

1, 2, 3 STORY TIME!

PHILIPPE AND THE AFRICAN MINISTER

There was a problem at school and the teacher asked the students what had happened.

- I've seen it all, Madam, replies Lucas, I've heard it all.

- So tell me what you know since you witnessed what happened.

Quite so! Lucas is a witness. To be a witness is to say what you know, what you have seen, what you have heard, this is the mission that Jesus entrusted to his disciples. Do you remember? He said to them:

- Be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

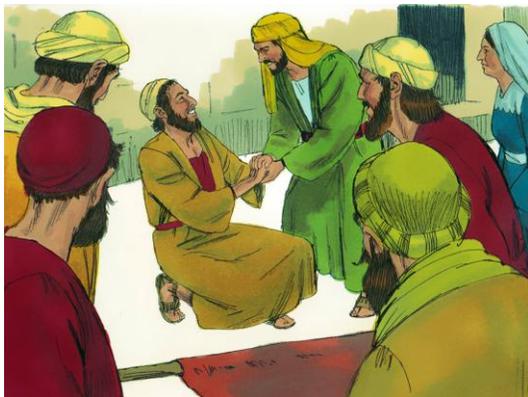
So they left to announce the Good News all over the country and, do you know what God was doing? He was accompanying them by performing miracles and wonders.

We are going to follow one of these disciples, it is Philip. Listen carefully and you will answer my question: Who was one of the first witnesses in Africa? You will find this account in the Acts of the Apostles in chapter 8.



Since Philip arrived in Samaria a lot has changed and the people of the town are discussing about it.

- It's amazing! We have heard of the miracles that the disciples do in Jerusalem but now we see them at home.



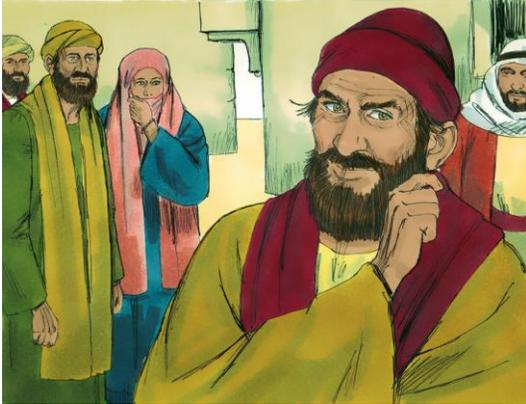
- Yes! Philip prays in the name of Jesus and the people are healed. I saw a man who was possessed, tormented, he was completely delivered. He was jumping for joy, we didn't recognize him.

- I have seen several disabled people drop their walking sticks and crutches and start walking and running; among my neighbors and friends, many sick people have been completely healed.

- Truly, God works wonders among us.

Whole crowds come to listen to Philippe. He tells them about Jesus' love and forgiveness, and God confirms his words with miracles.

Men discuss among themselves:



- Me, it's over! I'm not going to see Simon anymore. He's a thief!

- Me neither. He cheated on us all, he's a crook. But who is this Simon posing as a very important man? He's a magician. He amazes children and adults with his magic and witchcraft. People are fascinated by his powers, even the chiefs of the city seek advice from him.

But by listening to the Word of God, they understand that Simon is a wicked man. So they turn away from him.

Many people believe in Jesus. They get baptized and become His disciples. And what do they do next? Well! They are so happy that they keep talking about what they have seen and heard, and the good news is spreading further in Samaria.

One day, an angel of the Lord appears to Philip. He tells him:

- Philip! Get up; go on the path that leads from Jerusalem to Gaza.

Philip gets up and he leaves. Along the way, he hears horses pulling a chariot behind him.



- Well, a traveler returning from Jerusalem! He says to himself as he sees them pass.

The man in the chariot is an African. He doesn't pay attention to Philip; he is reading and seems very absorbed in his reading.

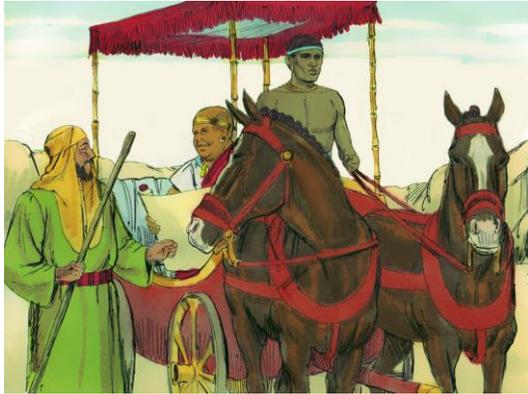
The Spirit of God says to Philip:

- Go ahead and catch up with that chariot.

Philip runs. He is now very close. The man continues to read aloud. Philip listens.

*"He was led like a sheep to be slaughtered,
Like a lamb that lets itself be shorn without struggling!"*

- Oh! But he's reading the Word of God, Philip thinks to himself, it's a very old prophecy about Jesus.



- Do you understand what you are reading? He asks the traveller.

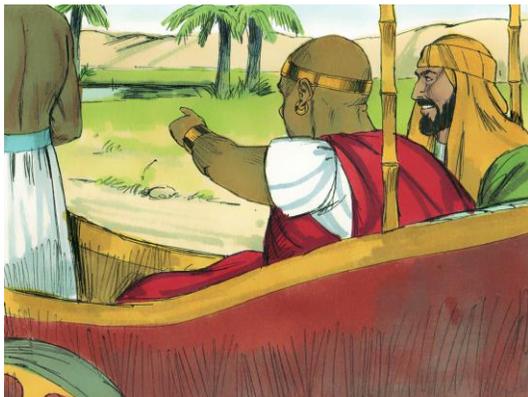
- No! I am thinking hard but I do not understand and there is no one to explain it to me. But, you, do come and sit in the chariot and explain to me!

Philip sits next to this man who came to Jerusalem to worship God and who is returning to his country

more than seven hundred kilometers away. He still does not have the answer to his question, but from above God saw he and he sent Philip especially for him. This man is a minister of the Queen of Ethiopia. He manages all of the queen's treasures.

- Please, he asks Philippe, explain to me. Who is the prophet talking about? Who is this man who accepts being sentenced to death without saying anything?

- It is about Jesus, who agreed to give his life for the forgiveness of all men, replies Philip, who then announces the good news of the love of God, of the coming of Jesus, of His death on the cross and His resurrection. The man receives all his words with joy. Finally, he understands and he believes!



The journey continues, the horses gallop on the path and the two men discuss.

- Oh! Look! The minister says suddenly, can you see? There is water here. Do you want to baptize me?

- If you believe with all your heart, I will baptize you! Replies Philippe.

- Yes, I believe that Jesus is the Son of God. I

believe He gave His life to save me, now I want to follow Him and be His disciple, the man answers. Stop the horses!

They both go down into the water and Philip baptizes him. Then they come out of the water but suddenly the Minister looks around him, he no longer sees Philip. He has disappeared. The Spirit of the Lord took him away. The man gets back into his chariot and, full of joy, he continues his long journey, praying and praising God who has made himself known to him.

What about Philip? Where is he? What did he become? The Spirit of God led him to another town where he announced the Good News.

1, 2 3, 4 AND YOU AND ME!



The minister has travelled hundreds of kilometers, passed through towns and villages, what did he do? He certainly told everyone he met about Jesus. Once in his country, in Africa, he spoke about Him to the queen, to the ministers, to his family, his friends, his servants and thus the Good news of the love of God was spread, as Jesus had said. .

And after, do you know what happened? Well, it went on, there were always men, women, and children that spoke of Jesus and God walked with them, doing wonders and miracles. This is still happening today.

4, 3, 2, 1 AND WE PARENTS!



This is the start of missionary work. The evangelization of the world is launched. So offer your children books on the life of missionaries, how God has led them, accompanied them, how the work has continued and is still going on throughout the world.

Like the minister, your children may not understand what they are reading. They need to be explained to them, to be supported. I encourage you to be attentive to their reactions, their questions. Nothing can replace this direct contact. If you don't know how to answer them, don't hesitate to put them in touch with people who can. Good luck!