

Baptism

Faith Happens in an Instant

Text: Acts 8:26-40

3-27-11

What I mean by the title of this little message *Faith Happens in an Instant* is that in the life of every true, born again Christian, there comes a point in time where the light bulb turns on and they get it.

- For some, the moment is discernable and their spiritual birthday is forever etched in their minds and hearts
 - o Steve
 - o **Isaiah 1:16-18 (ESV)**
¹⁶ Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil, ¹⁷ learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause. ¹⁸ "Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.
- For others, the moment is less discernable and the exact date of their spiritual birthday will remain a ministry until they get to Heaven
 - o Me
 - o Often the case with those who grow up in a good church

But for every true believer, there comes a point in time when they move from spiritual death to spiritual life, when the truth about Jesus' life, death, and resurrection moves from their head to their heart and becomes so real to them that they can do nothing but turn from their sins and follow Him.

- The theological term for this point in time is *conversion*. Jesus referred to it as *being born again*.
 - o In John 3:3 and 5 Jesus says, "Unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God. Unless you are born again, you cannot enter the Kingdom of God."

- The Old Testament prophet Ezekiel described being born again or conversion this way...
 - o **Ezekiel 11:19-20 (NIV)**

¹⁹I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh. ²⁰Then they will follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. They will be my people, and I will be their God.

For the Ethiopian Eunuch in Acts 8, the moment of his conversion, the day he was born again, the instant He believed and was saved, was unforgettable.

Note four things about the Ethiopian Eunuch's conversion

- 1) It was orchestrated by God
 - a. **Acts 8:26-31 (ESV)**

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.

- 2) It came through the good news about Jesus
 - a. **Acts 8:32-35 (ESV)**

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.

b. **Isaiah 53:2-6 (NIV)**

² ...He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. ³ He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. ⁴ Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. ⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. ⁶ We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

3) It was marked by baptism

a. **Acts 8:36-38 (ESV)**

³⁶ And 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?" ³⁷ ³⁸ And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him.

4) It brought him great joy

a. **Acts 8:39 (ESV)**

³⁹ And 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.

We have four neat young people with us this morning who, like the Ethiopian Eunuch, have been converted. Four young people who get it. Four young people for whom the light bulb has turned on. Four young people for whom the truth about Jesus' life, death, and resurrection has moved from their heads to their hearts and become so real to them that they can do nothing but turn from their sins and follow Him.

Before I invite them to come up, I want to give the rest of you a chance to join them.

- There will be other chances
 - We'll have another one this summer for sure.
 - If you're a child we ask that you wait until next time.
 - Resource for parents

- But if you're an adult who truly believes, who has been converted, who is already following or ready to follow Jesus, then *what's to prevent you from being baptized today?*
 - Don't worry about the logistics ☺. The Ethiopian didn't! Just be obedient to God.

- I'm going to ask everyone who wants to be baptized four questions. If your answer to the first three is yes, then I would encourage you to come up and join them, even if this is your first Sunday at TWE or the first time you've heard the good news about Jesus.
 - Do you believe that you are a sinner in desperate need of a Savior?
 - Do you believe that Jesus is that Savior, and are you trusting in Him alone for salvation?
 - Are you ready to repent of your sins and follow Jesus, allowing Him to be the Lord of your life?
 - Would you be willing to share your story with us?

Close in prayer and invite those who want to be baptized to come forward.