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**STRIVING TO DO
 GOD'S WORK, GOD'S WAY, FOR GOD'S GLORY**

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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In Acts 8, the Holy Spirit portrays a thrilling encounter, which the Providence of God designed, between Phillip, the evangelist and the Ethiopian eunuch! Acts 8:26-28 & 35 - Now the angel of the Lord spoke to Phillip, saying, "Arise, and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza". This is desert. So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship, was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet.... Then Phillip opened his mouth, and beginning at this scripture, preached Jesus to him... .

The world falsely thinks that this natural world is the only realm which exist. They mindlessly assume that there is not a supernatural realm. But oh, brothers and sisters, we know that there is another supernatural, eternal, Kingdom of God. We are entirely persuaded that the Ruler of both, the visible and the invisible realm, is the Lord of all history! Our omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent Savior possesses all authority over both the natural and the supernatural realm. Furthermore, we can be assured that our great and glorious God is working out His majestic agenda in this world. He is calling out a people for His great name's sake, from every tribe, tongue and people group.

So friends, there is absolutely no need to be consumed with pessimism or despair, as we live in this fallen and materialistic culture. Instead, we should be consumed with the glory of our God; and we should be intimately involved in the Lord's eternal agenda, that He is carrying out in this fallen and depraved nation and world! Our Lord Jesus is still building His church! The Father is still drawing in the bride of Christ! The Holy Spirit is still breathing life into spiritual corpses, in the graveyard of this "present world"! Our conquering King continues to put the glory of His love, grace and mercy on display; in the salvation of those who deserve His just and eternal wrath!

Notice the amazing agenda of the glory of God's providence unfolding, in the life of Phillip, the evangelist. Remember, at this time, great persecution had risen up against the church at Jerusalem. But this was all a part of God's over-arching agenda, to send out the disciples to be witnesses unto Jesus in Judea, Samaria and the uttermost parts of the earth! Those who were scattered, went everywhere preaching the Gospel. Phillip, in particular, had gone down to the city of Samaria and was faithfully preaching a "Jesus-focused" message to the people. God was granting scores of spiritual heart transplants! The Lord was delivering many Samaritans from the tyranny of sin, and transferring them into the kingdom of God's dear Son! And there was "much rejoicing" in this city.



But, as Phillip was ministering in the middle of a "spiritual awakening" in Samaria, God sent a heavenly messenger to him. This angelic being told Philip that he needed to leave the revival meeting and go to a remote location in the Gaza desert! Friends, how many Southern Baptist evangelists do you know, who would obey that order? But, Philip was willing to hear and obey. Oh friends, the Lord had a specific timetable to extend the Gospel far beyond the city of Samaria! The astounding providence of God had arranged for Phillip to have a "Divine Appointment" with a man from the "horn of Africa".

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Think of it! Phillip approached the chariot, at just the precise moments that this eunuch was reading aloud from Isaiah 53! You could not pick a better text in the entirety of the Old Testament, for a declaration concerning the Person and the Work of the Lord Jesus Christ! Friends, this was no coincidence! This was no happenstance! This was a *'Divine Appointment'* that was orchestrated, by the amazing providence of our Lord and God!

Oh brothers and sisters, do you understand that our God has a providential timetable, in which He is orchestrating 'Divine appointments' for you? Have you stopped to consider this spiritual reality? It may be with that person at your place of employment; or a neighbor who is in the midst of a crisis; or that waiter who is serving you at the restaurant. It may be someone else that God has placed in your life by Divine appointment! There are multiple occasions in our walk with Jesus, when the providence of our Savior has arranged for our lives to intersect with others, at a crucial moment or at a critical crossroads in their lives. Will you be sensitive and submissive to Him, so that you may be ready, willing, and equipped to preach JESUS to them? If we will walk in prayerful intimacy with our King, we will be amazed at how our Lord will direct us to be used as His witness, to gather in His bride!

Divine Appointments

I want to thank you so much for interceding for Garry Morrison and me, as we taught the "Christ-centered Discipleship" study to pastors, church planters and cell group leaders from all over the Santiago district of Cuba. They came by public buses, from a 70-mile radius, to attend the conference; which lasted from morning until evening, for 4 days. The conference was held at the 7th Baptist Church of Santiago de Cuba. Brothers and sisters, God gave us a glorious time of ministering the Word. There was great liberty in the teaching; there was a manifest hunger for the Word, by those in attendance; and an obvious and mighty application of the truth, by the Holy Spirit, to those spiritual leaders. Several times, during the conference, there was manifested weeping among those in the audience. Even Bro. Garry and myself were overcome and began weeping, as we were teaching and translating these truths! It was such a powerful time of sitting at the feet of our Master-Teacher, as He taught us many profound truths concerning the vital issue of discipleship! One of the wonderful blessings of each of these conferences in communist Cuba, is that these pastors, church planters and cell group leaders take these workbooks and multiply these truths into thousands of lives, whom they teach on a weekly basis! So this really is a ministry of multiplication, for the glory of the Lord Jesus, our Teacher, Priest and King!

During one of the breaks in the conference, Nelson, a 31-year old pastor came up to Bro. Garry and began sharing his testimony of conversion. Garry was so excited about what he heard that he hurried over to me and said, "Bro. Ed, you need to hear this story". It was a story of a 'Divine Appointment' unto the conversion of his eternal soul! Here is what Nelson said to us.

"I was raised in a town called El Caney, which is close to Santiago de Cuba. I was raised without the presence of my father, because he abandoned my mother. When my father abandoned my mother, my mother wanted to abort me while I was in her womb; nevertheless, I thank God that this never happened. I went to church as a child with a neighbor. However, when I was 14 years of age, I ended up in street gangs and being promiscuous. But at the age of 17, in the year 2000, I was invited to attend a crusade at El Caney Baptist Church. Bro. Ed Lacy and Garry Morrison were preaching the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, in these nights. God, the Holy Spirit, used Bro. Lacy and Bro. Morrison, to open my understanding of the love of God; and of my need to follow Christ and seek Him for the forgiveness of my sins, and be freed from eternal condemnation. For 2 days I heard them preaching the message of Salvation. I will never forget the miracle of salvation that God worked in my life, in those 2 days. I went home and talked to God; and told Him to "help me, change me, and forgive me"; and God was faithful to work His mighty salvation in my life. In the days that followed, my life changed; and many of my family members and acquaintances noticed the changes that the Lord was working in my life. As I witnessed to them, many of them came to the saving faith in Jesus Christ.

Throughout this time, I was being disciplined by 2 church counselors; and one day, during a youth event, I sensed the call of God on my life to the pastoral ministry. During the following years, I actively participated in a

national evangelistic outreach ministry, preaching the gospel in different provinces in the country of Cuba. In 2007, I applied for seminary and was accepted; and I began my theological training at the Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary of Cuba. Today I am married and with my wonderful wife, Katy, we have a beautiful 9-month old baby girl; and I am pastoring a church in the rural zone of Contramaestre. I founded this church 3 years ago, with 4 people. But now, it is comprised of 50 baptized members. Recently, we baptized 4 young people. Our church has now started a new mission with 15 people.”

Friends, after Nelson shared this testimony, I asked, “Where does the church meet for worship?” He told me that they were meeting under a palm tree; but the most recent hurricane had blown down the tree. He also told me that they have laid a concrete foundation for a building; and when the sun is shining, they meet on that foundation for worship. I had brought some extra funds to this conference, (as I usually do), so that I might be sensitive to specific opportunities that may arise; and so that I can be used, by our Lord, as a channel of blessing. So, when I heard about where the church was meeting, I knew that this was another Divine Appointment. I knew that the Lord wanted us to be involved in the construction of this concrete block building. So I asked Nelson, “How much would it cost to put the building up?” Nelson responded, “It would cost \$1,500. But we don’t have that kind of money.” I responded, “But the Lord has allowed me to have the funds; and I want to give those funds right now. Let’s go get Pastor Javier, (the President of the Santiago district) and we will make a legal documentation for this contribution. You can begin the construction immediately!” Well friends, Nelson was already overwhelmed with joy; just to be able to share his testimony with us about God’s divine appointment with him in salvation; but now, he was about to go into orbit, as he heard me tell me that this was also a ‘Divine Appointment’ for our Father to provide for the construction of their building!

Friends, this is just one small example of the multitude of things that our precious Lord accomplished on this trip. We could almost write a book, about the events that take place at each conference in Cuba. Both Garry and I are so very grateful, that there are so many brothers and sisters like you, who were interceding for us, during these glorious days of ministry; and some that are so willing to give; so that we can be conduits of the Lord’s great provision.

A DIVINE APPOINTMENT WITH A ‘PRODIGAL SON’

On the Sunday afternoon, before the conference began, I was preparing to preach 2 evening services at 4th Baptist Santiago de Cuba. One of the sermons that I was preparing to preach was from Luke 15 concerning the **Prodigal Son**. I decided to take a break and head down to the lobby of the hotel, to get some bottled water. When I got off the elevator and walked into that spacious lobby, there had to be at least 75 Europeans who were standing around. Many tourists from Europe visit Cuba year around; and there were many who were staying in this same hotel. I also noticed that there was a young Cuban man, who was playing the piano in the lobby. As I went over to get my water, the pianist picked me out of the large crowd of Caucasians in that room, and asked me this question, “Sir, my name is Rubin. I need to ask a favor of you. I desperately need to practice my English, (although he spoke very well already). I am asking if you would be willing to sit down and speak with me for a while. Sir, you can talk about any subject that you would like to; I just need to converse with you!” Well, brothers and sisters, I knew that this was a ‘Divine appointment’! As I began to tell him my testimony, as a professional musician, who was once lost and on the road to damnation; his eyes were as big as saucers! I spent quite a while testifying to Him about the Person and the work of the Lord Jesus; and the conditions to a saving relationship with Him. Then Rubin said something that absolutely blew my mind. He said, “Ed, this is not a coincidence. This is an appointment with God! For you are not aware of this, but I am a **prodigal son**!!!! My mother is a faithful disciple of the Lord Jesus. My sister and brother are both faithful followers of the Lord Jesus. But I have always rejected the Lord and gone my own way!” Well brothers and sisters, I had just come from spending a few hours pouring over and praying over my sermon manuscript on the PRODIGAL SON! Now, I do not have the time or space to give you all the details of the story; but after quite a while, I said to Rubin, “You are right! This is not a coincidence! God is seeking you, Rubin. (CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

Out of all of the people in this lobby, you came to me; a preacher, who had spent the last few hours studying the story of your life! Rubin, you **must** seek the Lord, while He may be found. You **must** call on Him, for He is near. You **must** forsake your way and turn to the Lord Jesus Christ and surrender your life to Him!"

Friends, please join me in intercessory prayer for Rubin. I pray that, (just like Nelson), I may meet Rubin down the line one day, and learn of his personal testimony of how the Lord Jesus saved his soul, through this Divine Appointment with Him!

My long-time co-laborer in this ongoing ministry to Cuba, Pastor Garry Morrison, shared some precious insights on this trip. Garry shares, "What a privilege it is to serve the Lord Jesus, in eastern Cuba. This trip was so special to me, for a number of reasons. It was so very exciting to hear how God converted Pastor Andy Nelson Martinez Barrero, as he shared his testimony with us. Even though we understand that it is all of God's grace, we rejoiced to know that we were the instruments used in God's Divine appointment with Andy. I also had the privilege to preach on Sunday morning at 7th Baptist Church, (the same church that hosted the conference). Bro. Javier Herrera is the precious pastor of that flock. This church has grown from 30 believers, in its inception, to over 500 disciples in the span over a little over 10 years! Finally, I was much encouraged to see the commitment, enthusiasm, sacrifice, and determination of the Cuban believers, as they intentionally reach their fellow countrymen with the Gospel of the Lord Jesus. They do this without much theological education; without having any financial resources; and without having a modern sanctuary! However, they do have transformed lives; they do have the power of the Holy Spirit; and they possess the understanding that God has left them on this earth to reach others with the truths of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus!"

CHRIST-CENTERED EVANGELISM NOW ON DVD!



All 12 video sessions of the "Christ-centered Evangelism" study are now posted for viewing, on Youtube; on Vimeo; and also on sermonaudio.com. I recently was given the blessed privilege to teach this study at my home church, in Mobile, AL. The Holy Spirit of Truth visited us with His illuminating power in each of the 12 sessions. There were several of our members who were calling our home, during the day-time hours; testifying of an awesome

spiritual work, that was taking place in their lives, concerning their concepts of the message and methods of evangelism. They were personally testifying of being revived, refreshed, and reformed, in this essential area of "Doing God's Work; God's Way; For God's Glory"! I had an unusual sense that I was being "moved along" by the Wind of God in a mighty way, in every session! Friends, it was awesome! Our associate pastor of worship, and my dear friend in the Lord, Bro. Ed Keyes, writes a few of his thoughts of that week, "It is with a heart of gratitude, that I write these thoughts, concerning the "Christ-centered Evangelism Conference". Bro. Ed, I had read the reports of mighty effects of this conference, as you taught it in other countries, on many occasions. And I so longed to have this conference in our local church here in Mobile. I've felt in my heart for many years, that there had to be a better way to reach the lost around us. Bro. Ed, this conference was an answer to prayer! All the scriptures that you used were so familiar to me; and yet, the way you laid them out was so powerful and illuminating, concerning this vital issue of using God's means, to carry out God's great mission! I will feel much more confident about God-pleasing evangelism; and about anyone who receives Christ as Lord of their lives, as a result of this Christ-centered message and method. What a relief it was to be reminded again, that I don't have to step over the line into God's territory and try to do God's part. But that I can prayerfully trust our Lord to accomplish His work, in His timing! I am certain that we will have greater freedom and greater confidence, when doing God's Work, God's way. Thank You for letting the Lord use you here in our lives!"

