

Seeing Differently

Acts 8:26-40

5/17/26

What is the meaning of life? Why do we exist? Where did we come from? Who do I want to be? Should I get married? Should I have children? How do I cope with stress?

Who here has never had a cavity? Anyone? I know at least three people in this room. Spiritual health is oral health, and oral health is spiritual health. Mental health is oral health. Oral health is heart health is spiritual health. I say that because Christians believe the body is the Temple of God! We Christians see the world differently than most.

I am asking many questions today because I follow Jesus as Lord and Savior. Jesus teaches that questions don't threaten faith-questions are pathways to deeper relationships. Stay curious! Questions are pathways to deeper relationships. Stay curious! Remain relational.

The Ethiopian in today's passage is curious. He asks questions. And how does Philip answer them? He proclaims the good news about Jesus. What is the meaning of life? If we believe Jesus is God, then the meaning of life must be God and humans uniting. Or as Jesus teaches, "God so loves the world that he sent His only Son that whoever trusts in Him will have eternal life, purposeful life, the meaning of life." Why do we exist? Well, if we believe Jesus is God then the reason we exist is to be in friendship with God and one another. Or as Jesus teaches, "No longer do I call you servants, but friends."-Jn 15:15 Where did we come from? "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. Jesus was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Jesus..."-Jn 1:1-3 Who do I want to be? Jesus teaches, "Those who exult themselves will be humbled and those who humble themselves will be exalted."-Mt 23:12

As the Ethiopian was curious and asking questions about God, I'm confident this is how Philip answered the questions. Or Philip witnessed to his own relationship with Jesus. "You will never believe this: there was this one time when Jesus was preaching to 5000 people. And this sermon went on and on and on, so long that the people got hungry, but we were in the middle of nowhere, and Jesus asked me, 'How are we going to feed these people?' I protested by saying, 'Six months wages couldn't buy enough bread for these people.'-Jn 6:5-7 But Andrew pointed out there was a boy with 5 loaves and two fish. That generous little boy trusted Jesus and shared. Jesus had all the people sit down, Jesus prayed, and then we began to share the 5 loaves and 2 fish with the 5000 people. You will not believe this, but after feeding the people, we brought back more than with what we started. You see, when you follow Jesus, you will see that life is generously living and Jesus generously gives His life for ours. Do you have anything to confess? Any mistakes? Any sins? Jesus forgives. We don't know how it works yet, but Jesus was crucified for our sins. Do you trust this?"

This is the faith that we are baptizing our children into today.

Acts 9:1-19

One of the best pieces of advice I have received from Travis is to stay curious. Especially if we must enter difficult conversations with folks whom we differ. Stay curious.

Saul, who became a founder of Christ's Church, began as an enemy. The thing we sometimes don't see is that God is already at work in people we don't expect. No one expected Saul of Tarsus to become Paul who writes much of the Bible. Stay curious. Remain relational. This is how we can see differently and be Christ's presence in the world.

Stay curious. Ask questions. In a polarized culture, humility in learning builds bridges. Ananias was in a polarized culture. He's being called by the Lord to transform enemies. But Ananias is hesitant. One thing we must notice is that God must change Ananias as much as the Lord needs to change Saul to make him Paul. Saul's invitation to Jesus doesn't simply happen by Jesus. The Lord partners with us. And we must change before we can invite others to Christ. We must see differently. How do we see differently? Stay curious. Ask questions. Remain relational. We must trust that the Lord can make changes in people.

Where do I need to be more open, curious, or teachable?

Am I open to God working in people I struggle to understand?

In divided times, spiritual maturity includes openness to transformation. Jesus is in the change business. And if I have learned anything about change management, one must have a clear and good why. Why this change? Jesus desires us to flourish. Jesus desires to empower us to empower others to flourish. That is Christ's faith we will teach our children.

Love,
Pastor Curtis

MAY 2026 THeme: Keep Going: Faithful in Divided Times

Theme: Faith grows through curiosity, not certainty.

Sermon Notes:

1. Questions are not threats to faith—they are pathways deeper into it.
2. God is already at work in people we don't expect.
3. In a polarized culture, humility in learning builds bridges.
4. Sometimes perseverance means letting God change your perspective.
5. God works on both sides—Saul and Ananias.
6. In divided times, spiritual maturity includes openness to transformation.
7. Where do I need to be more open, curious, or teachable?
8. Am I open to God working in people I struggle to understand?