

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

April 29, 2018



THE LESSON Acts 8:26-40

²⁶An angel from the Lord spoke to Philip. ²⁷At noon, take the road that leads from Jerusalem to Gaza. (This is a desert road.) ²⁸So he did. Meanwhile, an Ethiopian man was on his way home from Jerusalem, where he had come to worship. He was a eunuch and an official responsible for the entire treasury of Candace. (Candace is the title given to the Ethiopian queen.) ²⁹He was reading the prophet Isaiah while sitting in his carriage. ³⁰The Spirit told Philip, "Approach this carriage and stay with it."

³¹Running up to the carriage, Philip heard the man reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, "Do you really understand what you are reading?"

³²The man replied, "Without someone to guide me, how could I?" Then he invited Philip to climb up and sit with him. ³³This was the passage of scripture he was reading:

*Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter
and like a lamb before its shearer is
silent*

so he didn't open his mouth.

*³⁴In his humiliation justice was taken
away from him.*

*Who can tell the story of his descendants
because his life was taken from the
earth?*

³⁴The eunuch asked Philip, "Tell me, about whom does the prophet say this? Is he talking about himself or someone else?" ³⁵Starting with that passage, Philip proclaimed the good news about Jesus to him. ³⁶As they went down the road, they came to some water.

The eunuch said, "Look! Water! What would keep me from being baptized?" ³⁷He ordered that the carriage halt. Both Philip and the eunuch went down to the water, where Philip baptized him. ³⁸When they came up out of the water, the Lord's Spirit suddenly took Philip away. The eunuch never saw him again but went on his way rejoicing. ³⁹Philip found himself in Azotus. He traveled through that area, preaching the good news in all the cities until he reached Caesarea.

THE RESPONSE Psalm 22:25-31

²⁵I offer praise in the great congregation because of you; I will fulfill my promises in the presence of those who honor God.

²⁶Let all those who are suffering eat and be full! Let all who seek the LORD praise him! I pray your hearts live forever!

²⁷Every part of the earth will remember and come back to the LORD; every family among all the nations will worship you.

²⁸Because the right to rule belongs to the LORD, he rules all nations.

²⁹Indeed, all the earth's powerful will worship him; all who are descending to the dust will kneel before him; my being also lives for him.

³⁰Future descendants will serve him; generations to come will be told about my Lord. ³¹They will proclaim God's righteousness to those not yet born, telling them what God has done.

THE EPISTLE 1 John 4:7-21

⁷Dear friends, let's love each other, because love is from God, and everyone who loves is born from God and knows God. ⁸The person who doesn't love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹This is how the love of God is revealed to us: God has sent his only Son into the world so that we can live through him. ¹⁰This is love: it is not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son as the sacrifice that deals with our sins.

¹¹Dear friends, if God loved us this way, we also ought to love each other. ¹²No one has ever seen God. If we love each other, God remains in us and his love is made perfect in us. ¹³This is how we know we remain in him and he remains in us, because he has given us a measure of his Spirit. ¹⁴We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the savior of the world. ¹⁵If any of us confess that Jesus

is God's Son, God remains in us and we remain in God. ¹⁶We have known and have believed the love that God has for us.

God is love, and those who remain in love remain in God and God remains in them. ¹⁷This is how love has been perfected in us, so that we can have confidence on the Judgment Day, because we are exactly the same as God is in this world. ¹⁸There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear, because fear expects punishment. The person who is afraid has not been made perfect in love. ¹⁹We love because God first loved us. ²⁰If anyone says, I love God, and hates a brother or sister, he is a liar, because the person who doesn't love a brother or sister who can be seen can't love God, who can't be seen. ²¹This commandment we have from him: Those who claim to love God ought to love their brother and sister also.

THE GOSPEL John 15:1-8

¹I am the true vine, and my Father is the vineyard keeper. ²He removes any of my branches that don't produce fruit, and he trims any branch that produces fruit so that it will produce even more fruit. ³You are already trimmed because of the word I have spoken to you. ⁴Remain in me, and I will remain in you. A branch can't produce fruit by itself, but must remain in the vine. Likewise, you can't produce fruit unless you remain in me. ⁵I

am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, then you will produce much fruit. Without me, you can't do anything. ⁶If you don't remain in me, you will be like a branch that is thrown out and dries up. Those branches are gathered up, thrown into a fire, and burned. ⁷If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you. ⁸My Father is glorified when you produce much fruit and in this way prove that you are my disciples.

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