

“Rise and Go”

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A young man had just left his Wednesday evening Bible study. Sitting in his car he prayed, *"Lord, we studied tonight about your speaking to Samuel. Do you still speak to people today? If you'll speak to me, I'll try to obey."* On the way home, he passed a corner grocery store when he heard a loud voice in his head saying, *"Buy a gallon of milk!"* He slammed on his brakes, pulled over, and asked, *"Is that you, Lord?"* *"Buy a gallon of milk,"* the voice in his head repeated. *"This is crazy,"* he thought. *"But, if it's the Lord, I told him I would obey. Besides, I can always use the milk."*

He bought the milk and started home when he heard the voice again: *"Turn down this street and stop."* He did so reluctantly. Again, the voice told him, *"Take the milk to that house."* The small house was dark, and the occupants appeared to be asleep. Sheepishly, the young man knocked on the door. He saw a door opening from a lighted room down the hall. A man opened the front door and starred at him.

Trembling, the young man said, *"I don't know why, but I felt like I should bring you some milk."* The man grabbed the milk and ran back down the hall shouting in Spanish. A young woman carrying a baby came to the door with tears streaming down her face. She explained in broken English, *"We had no money to buy milk for our baby, so I prayed and asked God to send an angel with some milk. Are you an angel?"*

The young man explained his strange urge to bring milk to their house. He left praising God and thanking Him that He still speaks today if we'll only listen! Just like this young man who invested himself in Bible Study and prayer, **we need to be personally connected with God.** We should be in regular Bible Study, worship, and prayer connecting to our God!

Open to Acts 8. We find Phillip having a spiritual conversation along the roadway. He'd been in Samaria where he'd preached Christ and many believed. But this was also the time Saul was going around trying to destroy the Christian church. We too have those who would like to stop us from speaking Jesus, but we have to stand firm in faith and continue to share Him!

Look at verse 26, *"Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is a desert place."* The first thing we see is that sharing God's love with others is linked to our own special relationship with Jesus. God said go and Phillip took off. He listened to and followed God's command.

Are you faithful in doing what God wants? If you want to be used by God you have to have an open spirit. **We need to listen to His voice.** When God says, *"This is the path for you, now go and walk in it"*, we need to listen and get into action! It's so easy for us to be content and sit still, and not do anything. But God's calling us to be active and go do His work. We have to rise up and go!

Verses 27-28, *"And he rose and went. And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. He had come to Jerusalem to worship. And was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah."* Just like Phillip, **We need to respond to God's leading, wherever and whenever!**

The road God directed Phillip to travel led to a particular city. But God's plan didn't include Philip actually arriving at that destination. As he was on the way, God met him midway and gave him a God-given opportunity. It seems sometimes we get so wrapped up in what we think is the ultimate purpose of our life, that we fail to live each day fully. So we miss all the opportunities God brings to us as we are traveling the pathway and way of life.

On the other hand, look at those people who commit themselves and say, *"I'm going to enjoy this journey called life and I'm going to enjoy relationships and experiences along the way."* With this as our attitude, we allow God to bring many more opportunities for us to live life fully and to share the good news with others.

That leads us to our next point. **We need to show genuine interest.** Look at verse 29, *"And the Spirit said to Philip, 'Go over and join this chariot.'" If you're going to influence people in a relationship, you have to be close, available, and willing to draw near to them. You have to connect to the person with a warm and genuine concern. One of the great challenges, as well as one of the great tragedies, of the church today is the tendency to no longer connect the world in which we live. We're still in the world but shouldn't be of the world!*

We have to win people's attention with our kindness and love before we can present Christ to them. It's like that saying: *"People don't care how much we know, until they know how much we care!"*, or *"Don't walk in front of me, I may not follow. Don't walk behind me, I may not lead. Walk beside me and be my friend."* This applies to witnessing to people about Christ. We must show that we care about them!

Verses 30-31, *"So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, 'Do you understand what you are reading?'" And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him."* When people ask what makes the difference in your life, be prepared to give them an example, to share the reason you have hope, and do it with gentleness and respect.

We must be ready to share the Good News. Verses 34-35, *"And the eunuch said to Philip, 'About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?'" Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus."*

God's in the life-transformation business! It's His desire to remove hate and darkness in this world and to cause all people to step from darkness into the Light of Jesus Christ! God needs us to rise and go out there and start loving people and be willing to engage in spiritual conversations with them. We need to share Jesus! Marriages, families, and eternity hang in the balance!

I look out at you and I see people who are here today whose lives are radically different than they were before. Someone was willing to develop a relationship with you, genuinely love you, and witness to you through their lifestyle and conversation. **Now, we must draw close to others so they'll receive God's love and grace.** They need to see it and feel it through us!

I challenge you to be like Philip, and be personally connected with God, listening to His voice, having a genuine concern for others, and being ready to rise and go and Share the Good News of your Savior, Jesus Christ, each and every day!