



Southside Worship Online

Sunday 25 April 2021.

Choosing God's way is a blessing.

Acts 8:26-39

As we come this beautiful Sunday morning to worship our God, we turn our eyes to the Lord Jesus Christ and his peace that quietens any distractions from the world, a peace that the world cannot give. We let ourselves focus on the goodness and the presence of our God through the Holy Spirit who is here with us, and we celebrate the inseparable love that we share from God.

Call to Worship: Psalm 18:30

This God—his way is perfect;

the promise of the LORD proves true;

he is a shield for all who take refuge in him.

Song: King of Kings.

Prayer of Confession:

God our Heavenly Father, we come into your presence this morning with grateful hearts for who you are from generation to generation You have shown your great mercy. You have loved us so much that you gave us your only Son, Jesus Christ, to die for our sins, yet we failed to love you, our only Lord and Savior, with all of our hearts, minds and strengths. You have shown the way of loving our neighbour, and indeed we are sorry that we have not loved our neighbour as ourselves. Lord, before we speak, you have known us; from our mother's womb, you have made us in your image God we were created. Lord, we are Yours, and we know that our identity can be found in Christ, but we still do not make the right choice to follow you and do your will. Lord, we ask for your forgiveness for not following your teachings and commandments that lead us into everlasting life. We need you to come into our life Holy Spirit and lead us, guide us with the wisdom to be able to discern what is God's way and will into our life. We are sorry that we often forget and not acknowledge your way, God.

Bible Reading: Acts 8: 26-39

Sermon:**Prayer of Thanksgiving:**

Lord, before we speak, you have known us; from our mother's womb, you have made us in your image God we were created. We thank you for being with us and your living presence through the Holy Spirit. John's gospel tells us that apart from you, we cannot do anything, and we thank you that you have enabled us in so many ways to share your love with one another. We thank you for your Son Jesus Christ, who died so that we have life and living in the hope of Jesus's coming again. We are grateful for your Holy Spirit that comforts us and guides us to do your will even in a very challenging time as we are facing these days. We thank you that you have called us to be your children and to imitate the life given by Christ to our neighbours. Lord, we thank you for those who are serving our country as we acknowledge today their courage and sacrifices. We have so many to be thankful for, Lord, that we should be grateful for every great gifts and blessing. In Jesus name, we pray. Amen.

Prayer of Intercession:

Lord, we pray for the people who are being persecuted because of their Christian faith in the world. We pray for your revelation in those lives that they continue living in the resurrected hope with their unwavering belief in the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour. We pray for our Prime minister and the leaders of our government that they seek your face Lord and find justice and mercy serving the country. We pray for our frontline workers as they provide medical supports for our community and those who are sick. Lord, please guide them and invite them to trust in your healing and mercy. We pray for our church, the Southside UC, the leadership team and the rest of the communities. Please strengthen and encourage our church to be a community of love, joy, peace and fullness of hope, especially for our friends who are seeking a place to belong. Lord, we remember those who cannot be with us here today; please be with them. In Jesus name, we pray. Amen.

Song: We will remember (ANZAC)

Benediction:

The Lord bless you and keep you,
The Lord make his face shine upon and be gracious to you,
The Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace. Amen.

Sermon God's way is a blessing.

2 Samuel 22:31

As for God, his way is perfect: the word of the LORD is tried; he is a shield unto all them that trust in him.

The book of the Acts of the Apostle is the only unfinished book in the bible. St Luke, the evangelist who wrote Luke's gospel, also wrote the book of Acts and started with the ascension of Jesus to the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. The book of Acts recorded the birth of the Christian Church and its growth and awaits for us to complete the book. We are invited to join in a very significant time to be a profound witness of God's way in our life that continue to be a blessing to those around us. Jesus proclaimed the Good News first to Jerusalem, then Judea and Samaria, and the remotest places inviting them to know and experience the grace and love of God. Those who chose to believe and follow Jesus's teachings testified to what the Lord has done in their life, and they blessed others with their presence. This morning we hear a story from Acts 8 about this man who is a eunuch from Ethiopia who travelled to worship in Jerusalem. This trip from Ethiopia to Jerusalem is not an easy ride, but this eunuch went this way. As he returned from Jerusalem, he met Philip on the way from Jerusalem to Gaza, sent by an angel of the Lord. Philip was one of the seven chosen in Acts 6. He appears many times in the book of Acts as he preached the gospel and performed miracles in Samaria. The story of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8:26-39 marked Christianity entered into Ethiopia.

Choosing God's way is a blessing is my theme for this morning's message. It is always amazing how God used people in the past to deliver the gospel and blessed so many people in different ways. In previous chapters, we find people who were filled with the Holy Spirit, full of grace and full of power, strong faith in the Lord who performed miracles in the name of Jesus. In Acts 8, we focus on Philip (evangelist, preacher, miracle performer), who preached God's Word to the eunuch and baptised him. Philip obeyed the Lord and went to meet the eunuch on the way from Jerusalem to Gaza. Philip's choice to follow God's way became a blessing to the Ethiopian eunuch who came back from Jerusalem (religion) empty:

- Acts 8:26 & 27: Philip obeyed the angel of the Lord to go and meet the eunuch. He listened to the message and responded. His priority in life is to be a disciple of the Lord.
- Acts 28: The eunuch returned from Jerusalem yet unsatisfied, so he kept on seeking God in the scripture. The eunuch's heart was hungry and thirst for God's Word to be able to understand.
- Acts 29: The Spirit spoke to Philip to go, and he obeyed. Philip asked a question at the right time and in the right place. He met the hunger in the heart of the eunuch as he read Isaiah 53.
- Acts 8:36: The Ethiopian eunuch got baptised as an affirmation of his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

We learned from this story, so as the other story in the bible, that when God leads the way or open an opportunity, we follow without hesitation or doubt. Why?

- God knows best with the right time and the right place.
- God loves you more than anything. God wants a relationship with you always.

- God's Spirit is with us, leading, guiding and comfort us while we journey in this world. We are pilgrim people yet to arrive at our destiny.

Which character will you identify yourself with this morning? Remember our theme for this morning God's way is a blessing first to you, and through you, others received and share God's blessings.

- The eunuch who read the bible without understanding and honestly asked for help from someone else? How can I understand unless someone teaches me?
- Are you a blessing that someone else is waiting for to be able to share the beautiful, wonderful Word of God through you?
- Are you Philip that loves God so much and listen to the lead of the Holy Spirit and loved to share the goodness of the Lord by discipling others to follow Jesus?
- We might be someone who is like living in a neutral way of life. We do not want to involve in any missions or ministry due to fear and lack of courage. We are too got up with worldly views and not wanting to share our gifts or blessings with our neighbour who might be in need.

To conclude my message this morning, I pray that we continue to choose God's way of living our life, discerning with the Holy Spirit within us to follow the way of the Lord Jesus Christ. John's gospel tells us that Jesus is the ways, truth and life, and we can be with the Heavenly Father only by following Jesus. As we follow the path of God's leading in our life, we are not only transforming our life to become a child of God, but we shared the gospel with our family and friends. May today's message encourage us to choose to live a Godly life by being a blessing, as it says in Psalm.

Psalm 1

¹Happy are those
 who do not follow the advice of the wicked,
 or take the path that sinners tread,
 or sit in the seat of scoffers;
²but their delight is in the law of the LORD,
 And on his law, they meditate day and night.

Let's pray: Lord Jesus, thank you for showing us the way not only by teaching but also by leading and living the way that God created share. May we find our heart always hungry to understand what you are saying in the scripture. Let us nourished our faith in a prayerful life, meditation in the Word and being a disciple to our neighbours. Lord help us continue living a life faithful to the Word and help our neighbour know you, Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.