

Just Go!

Have you ever found yourself in a situation where you knew God was working in your life in a very special way? Maybe the time, place, people and events all seemed to line up beautifully for an opportunity to witness, to serve, to help, to encourage, to comfort, or to rejoice. Share your experience with the group or with a partner. **Encourage discussion and remind one another that all things shared within the group are confidential.**

Opening Prayer: Dear Father, We praise You for creating us and giving us life. We especially thank You for sending Your Son Jesus to be our Savior. We glorify You for the new life we have because of Jesus' death and resurrection for us. Be with us as we study Your Word. In Jesus' Name we pray, Amen.

Read **Acts 8:26-40** and **Romans 8:28**. On the road to Gaza, what circumstances "worked" together for Philip and the Ethiopian's good? **The Ethiopian was on the same road that the angel told Philip to take; the eunuch was reading a portion of Isaiah that made reference to Jesus Christ, the Savior; there was water nearby for the baptism; Philip had the knowledge of the Good News of salvation and was ready to share it with the Ethiopian eunuch.**

Acts 8:26-40

Philip and the Ethiopian

26Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." 27So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, 28and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the book of Isaiah the prophet. 29The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it."

30Then 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.

32The eunuch was reading this passage of Scripture:

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

33In his humiliation he was deprived of justice.

Who can speak of his descendants?

For his life was taken from the earth."

34The eunuch asked Philip, "Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?"

35Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.

36As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?" 38And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. 39When 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.

40Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and traveled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea.

Romans 8:28

28And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Time

God chose just the right TIME for Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch to meet on the Gaza road. Discuss God's timing in this event. (See **Acts 8:26-30**.) God "set the stage" for Philip to share the Good News with the Ethiopian.

What do the following Bible passages remind us about God's timing?

Romans 5:5-7

5And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us. 6You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. 7Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. Christ Jesus came at just the right time to die for us sinners; explore the conditions in the world at the time of Jesus' birth (the "Pax Romana" or the peace of Rome; good road system; security; Jewish dispersion).

2 Corinthians 6:1-2 (Isaiah 49:8)

1As God's fellow workers we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain. 2For he says, "In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you." I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation. God's grace is NOW; sharing the Good News of salvation is NOW.

Galatians 4:3-5

3So also, when we were children, we were in slavery under the basic principles of the world. 4But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, 5to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Christ came in God's timing as a human to fulfill the Law perfectly, to suffer for OUR sins and make us sons (and daughters) of God!

Galatians 6:8-10

8The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. 9Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. 10Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers. One important "good work" we can do is to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ into our community, our nation and our world; the urgency is to do this right now; we might not see the results, but we should not give up. We are encouraged to care for one another as the family of believers.

1 Timothy 2:5-6

5For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, 6who gave himself as a ransom for all men—the testimony given in its proper time. Again, Christ Jesus came at just the right time to save us from the eternal punishment of our sin and to offer us eternal life in Him.

* Share with a partner or the group a TIME when you had a Gaza road experience – an opportunity to witness about God's grace in Jesus Christ. Optional – as time allows

Task

God prepared just the right TASK for Philip on the Gaza road. What was Philip's task? (See **Acts 8:30-38**.) Share the Good News about Jesus Christ

Philip's primary task was to share about salvation in Jesus Christ. Read **Isaiah 53:7-8**, the passage Philip shared with the Ethiopian. What was the Suffering Servant's primary task? Suffer and die on the cross as propitiation for our sins

Isaiah 53:7-8

7 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 her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. 8 By oppression and judgment he was taken away. And who can speak of his descendants? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken.

How does the Holy Spirit work saving faith in our lives? **The Word and the Sacraments**

Romans 10:14-17

14How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? 15And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" 16But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our message?" 17Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ. **Hearing the Word of God (this includes preaching, teaching, reading, and receiving the sacraments); applying that Word (the Good News) to us and our lives.**

Mark 16:16a

16Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, **Baptism**

1 Peter 3:21-23

21and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge^[a] of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 22who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.

Baptism**1 Corinthians 10:17 (11:23-26)**

16Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ?

(23For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, 24and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." 25In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." 26For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.) **The Lord's Supper**

What tasks does God prepare for His saved people in the following passages?

Isaiah 52:7

7 How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!" **Proclaim peace and salvation in Jesus**

Matthew 9:37-38

37Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. 38Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." **Count it a privilege to be His worker; spread the Gospel message**

Matthew 28:16-20

16Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. 17When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. 18Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." **Go, make disciples; baptize; teach...**

Acts 20:24

24However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace. **Testify to the gospel of God's grace**

Galatians 2:7-8

7On the contrary, they saw that I had been entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, just as Peter had been to the Jews. 8For God, who was at work in the ministry of Peter as an apostle to the Jews, was also at work in my ministry as an apostle to the Gentiles. **Telling the Gospel news**

Ephesians 2:8-10; 4:15-16

8For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—9not by works, so that no one can boast. 10For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. 10For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. 15Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. 16From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. **The good works we do are actually God's works, which he has prepared us to do. He is the "Head," the director and source not only of good deeds, but of love and every good thing that happens in our lives.**

1 Corinthians 3:4-6, 8-10

4For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not mere men? 5What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. 6I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow.

8The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor. 9For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building. **We work together in God's kingdom; we all have our God-given talents in His church which God uses to build us all up in love and faith.**

1 Corinthians 15:58

58Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain. **What the Lord does through us (our labor in the Lord) is able to accomplish what God desires, because God is the one doing it.**

Colossians 1:9-14

9For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. 10And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, 11being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. 13For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, 14in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. **Bearing fruit; growing in the knowledge of Christ; having endurance and patience; giving thanks to God**

* Read the following passages. Identify the task and the task achiever. **Optional – as time allows**

Proverbs 31:17

17 She sets about her work vigorously; her arms are strong for her tasks. **Vigorously does her work (read more in the entire chapter of Proverbs 31); the godly woman**

Matthew 9:35-36; Luke 8:1

35Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. 36When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

1After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. **Proclaiming the Good News of salvation; Jesus**

Mark 16:15-16

15He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. 16Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. **Go and tell the Good News to all; His disciples (and us!)**

Acts 5:41-42

41The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name. 42Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ. **Teaching and proclaiming the Good News of Jesus; the apostles**

Acts 10:34-42

34Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism 35but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right. 36You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. 37You know what has happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached— 38how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him. 39"We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a tree, 40 but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. 41 He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen—by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. 42He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. 43All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name." **Witnessing to the good news of peace through Jesus Christ ; Peter, an eyewitness**

Acts 14:6-7, 14-15, 21

6But they found out about it and fled to the Lycaonian cities of Lystra and Derbe and to the surrounding country, 7where they continued to preach the good news. 14But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of this, they tore their clothes and rushed out into the crowd, shouting: 15"Men, why are you doing this? We too are only men, human like you. We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made heaven and earth and sea and everything in them. 21They preached the good news in that city and won a large number of disciples. **Bringing the Good News of salvation to the Gentiles; Barnabas and Paul**

* List specific tasks God might have for you or your group to do (i.e., lend a helping hand in a given situation, provide “a cup of cool water” or transport someone to the hospital). **Optional – as time allows**

* Can you name at least five Biblical characters that performed a God-given task in God’s time? **Optional – as time allows**

Noah, Abraham, David, Esther, Ruth, Nehemiah, Daniel, Joseph, Mary, the shepherds in the field, Paul, Barnabas

JOY in the Journey

What happened to Philip after he shared the Good News of salvation with the Ethiopian? (See **Acts 8:39-40**.) Philip continued to be God’s man and to share the Good News about Jesus, ready for action at such a time and place as God would lead and guide him.

What does God promise to each of us as we go and do the tasks He has prepared for us?

Deuteronomy 16:15b

For the LORD your God will bless you in all your harvest and in all the work of your hands, and your joy will be complete. He will bless us and give us joy

Matthew 28:20b

And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." He will be with us always

Romans 8:28

28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. He will direct the end result of our efforts for our good

Hebrews 13:20

20 May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, 21 equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. He will equip us; He will lead us; He will give us peace

What was the Ethiopian's response to news of salvation in Jesus? (See **Acts 8:38-39**.)

Read the following Bible passages and note similar responses. Joy; rejoicing

Psalms 28:7

7 The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and I am helped. My heart leaps for joy and I will give thanks to him in song.

Psalms 51:12

12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

Psalms 95:1-3

1 Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. 2 Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song. 3 For the LORD is the great God, the great King above all gods.

Isaiah 12:2-4

2 Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid. The LORD, the LORD, is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation." 3 With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. 4 In that day you will say: "Give thanks to the LORD, call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done, and proclaim that his name is exalted.

Luke 15:3-7

3 Then Jesus told them this parable: 4 "Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? 5 And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.' 7 I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

Romans 15:13

13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Can you imagine the conversation when the Ethiopian eunuch returned to the queen's palace and his own quarters? What do you think he might have said? Maybe he said something like: "You'll never believe this, but while I was riding in the chariot on the Gaza road, this complete stranger approached me, noticed that I was reading the book of Isaiah, and told me all about the Suffering Servant ..."

JUST GO!...that's what our God asks us to do. He promises that he has a TIME and a TASK for each of us. Read **1 Peter 2:9-10** and **Acts 1:9**.

1 Peter 2:9-10

9But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. 10Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Acts 1:9

8But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Yes, we JUST GO with the blessing of our God! What excitement! What a life! As you look forward to your next Gaza road experience, may you have JOY in your journey! Read together Ephesians 3:20-21 as the closing prayer.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Sing: "Go into the World" (*All God's People Sing!* - #101) or "Hark the Voice of Jesus Calling" (*TLH* 496, *LW* 318, *LSB* 826).