

**Challenge of
Authentic Discipleship**
Genuine Saving Faith

Acts 8:4-40

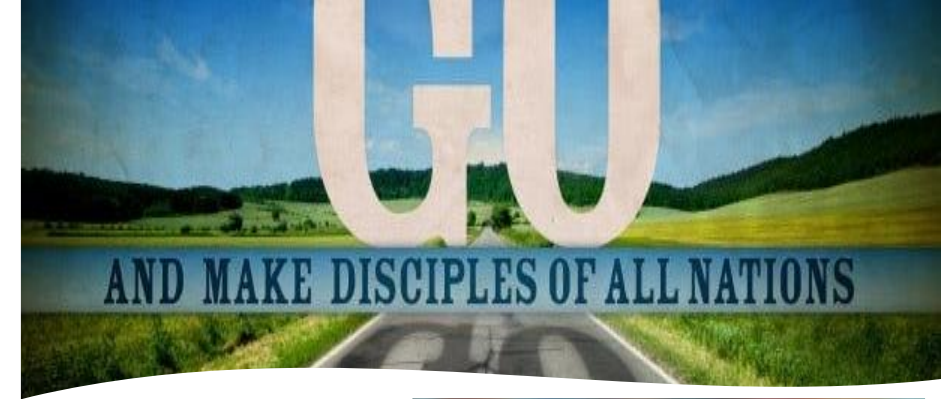
What does genuine saving faith look like?

What kind of faith do I possess?

Genuine Faith? Blind Faith?

Intellectual Faith? Utilitarian Faith?

- A Genuine Faith includes knowledge, agreement, and commitment.
- A Blind Faith lacks understanding.
- An Intellectual Faith lacks commitment.
- A Utilitarian Faith lacks perseverance.



Acts 8:4–40 Challenge
of Authentic Discipleship
In a growing persecuted church

*"Those who had been scattered
preached the word wherever they went."*

Times of blessing attract crowds

*The question is who are
the authentic disciples?*

Theme: *A growing church not only
face opposition from outside but also
must discern true saving faith within.
Genuine faith submits to Christ,
perseveres, bears fruit under pressure.*



Two Responses and Two Types of Faith:

Simon the magician professed belief

A false, superficial, utilitarian faith.

Ethiopian eunuch genuinely trusted Christ

A genuine disciple-ready faith.

Compare Outward Action, Heart Condition, Desire, Outcome

Simon Magus - *Initial Profession, Flawed Motivation, His Heart and Life Unchanged.*

Ethiopian - *Eager Searcher, Teachable Spirit, Immediate Obedience, Evident Fruit of Joy.*



Simon the Sorcerer

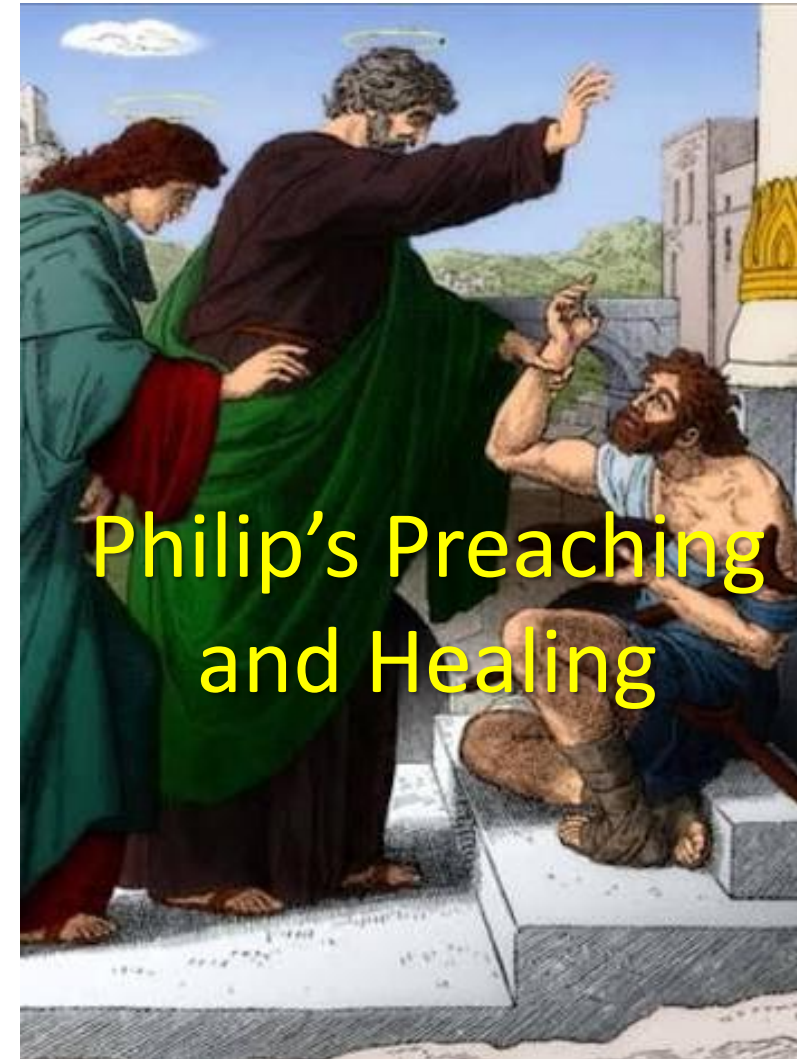
'The Great Power of God'

⁹ Now for some time a man named Simon had practised sorcery in the city and amazed all the people of Samaria... 'This man is rightly called the Great Power of God.'

¹¹ They followed him because he had amazed them for a long time with his sorcery.

**Simon the magician
professed belief**

***"Simon himself believed
and was baptized."***



**Philip's Preaching
and Healing**



Simon's Apparent Conversion

"Amazement-Driven or Sensational Faith"

Acts 8:13 Simon **followed** Philip everywhere because he was "*astonished by the great signs and miracles he saw.*"

He believed and followed for the wrong reason!

Simon's faith was not a response to a broken, repentant heart over his sin.



His Action Revealed His Heart

"Give me also this ability."

Utilitarian Faith - Transactable ("Simony")

He followed because he wanted spiritual power

*He didn't want a Saviour; he wanted a stronger
spiritual "product" to market.*

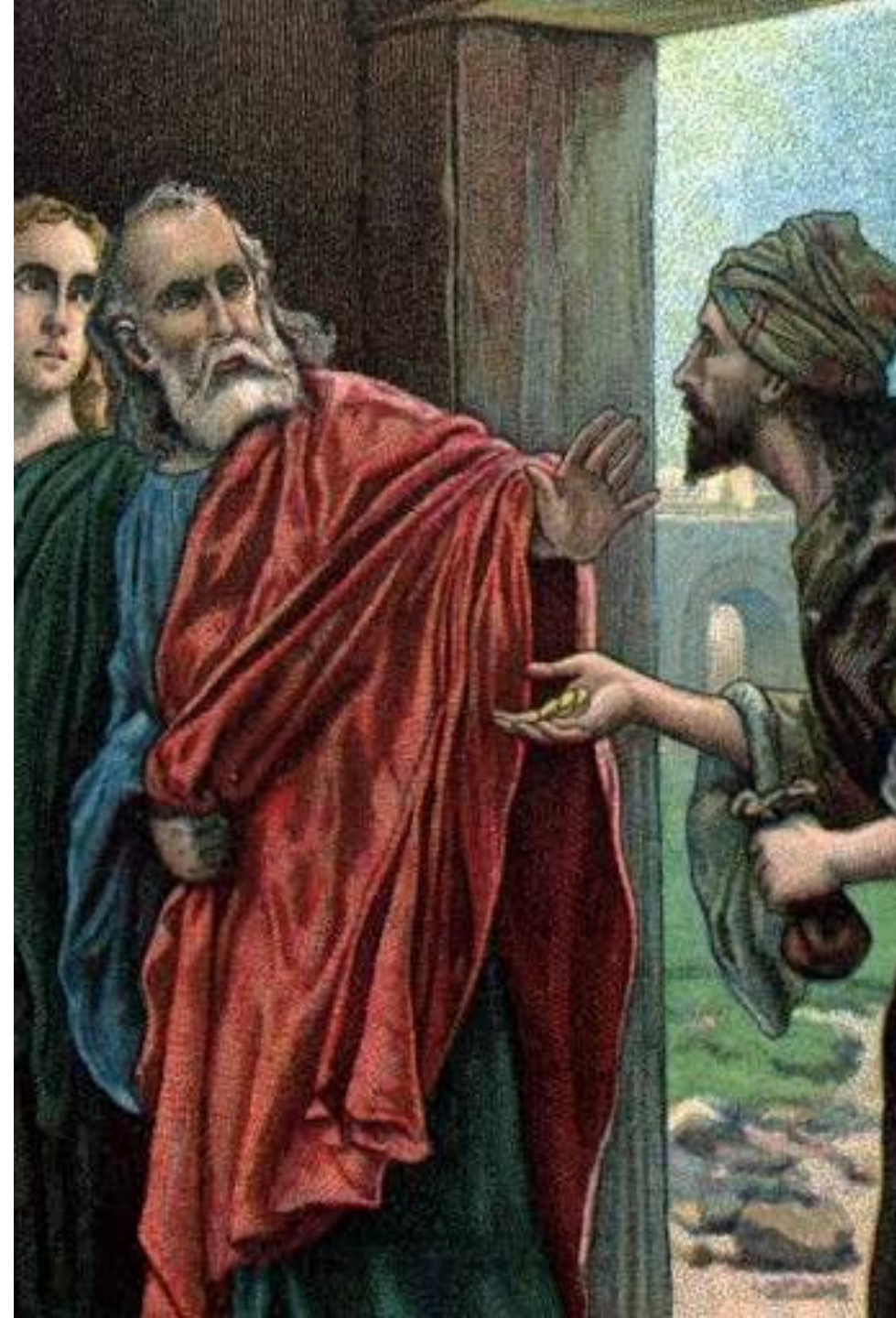
Peter's startling response and diagnosis

His heart remained unchanged!

*"May your money perish with you...
Your heart is not right before God...
Repent... You are full of bitterness
and captive to sin."*

His life remained unchanged

*²⁴ Then Simon answered, 'Pray to
the Lord for me so that nothing
you have said may happen to me.'*



The Ethiopian Eunuch

²⁶ Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, 'Go south to the road – the desert road...and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of the Kandake (which means 'queen of the Ethiopians').

**A high ranking
government official**

***Wealthy, Educated,
Influential, Sincere.***



Eager Searcher

This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, ²⁸ and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the Book of Isaiah the prophet.

Searching for truth

*Reading Isaiah 53,
The Suffering Servant*

Truth-Seeking Faith

Not Miracle-Seeking Faith



Humble Teachable Spirit

"How can I understand unless someone explains it to me?"

Simon vs. The Ethiopian

- **Humility**

Already knows vs. needs help.

- **Loves God's Word**

Seeks power vs. Seeks truth.

- **Teachability**

Wants control vs.

Wants understanding.



Immediate Obedience

*"What can stand in the way
of my being baptized?"*

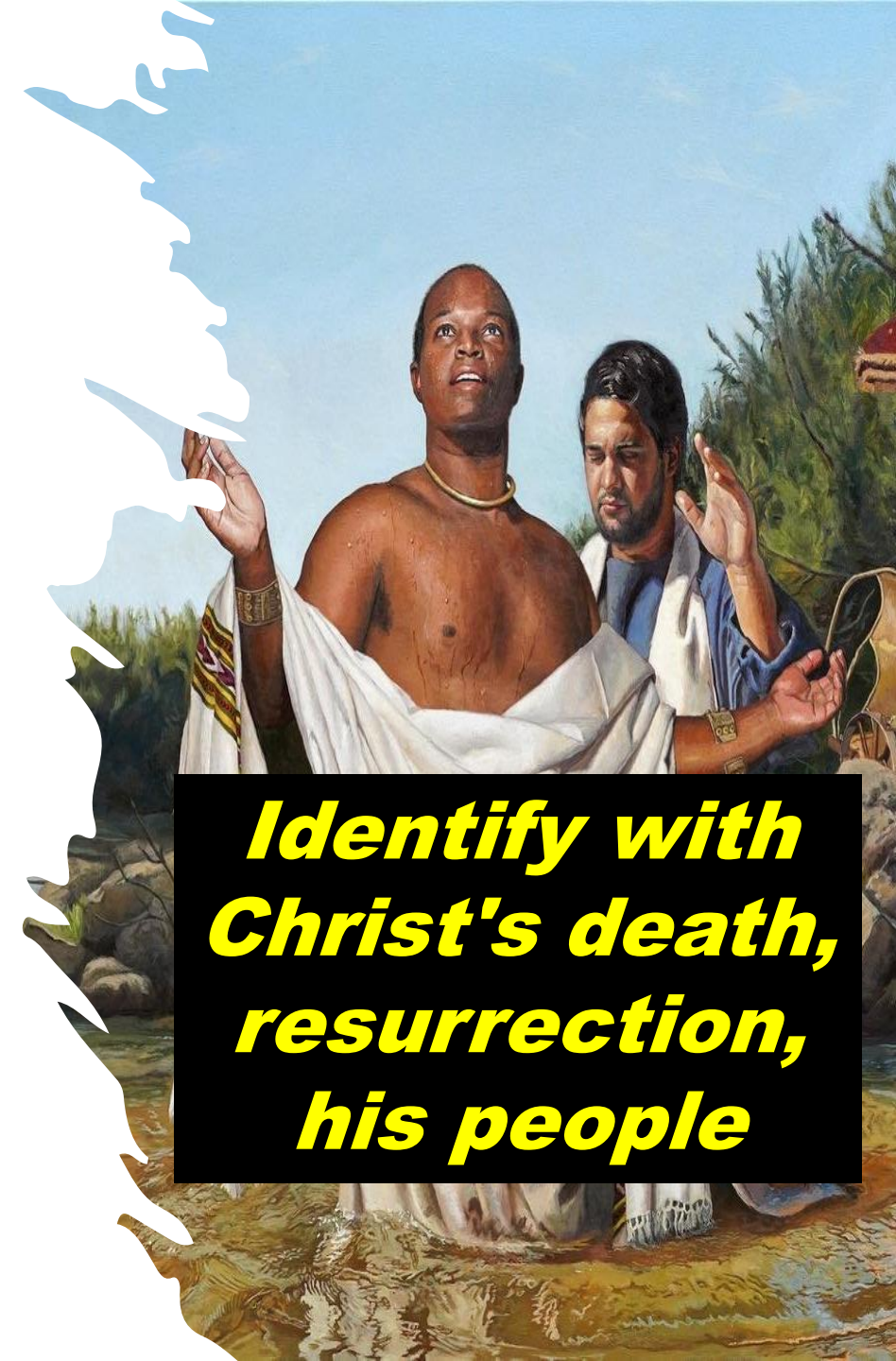
Proactive and Unashamed Faith

*Baptism Is Not Mere Ritual but
Faith and Obedience to follow Jesus*

Repentant Christ-Centred Faith

Transformation of Heart

*Willingness to bear the cost
to be a disciple of Jesus*



***Identify with
Christ's death,
resurrection,
his people***

Evident Fruit of Joy

After baptism: *"He went on his way rejoicing."*

True Saving Faith Results in a Changed Life

The Ethiopian leaves rejoicing.

Simon leaves the story fearful and exposed.





Conclusion

Simon the Sorcerer

*Faith that appears genuine,
but heart and life remain unchanged.*

The Ethiopian Eunuch

*Faith that seeks and humbly receives
and follows Christ and rejoices in salvation.*



What sort of faith does Simon have?
True genuine faith or a false counterfeit faith?

The Spiritual Lesson on Simon

"Whether Simon was ever converted or whether he was a severely backslidden believer, our main concern is not to satisfy curiosity about Simon but to examine our own hearts. The warning is clear: an outward profession, baptism, and fascination with spiritual things are no substitute for a heart transformed by the grace of Christ."



Spiritual Lesson

As the church move out, God not only expand His mission, He purify His people.

*We must come to true saving faith
to be a good and faithful disciple.*

True saving faith produces obedience

True saving faith wants holiness, not power.

True saving faith follows Jesus, not admiring Jesus.

The Danger for Every Church

Not everyone who appears converted is a disciple of Jesus

Jesus warned wheat and weeds grow together until the harvest

A growing church will always have people who are attracted to:
Community, Influence, Recognition, Benefits without genuine repentance.





Genuine Saving Faith is Not:

Admiration of miracles, fascination with spiritual experiences, outward religiosity, or baptism.

True saving faith repents and treasures Christ Himself and produces fruit.

The question is not: *"Have I been baptized?"*

The question is: *"Has my heart been transformed and I want to follow Jesus?"*

How to Recognize True Saving Faith and a Disciple of Jesus?

1. Examine Your Motives

Why are you following Jesus?

*To avoid hell? To gain blessings?
Or because He alone is worthy?*

Treasure Christ Above His Gifts

*Do I want Jesus—or merely what
Jesus can give me?*

Is Christ Alone Sufficient?



How to Recognize True Saving Faith and a Disciple of Jesus?

2. Don't Trust Religious Activity

Church attendance, religious activities cannot replace true conversion of the heart.

3. Let the Gospel Change You

Christ the Treasure of Your Heart

He transforms desires.

He changes priorities.

He produces increasing holiness.





An Invitation

Believe in Jesus, Be His Disciple

Be filled with His Spirit

Submits to God's Word

Obeys Christ gladly

Perseveres through trials

Finds joy and hope in Christ alone

HLCE Theme 2026 - Church on the Move

The Spirit Empowered Mission and Service



GO Be Spirit-Filled Authentic Witnesses