Sermon – Spirit-Led Encounters
May 10, 2026

Mother's Day

Before we begin, I just want to take a moment to say—Happy Mother's Day!

Today we honour and celebrate all the mothers here. Thank you for your love, care and all the countless sacrifices you make that often go unseen.

We also want to celebrate all the women in our lives—sisters, daughters, friends who support and encourage us in so many ways.

We also want to recognize that for some of you, today comes with grief and complicated emotions.

So wherever you are today, we're really glad you're here. And we want you to know - you matter deeply to God and to us.

Introduction

A few months ago, I had a strange day. I didn't have my car - which is unusual, so I decided to walk to work. Not a big deal.

But as I was walking along, someone came to mind. I knew he had been going through a difficult season, so I started praying for him. And as I prayed, another thought came to mind: *You should reach out and pray with him.*

So I made a mental note - when I get to the church, I'll message him. But partway through my walk, I heard someone call my name. I turned around and a car pulled up beside me. Guess who it was?

It was him. The exact person I'd just been thinking about. The exact person I'd just been praying for.

He said, "Hey Jeremy, do you want a ride?" I said yes and got in.

On the short drive, he opened up about what he was going through. And before I got out, I asked if I could pray with him – and we prayed right there in his car.

And in that moment, I got a little emotional. Because I was thinking:

- What if none of this was random?
- What if the Holy Spirit cares so much about one person that he would arrange a whole series of events just to reach him?
- What if the people who come to mind aren't random thoughts but invitations from the Holy Spirit to join him in something He's already doing?

Sermon Series

We're in a series called *The Holy Spirit Series: Book of Acts edition*.

The book of Acts shows us what happened when the Holy Spirit took hold of the early disciples. These ordinary people were transformed and then sent out to boldly advance Jesus' mission.

And we're not just looking at what God did then. We're asking, God what does this mean for us now? Because as a church, we sense that God is leading us forward into a big and faith-filled future.

But we don't want to move forward in our own strength. We want to be a people filled and led by the Holy Spirit.

Background

Today we're looking at Acts 8. At the beginning of the chapter, Philip is in the middle of a revival in Samaria. He's preaching and healing. Crowds are gathering and lives are being changed.

And then the Holy Spirit tells him to go – not to a bigger crowd, not to a bigger opportunity. But to a desert road – for one person. And that one conversation takes as much space in Acts 8 as the entire revival! Why? **Because to God, one person matters**.

So here's the question:

- What if the Holy Spirit is already at work around you?
- What if he's setting up encounters that he wants you to be part of?
- When that happens how do you recognize it?
- What do you do when the moment comes?

Today we're going to look at 3 things.

1. Be ready to follow the Spirit's prompting
2. Recognize where the Spirit is already at work
3. Point the conversation to Jesus

First, **Be ready to follow the Spirit's prompting.**

When we talk about the Holy Spirit's promptings, we often expect something dramatic - like a voice from heaven.

But most of the time, Holy Spirit promptings aren't like that. They're subtle.

- A person that comes to mind.
- A nudge to reach out to them.
- A sense that you should pray or say something.

Show of hands: How many of you have ever experienced something like that?

You see, our problem isn't that we don't receive promptings. Our problem is that we don't always respond.

Because we start thinking:

- What if I'm wrong?
- What if this feels awkward?
- What if I mess it up?

So instead of responding, we hesitate and we miss the moment.

But what do we see in Acts 8?

Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." (Acts 8:26)

What does Philip do? Verse 27 says: **So he started out… (Acts 8:27)**

Then **The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it." (Acts 8:29)**

What does Philip do? Verse 30 says: **Philip ran up to the chariot (Acts 8:30)**

Do you see the pattern? The Holy Spirit prompts. Philip responds. No hesitation. No overthinking. Just obedience.

So what can we learn from this?

We learn that: **Spirit-led encounters don't begin with full clarity—they begin with simple obedience.**

You see, if Philip had ignored that first prompting, he would have missed the moment entirely.

So here's the challenge:

- Pay attention.
- Notice who comes to mind.
- And when the Spirit prompts you - respond.
    - Send the text.
    - Make the call.
    - Offer to pray.

You don't have to get it perfect. You just have to be obedient.

Second, **Recognize Where the Spirit is Already at Work.**

Let me ask you a question: What's your biggest barrier to having a spiritual conversation?

For many of us, it's the pressure. We feel like we need to have the perfect words, the perfect answers, the perfect timing.

So we hold back. But what if that's not how it works? What if the Holy Spirit is already at work in the other person?

Because that's exactly what we see here. By the time Philip arrives on the scene:

- The Ethiopian is already seeking God.
- He's already reading Scripture.
- He's already asking questions.

The Holy Spirit has been preparing the moment. So what does Philip do? He asks a simple question: **Do you understand what you are reading? (Acts 8:30)**

That's it. He doesn't force anything. He doesn't prove anything. He simply steps into what the Holy Spirit has already started. Do you know what this means?

It means that your job isn't to make something happen. Your job is simply to join what the Holy Spirit is already doing.

So instead of asking: Do I have all the answers? Instead start asking: Where is the Holy Spirit already at work?

Where is the Holy Spirit working…

- In your school?
- In your workplace?
- In your neighbourhood?

This leads to our third point, **Point the Conversation to Jesus**.

When Philip meets the Ethiopian, he finds him reading Scripture.

This is the passage of Scripture the eunuch was reading:

"He was led like a sheep to the slaughter,
and as a lamb before its shearer is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.
33 In his humiliation he was deprived of justice.
Who can speak of his descendants?
For his life was taken from the earth." (Acts 8:32-33)

This passage comes from Isaiah 53. Israel had been called to be God's people and be a light to the nations. But they failed. They turned away from God and as a result, they were sent into exile.

And the question people were wondering was: How will all God's promises still come true?

Isaiah speaks to this. He prophesies about a Servant. One who would step in, carry the people's sin and bring restoration to the world.

This is what the Ethiopian is reading and struggling to understand. And it's here that Philip does something simple and powerful.

Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus. (Acts 8:35)

How does Philip respond in this moment?

- He doesn't start a debate.
- He doesn't give a lecture.
- Philip points to Jesus.

Because the good news isn't just information—it's a story.

A story of a world created good, where everything was in right relationship: with God, with one another, and with creation.

But humanity chose to go its own way. Sin entered the world. And everything was damaged—our relationship with God, with one another, and with creation itself.

But God didn't walk away. He stepped into it. He sent Jesus.

- To carry our sin,
- To take on our brokenness,
- To make a way for things to be restored.

And through His life, death, and resurrection:

- Our sin is forgiven
- Our relationship with God is restored
- And new life is available

And then Jesus does something no one expected. He calls people to Himself—and sends them back into the world to be part of His restoring work.

He sends them out to love, to bring hope, and to reflect His goodness in a broken world.

And as they do, the kingdom of God begins to break in—little by little.

- Every act of love
- Every word of encouragement
- Every step of faith

They all become a glimpse of what God is restoring. And one day, that work will be complete.

Jesus will return. All that is broken will be made new. There will be a new heaven and a new earth—where everything is restored and God will dwell with His people.

And until that day, we join the Holy Spirit in bringing glimpses of that future into the present.

And that's the story. And it speaks to what every human heart longs for:

- Peace
- Healing
- Belonging
- Purpose

And here's the key. You don't need to say everything. You just need to point to Jesus. Because he is the answer people are searching for.

Conclusion

In Acts 8, the Ethiopian hears this story and immediately responds, *"What's stopping me from being baptized?"*

And right there, on the side of the road, his life changes. And then he goes home.

But he doesn't go home the same person—he carries the good news of Jesus with him – and through him, others come to faith.

How did all this happen? Through one encounter. One person. One moment led by the Holy Spirit. Because the Holy Spirit cared enough about one person to set it all up.

As a church, two of the guiding priorities we sense God is calling us to are:

- to Join God in the neighbourhood
- to become a hub of connection and belonging to the community.

But even as the Holy Spirit wants to reach the whole neighbourhood, he also wants to reach the one person.

- The one person who's quietly struggling.
- The one person who's hurting.
- The one person who feels unseen.

And how does the Holy Spirit reach that one person? Through one person. One person who's willing to say Yes.

So let me ask you, Will you be that one person? Some of you already know who that person is.

So here's the challenge this week:

Pay attention:

- Who comes to your mind?
- Where are conversations opening up?
- Where is the Spirit already at work?

And when you notice it – simply respond.

- Send the message.
- Start the conversation.
- Offer the prayer.

Because what feels like a small act of obedience might actually be a Spirit-led encounter that the Holy Spirit is setting up… all because He loves that one person that much.