

Faith, Fashion, LGBTQ+ Rights

Acts 8:26-40 (NRSVUE)

Then an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Get up and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a wilderness road.) So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, the queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over to this chariot and join it." So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" He replied, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this:

"Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter,
and like a lamb silent before its shearer,
so he does not open his mouth.

In his humiliation justice was denied him.

Who can describe his generation?

For his life is taken away from the earth."

The eunuch asked Philip, "About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. As they were going along the road, they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?" He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip[c] baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more and went on his way rejoicing. But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

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OBSERVATION

Important questions:

- Who?
- What?
- Where?
- When?
- How?

Important things to notice:

- Repetitions
- Similarities or comparisons
- Contrasts
- Cause and Effect
- General to Particular
- Particular to General

Observation Questions

1. From whose perspective is the story written?
2. Whose perspective is missing from the story?
3. Who is shown love during the story? Who is cared for in the story?
4. Who is not shown love? Who is not cared for?
5. Who received justice? What did that justice look like?
6. Who did not receive justice?
7. How do clothing and fashion play a role in the story?
8. Note the unexpected or unusual in the text.
9. Is there anything in the passage that raises a question for you?
Anything that intrigues, perplexes, or troubles you? Write it down!

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INTERPRETATION

Interpretation Questions

1. What did the author intend to communicate to the original readers?
2. What seems to be the main point or the core teaching of this passage?
3. What context is helpful in interpreting these texts?
4. How does the passage approach LGBTQ+'s rights and inclusion?
 - Is it helpful?
 - Is it problematic?
 - What do we do with this?
5. Does the passage mention gender justice? Why or why not?

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APPLICATION

Application Questions

1. How do you sense that God is speaking to you through this passage?
2. What part of your life is connected to the core teaching of this text?
3. How are you experiencing what a character in the text is living out?
4. What specific actions are you going to take in response to what God is saying to you?
5. What action will you take together with your community, in response to what God is saying to your community?
6. What ways have you seen communities use dress, clothing, and the ways we treat people who make our clothes to oppress rather than uplift?
7. When you think about those oppressive practices, what theological perspectives have supported them? What would you say in response to those after today?
8. What are examples you have seen or heard of where fashion and clothes have been used to liberate people and help social justice movements?
9. Based on these verses, how can fashion and clothing help us practice justice?

Adapted from InterVarsity [“How to Do Inductive Bible Study,”](#) which was Adapted from Bob Grahmann, based on the paper “How to Use Individual Study Time” by Lindsay Olesberg. October 2016
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