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| **Fruitful Conversations**  *Promise: Abiding in Christ nourishes us and makes us fruitful* Pastor Timothy A. Duesenberg Acts 8:26-40; Psalm 150; 1 John 4:1-21; John 15:1-8 (Fifth Sunday of Easter), 4/28/24)  *Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus.* – Ac 8:35  **Lead In –** Not everyone we share in conversation with will ask us a question like, “I’ve been reading in Isaiah 53 about a Suffering Servant. Who is this person Isaiah is talking about?” Talk about a softball! But, with a little practice and patience, the spiritually sensitive and alert person can often identify lesser cues that afford opportunity to bear witness to Jesus and His dying love for us. And I am willing to bet that many of you have been recipients of such a conversation and it is one of the reasons you are here this morning.   1. **Philip Was Obedient to the Prompting of an Angel**    1. What are angels (ἄγγελος)? Literally, messengers…    2. Don’t let the detailed word discourage you! (rare)…    3. The general word is abundantly clear… 2. **What Can We Learn From Philip’s Conversing?**    1. We do not have a verbatim account of it…    2. Ultimate items of an ideal conversation… Ask questions    3. We can safely assume Philip had mentioned baptism… 3. **The Exceptional Is Helpful Until It Is Not**    1. Not all are called to preach (evangelists)…    2. It helps to understand vocations and relationships…    3. Two pair of brothers among the Twelve…   **Final Word –** So how can we have fruitful conversations with others? Our Gospel Reading would counsel us to abide in and draw our life from Christ, as a branch draws from the vine. The Lord’s Word and prayer are especially highlighted in this regard. And our Second Reading would urge in the light of God’s love for us to grow in our love for one another. With that as our concentration and encouragement to each other, we will have more fruitful conversations with others, and together we will bear more fruit, as we tell others about the good news about Jesus.  **Mt 19:20** Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.  **Ac 1:8** You will be my witnesses.  **1Pe 3:15** Always be prepared to make a defense to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you.  **Ac 8:35** Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus.  **Is 53:4-6** Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.  **Is 53:11** He shall see the fruit of the travail of his soul and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous; and he shall bear their iniquities. | **Acts 8:26-40 ESV**  *Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch*  26Now 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. 27And 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 28and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah. 29And the Spirit said to Philip, “Go over and join this chariot.” 30So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” 31And he said, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. 32Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this: *“Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter and like a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he opens not his mouth. 33In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth.”*  34And the eunuch said to Philip, “About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?” 35Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. 36And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?” 38And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. 39And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. 40But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he preached the gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.  **Mk 1:14-15** Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel.”  **Ac 2:38** And Peter said to them, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.  **1Co 12:29-30** Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?  **1Pe 2:9** But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. |