy of both articles together, to give to someone, see David Halbrook. However you can, make some use of these articles.

*We assemble each Sunday at 10AM, 10:45AM, 5PM & Wednesday at 7PM*

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# The Exhorter

Acts 11:23 *Exhorted them all... cleave unto the Lord*

Church of Christ--Quail Valley

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## ***REMAINING FAITHFUL***

*Randy Blackaby*

Of genuine concern to many persons contemplating obedience to the gospel is the question of whether they can remain faithful to the Lord after they do so. Some ponder the question to such a degree that they become convinced that they can't and use such a decision as an excuse for disobedience.

In studying what the Bible has to say on the subject, it is first necessary to make certain we are speaking of the same thing. Temptation, which our Lord himself suffered on the mount with Satan, and the human desire to yield to temptation are two completely different things. Our Lord was tempted in every manner that we are - YET - without sin, according to Hebrews 4:14.

To the individual who is convinced that it is totally impossible for him to remain faithful, we must quickly direct his attention to 1 Corinthians 10:13 - "There is no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

Also of interest to the concerned sinner is the fact that a developing Christian will find faithfulness a constantly easier thing as he learn and applies the gospel. The Psalmist wrote, "through thy precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way." As a Christian matures, temptations begin to lose their power or may even no longer be temptations.

A noted gospel preacher once listed four activities for the Christian to insure faithfulness. He called them "backsliding preventatives." To begin he said, let God say something to you every day; that is, read the Bible. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path" (Ps. 119:105). "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat

of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night" (Ps. 1:1-2).

Secondly, he said, say something to God every day. Pray to Him. James points out the value of this advice when he said, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

We should also say something for God each day. The usefulness of this practice is boldly expressed in James 5:19-20. "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth and one convert him; let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." The expression of our faith in God can do nothing but strengthen each of us.

Lastly, it was noted that each Christian should do something for God each day. The Bible clearly points this out in 1 Corinthians 15:58. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." The growing Christian will find faithfulness easier in the knowledge that his work here is gaining for him an eternity in heaven, where temptation will not exist and where he can be with the God he is now striving to please.

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## ***MARTHA AND MARY***

*Mark Mayberry*

### **Introduction**

The Bible records that Jesus loved Martha, her sister, Mary, and her brother, Lazarus (John 11:5; cf. 13:23). They lived in Bethany, a village on the southeastern slopes of Mount Olivet, situated about two miles east of Jerusalem near the Jericho road. Luke 10:38-42 records an occasion when Jesus visited their home, enjoying rest and offering guidance. The differing actions of Martha and Mary teach several valuable lessons.

### **The Importance of Hospitality**

This text reminds us of the importance of hospitality. "Now as they were traveling along, He entered a village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home" (Luke 10:38). Furthermore, she was busy in preparing and serving a meal to Jesus and possibly also his disciples (vs. 40).

The New Testament repeatedly affirms the importance of hospitality. The Greek noun *philoxenia*, translated "hospitality," literally "the love of strangers," refers to a welcoming attitude toward people, both known and unknown (Rom. 12:10-13, esp. vs. 13; Heb. 13:1-2; esp. vs. 2). Hospitality should be characteristic of elders (1 Tim.

3:1-2; Titus 1:7-8), widows indeed (1 Tim. 5:9-10), and disciples in general (1 Pet. 4:7-11).

### **The Importance of Hearing**

This text reminds us of the importance of hearing. Mary, the sister of Martha, "was seated at the Lord's feet, listening to His word" (Luke 10:39). In both the Old and New Testaments, saints and sinners alike are admonished to "Hear the word of the Lord..." Consider the call of Isaiah the prophet (Isa. 1:10; 28:14; 39:5; 66:5). Note the admonitions of Jesus, with His emphasis on the necessity of obedience (Luke 8:19-21; 11:27-28; John 8:42-47).

God offers salvation to lost mankind through His revealed word (Luke 16:27-31). Faith comes by hearing the word of God (Romans 10:5-17, esp. vs. 17). Are we allowing the gospel, the word of truth, to bear fruit in our lives (Col. 1:3-12)?

### **The Importance of Focus**

This text reminds us of the importance of focus. Distracted with all her preparations, Martha yielded to frustration, saying, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me." Jesus gently replied, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but only one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:40-42).

Anxiety and mental distress can distract us from seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matt. 6:24-34; 12:22-32). In the Parable of the Sower, the seed which fell among the thorns represents those who hear God's Word, but subsequently are choked with worries and riches and pleasures of this life, and thus bring no fruit to maturity (Luke 8:7, 14). Following the example of Jesus, let us maintain spiritual focus (John 4:31-34), laboring not for food which perishes, but rather for that which endures to eternal life (John 6:26-27).

### **Conclusion**

May we learn the lessons of Martha and Mary, recognizing the importance of showing hospitality, hearing the word of God, and maintaining proper spiritual focus. Wisdom cries aloud in the streets, lifting up her voice in the square, calling the wayward to repentance and obedience (Prov. 1:20-23). Isaiah echoes the same call (Isa. 55:1-3), as does our Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 11:28-30). (www.ascoc.org/)