Acts Chapter 8 Con't

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[0:00] Father, as we open another day and another Thanksgiving, we are mindful that you are the giver of every perfect gift. And we thank you that you are a God who is utterly reliable and dependable, one with whom there is no shadow caused by turning.

We are so grateful that you are the dependable God that you are, and that you can always be counted upon to keep your word. And we ask that as we engage the content this morning, that you will give enlightenment and instruction to each and every one of us.

Young and old as well. Thank you for the meal we'll be receiving shortly. Thank you for the Thanksgiving dinner that we all have to look forward to today. For the liberties and freedoms that we enjoy in this country, and for those who have paid an ultimate price in order to secure it and maintain it for us.

We give you thanks for it all in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. Now, while it is true you do not have the sheet that precedes this that most of the men do, there are a couple of verses that you don't have that I'm going to begin by reading from the text on the sheet that would contain the verses if you had it.

And it has to do with a very dramatic situation that took place about 2,000 years ago in the book of Acts, chapter 8, and it has to deal with a man by the name of Philip.

Philip was an evangelist in his day, and he was mightily used of God, and you will discover, I think, that one of the things that was most remarkable about Philip is that he had a tremendously obedient heart and mind.

And I suspect that all of you have lived long enough, even you boys, to know that obedience sometimes can be a pretty hard thing to come by. If there's anything that we are really good at doing and being automatically, it's disobedience.

And that's because we all are endowed with this thing called volition. It is a will. It is the power to make choices that only you have, and nobody else, but you have that volition.

You have your own, everybody else has theirs. And you can do with your volition whatever you choose to do. Of course, there are often consequences that ensue when we make wrong decisions, but that's part of the price that goes with having volition.

And another word for volition is simply will. Volition comes from the same word as does our word volunteer, and it means to make a choice.

[2:49] When you volunteer for something, you make a choice to do something or be something. When you exercise your volition, you make a decision of some kind.

Philip was a sterling example of a man who had the wisdom to make the right decisions. He was obedient to the Lord.

And in the verses that you don't have, but I'm going to take the liberty of just reading a little bit ahead of, and then we'll be flipping the page, and you'll be able to follow us closely.

We read in verse 26. I'm sorry, beginning with verse 25 of Acts chapter 8.

And they, when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans. These are some of the other apostles. And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south, unto the way that goes down from Jerusalem, unto Gaza, which is desert.

And I don't know if you're familiar with it or not, but if you're following on the news right now, Gaza is a real hot spot. It is in the southernmost part of the ancient land of Canaan.

It is where the Palestinians are daily launching rockets over the border into Israel. This is the land of Gaza. And there are diplomatic efforts underway now to try and invoke a ceasefire.

And we don't know if that's going to be successful or not. But here we are, 2,000 years later, and this is very much still a hot spot in the world. That's the area of Gaza.

So we read in verse 27 that Philip arose and went. Now, we don't know anything about this angel, except the angel was dispatched from God to communicate this message to Philip.

And the very word angel, angelos, means messenger. And as you read through the Old and New Testament, you will see that angels often served in the capacity of being a messenger.

[5:08] It was an angel, Gabriel, that delivered the message to Zacharias that he was going to have a son, John the Baptist. It was the same angel, Gabriel, who delivered a message to Mary that she was going to be the mother of the Messiah.

So angels are utilized by God to do his special bidding. The Old Testament is replete with them, particularly in the book of Daniel. And we don't know much about these fellows.

I call them fellows because they are always referred to in the masculine when they are called angels. That's always in the masculine form. We know that angels are not humans.

We know they are an entirely different created order of beings. But we don't know much about them other than what the scriptures tell us. So when the angel gave this message to Philip as to where he was to go, he is immediately going to be obedient.

Now, he doesn't ask the question that we are all tempted to ask when we're told to do something. Why? Philip doesn't say, why? And Philip doesn't say, well, you know, I don't feel like going to Gaza.

[6:16] He just said, yes, sir. And if you can learn this early in life, I can't say that I did. But if you can learn this early in life, it will serve you so well.

And that is to develop an obedient spirit. It is important to resist the temptation of disobeying and going your own way when superiors tell you they want you to do something.

Whether it is a parent or a coach or a teacher. The natural inclination is, and I want you to know if you feel this way, you're very normal. Is to want to do your own thing.

Nobody likes to be told what to do. But, the most successful people, well adjusted, fulfilled people in life are those who learned early on to take orders.

Because while you are learning to take orders and do things that you maybe don't want to do, but someone in authority over you is giving you the orders, when you learn to take those orders, that will enable you to develop the skills necessary to one day be giving the orders.

[7:44] That's the way it works. Only those who have learned obedience will ever be in a position to issue orders and directions to others whom you will encourage to take orders and to be obedient.

This is one of the most important principles of life. And all of the scripture is replete with this. It begins with the disobedience of our parents in the garden. That's where it all started.

Thou shalt not eat of that tree, for in the day you eat thereof, you will surely die. Well, we know what happened. And we know the consequences that came from that.

So, disobedience and doing your own thing can at times seem so delicious and so tempting, but it comes at an awful price to pay.

You know, even our Lord Jesus in the book of Hebrews was said to have Jesus learned obedience by the things he suffered.

[8:52] And it doesn't imply that Jesus at times was disobedient and learned to be obedient. It doesn't mean that at all, because we know this one was the sinless perfect one and the only one who ever was.

But when the scriptures say that Jesus learned obedience, the word means that Jesus experienced, he lived obedience each time he was confronted with a decision to make.

So that he was able to say, I do always those things that please my heavenly Father. Every time he was confronted with a situation, he experienced, he lived, he went through an expression of obedience.

And it served him so well. And it will serve you well as well. So this fellow, Philip, is going in obedience to what the angel told him.

And verse 27 says, A eunuch was a man who was a servant who had been voluntarily castrated.

[10:14] Not a very nice thing to think about, is it? Having your testicles removed surgically. And what that did is it took him out of the capability of ever becoming a father or producing a child.

And it made it virtually impossible for him to even engage in sexual intercourse with a woman. A man who was a man.

A man who was a man. And for their protection, they would put a eunuch in charge of them, but they didn't have to worry about the eunuch fooling around, because he couldn't.

He was a eunuch. This guy was not only a eunuch, but he was obviously a financial wizard. He was really good with numbers, and he occupied a very responsible position as a treasure of the nation of Ethiopia.

And Ethiopia, to this day, of course, is a very ancient country. It's on the coast, on the northeast coast of Africa. And it is from Ethiopia that the Queen of Sheba had come.

[11:28] And a thousand years before the account we are reading here in the book of Acts, the Queen of Sheba visited Solomon. Solomon was one of the sons of David the king.

The guy who killed the giant. And Solomon had achieved all kinds of splendor and wonder, and had been responsible for raising the nation of Israel to a height of prosperity and glory that it had never known.

And his reputation went all throughout the world. And the Queen of Sheba in Ethiopia heard about this and couldn't believe it. So she came to Jerusalem and met Solomon.

And this was, of course, several hundred miles. Met Solomon. And what she did, she said, I have heard your reputation of the glory and splendor of your reign, but the half has not been told.

She was really impressed. Now, a thousand years later, fast forward a thousand years later, we've got a man from Ethiopia who is in Jerusalem, and we are told that he is there to worship.

[12:33] And that can only mean one thing. This guy had to be a Jew or a proselyte, a convert to Judaism. That's why he was there. And while he was there in Jerusalem, worshiping as a Jew, he, like all the other tourists and people who conducted pilgrimages to Jerusalem, looked around and found something of value that he wanted to buy and take home.

And guess what it was that he bought? It was a scroll. A book. We would call it a book. It wasn't a book like this, but it was a scroll that was all rolled up, very long, probably 20 feet long, but all rolled up.

And the scroll was of the text of the prophet Isaiah. And as he was in his chariot on the way home from Jerusalem back to Ethiopia, going through Gaza, he is opening up the scroll, unrolling it, and reading it.

And it is the scroll from Isaiah. Now, in all likelihood, this fellow was not traveling alone, because in the first place, in those days, almost nobody did, especially if you had any wealth or substance about you at all.

You would travel in a caravan. And the reason you did was because there were other people who could assist and help in case there were problems, and you were always in danger of highwaymen, of robbers, bands of thieves and robbers that would descend on a small group, mug them, take everything of value from them, may or may not kill them.

[14:17] So it wasn't safe at all to travel alone, especially if you were someone of great reputation or wealth, you would have a whole retinue, a whole caravan of people with you, because in numbers there is safety.

So, even though the text doesn't say there were a lot of people there, we can assume that there was. And we are told, in verse 27, that this man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority, in other words, this guy had connections.

He wasn't a nobody. He was a somebody. He was under Candace, who was queen of the Ethiopians. At the time, Candace was on the throne, and she had appointed this man, who obviously had distinguished himself as having great ability, particularly with numbers.

She had established him as her secretary of the treasurer. It was a cabinet level position. Very high, very prestigious. And we are told that he had charge of all her treasure.

That means the wealth of the nation of Ethiopia was in his hands. And he had come to Jerusalem for to worship. He was returning, going home, on his way from Jerusalem, back to Ethiopia.

[15:31] And he was sitting in his chariot, reading Isaiah the prophet. Isaiah had been written about 700 years before this happened.

When this man bought this scroll to take back home to Ethiopia, we don't know what he paid for it. We know it was probably expensive, because all of the scrolls were handwritten and hand copied.

So it was very tedious, very lengthy, and a very painstaking process that had to be engaged to duplicate this scroll. No copy machines, no Xerox machines.

It had to all be done by hand. And that made these things very expensive. So he was reading this scroll, unrolling it, and we are told in verse 29, Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.

We don't know how many chariots there were. And by the way, if you'll take your sheet now, the story picks up where it begins on the top of your page, which is Acts 8, up in the corner, and down in the bottom, left-hand corner, you'll see the number 486.

[16:56] You're on the right page. Philip is told by the angel, Go near, and join yourself. In other words, connect with this particular chariot.

Possibly we have an idea that there was just one lone chariot out there, but like I said, I think there were many chariots, and many wagons, and many servants along. But the Spirit of God said to Philip, Join yourself to this particular chariot.

And he did. Marvin, just real quick for you. You passed out 488, 489. Isn't it on the back side? No, no. No, it's the same one on both sides.

Yeah. No kidding? Some are right, and some are right. Okay. Some are right, and some are wrong. Sorry. This is what happens when you do it instead of let your secretary do it.

Okay? Okay. So, we read that in verse 30 at the top of the page then, that Philip ran thither to him.

[18:02] I like that. You know what that's an indication of? It's an indication of Philip's eagerness to obey. He didn't go reluctantly.

He didn't crawl. He didn't walk slowly. He ran to him. And, the best thing we can learn to do with obedience is to render it quickly.

It will serve you well. Fulfill your obligations speedily, not reluctantly. Philip ran thither to him and heard him read the prophet Isaiah and said, now this is just a little bit different spelling here.

It starts with an E, but it's actually talking about the same fellow we're familiar with in the Old Testaments. It's Isaiah. And, the spelling is just a little different. And, he is reading from the prophet Isaiah and Philip said to him, do you understand what you are reading?

Have you ever read anything in the Bible that you didn't understand? Boy, I've done that a lot of times. A lot of times. There's a great deal in the Scriptures that I don't understand.

[19:16] But, if you keep reading and keep thinking and keep studying, you will find that understanding will come in more and more areas as you apply yourself to it and become accustomed to it.

You'll start connecting dots and things will begin to make sense. But, it comes only with repeated reading and study. Trust me, it is well worth it. So, he asks this fellow who is reading from the prophet Isaiah, excuse me, sir, I hear what you're reading there and I'd like to know, do you understand what you're reading?

And the guy says, no, hey, this is all Greek to me. I don't get it. I don't understand. Now, he obviously had a desire to understand it and by the way, guys, that's one of the great objectives to start with is to have a desire, to have a hunger, to have an openness and a willingness to know what you are to be and do, to have an open heart and an open mind.

David was like that. We're told that David had a heart, had a mind after the heart of God and that means that he was eager and open to do God's will and this poor man was willing to show his ignorance.

I mean, this Ethiopian eunuch had some humility about him. He could have tried to fake it and say, well, yeah, I understand all about this stuff. Not wanting to show his ignorance, you know.

[20:52] This is the ego that gets in the way when we pretend we know something that we don't. When we pretend we can do something that we can't, but we don't want to take the pain that comes from bruising the ego so we say, oh, yeah, well, I can handle that.

And this poor man was honest enough to say, no, I can't. How can I understand this unless somebody gives me some help? And you know, that's what your parents are for.

That's what your teachers are for. That's what your pastors are for. There are people on hand to give you some help. And the time is going to come when the role will be reversed and you'll be the one who's giving the help.

And he says, how can I accept some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. Come on, come on up here. Climb up here. Can you help me? Can you tell me what this means?

And Philip climbs up in the chariot and the place of the scripture where this man is reading is in Isaiah 53. And it says, he was led as a sheep to the slaughter and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth.

[22:07] Now, I'm just reading in the black bold print here because that's the King James and the other translations that are following are listed below that. But for time's sake, we'll just limit ourselves to the bold print.

And this man is reading from Isaiah and verse 33 says, In his humiliation, his judgment was taken away. And who shall declare his generation? For his life is taken from the earth.

And the eunuch answered Philip and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? In other words, he's reading this content from Isaiah and what Isaiah is doing.

And guys, this is really exciting. This is really exciting. Isaiah is writing about an event that is going to transpire in the life of Jesus Christ when Christ had not even been born yet when Isaiah was writing this and wouldn't be born for 700 years.

But when Philip is relating this to the Ethiopian eunuch, Christ had been born. And he had been crucified and died probably about 5 to 10 years prior to this time.

[23:22] But this Ethiopian eunuch doesn't know this and as he's reading this thing from Isaiah written 700 years before Jesus was ever born, he asks a logical question to Philip. He says, Tell me, who is this man Isaiah writing about here when he talks about this one whose life is taken from the earth?

Who is he talking? Is he talking about himself or someone else? And Philip opened his mouth and began at the same scripture and preached unto him Jesus.

And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water. And the Ethiopian eunuch said, See, here is water.

What does hinder me to be baptized? Now there's only one explanation for his asking a question like that. And that is, when Peter preached to him, Jesus, he preached about Jesus being the Messiah of Israel, coming to the nation of Israel, for the whole world, and Israel rejected him, and we know that Christ went to the cross, and when he was on that cross, he suffered the penalty for the sins of the entire world.

And when it says that Peter preached Jesus unto him, that simply means he had to explain to him who Jesus is, what he did, and why it mattered.

[24:59] And the Ethiopian eunuch is just dumbfounded by all of this. He is really mesmerized by it, taken back by it. And the context would lead us to believe that the Ethiopian eunuch believed Philip.

He adopted his message. He took it to heart. And as a result, he's asking, because Philip, no doubt, clued him in about John the Baptist.

He proclaimed Jesus, the kingdom of heaven is coming, repent, and be baptized in the name of Jesus for the remission of sins. And then in Acts chapter 2, in the day of Pentecost, Peter said, repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Philip, no doubt, related all of this to this Ethiopian eunuch, and told him the whole nine yards. And when he got finished, the Ethiopian eunuch says, well, I have believed on Jesus Christ, and here's water.

Is there some reason why I shouldn't be baptized like those fellows were? And the Ethiopian eunuch said, if you believe with all your heart, and what does it mean to believe in your heart?

Your heart is a blood pump. It's located in the middle of your chest. But the Bible almost never refers to that heart. It talks about the heart as being the core of your being.

The real inner self. That's the heart in which we believe. It has to do with the core of one's being. And the Ethiopian eunuch responded and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Now, fellas, that, there's more there than meets the eye. And here's what you need to know. it is not sufficient to believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

That doesn't save anybody. Do you know something? Even the devil believes that. When this man said, I believe that Jesus is the Son of God, that's all that was required back then because that was all that was really revealed to them.

The whole concept about death, burial, and resurrection and it being the basis for the forgiveness of sins was not made all that clear. And it will not become crystal clear until the Apostle Paul begins preaching that.

[27:31] So up until this time, the big issue, the one burning issue was the identity of Jesus of Nazareth. Who was he? Who was this one?

Was he the one promised by Moses and the prophets 2,000 years earlier? Or was he an imposter? And when the disciples were with Jesus at Caesarea Philippi up in the north, Jesus asked them one time, he said, Who do men say that I am?

What's the word out there in the community about my identity? Who does everybody say I am? And they answered and they said, Well, some think that you're John the Baptist, resurrected from the dead.

Some think you're that prophet. Some think you're someone. And Peter said, Well, that's all interesting, but tell me, fellas, who do you say that I am? And Peter stood up and said, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.

And the word Christ means Messiah. It's a title. It isn't part of his name. Jesus is not Mr. Christ. He is Jesus, the Christ.

[28:43] Jesus, the Messiah. So, for these Jews to acknowledge that Jesus was the Christ, the Messiah, that was a watershed issue for them.

And what we understand as death, burial, and resurrection, and the substitutionary payment for our sins that Christ bore on the cross, that's a truth that is going to be more carefully revealed as the scriptures go on.

But right now, so much hinged upon the identity of who he was. And Peter said, if you believe in your heart, and he believed the information that was available to that time, so he commanded the chariot to stand still, and they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized them.

And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more, but look at the last verse, and he went on his way rejoicing.

That's the only logical response to anyone who really comes to grips with who Jesus Christ is and why he matters. There is a great cause for rejoicing.

[29:59] And you today, who have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, have no greater reason that will ever enter your life for rejoicing than the knowledge of Christ.

If you lose all your wealth, if you lose all your health, if you're lying on a sick bed, so exhausted and near death that you're ready to take your last breath, you still have cause for rejoicing even as you prepare to check out, as long as you know Jesus Christ is your Savior.

There is absolutely nothing that compares with that. And Paul the Apostle said, when he opened and closed the book of Romans, that God called me to be an apostle for the express reason that I might bring the Gentiles, that is, non-Jews, to the obedience of faith in Jesus Christ.

And there again, fellas, we're back to that subject of obedience. Everyone who is not under the authority of Jesus Christ is living in direct disobedience to God, even though they don't know it.

They don't have a clue. But that's exactly where they're coming from, and that's the way God views it. So when we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, we are coming also into a sphere not only of eternal life, but of obedience and blessing.

[31:30] And we are preparing ourselves for the best possible future. I trust that all of you here today have a personal relationship with Christ, and if you don't or if you have questions about it, ask your parents or talk to your coach, and I'm sure they'll be glad to give you any information that they have that will help you.

Thanks so much, guys, for being here this morning. Really appreciate your presence. Dave, do you have a comment or question? This is true.

Okay, so it will be during the tribulation period that they will 144,000 are preaching that they will finally accept it.

They will, and it will be an en masse thing. This is a Wiseman opinion, so be warned. It may not be worth much, but I am of the opinion from my limited understanding of biblical prophecy that in the latter days, and we may be in them.

I'm not saying we are, but we may well be. In the latter days, the people of Israel all over the world, and there are Jews in virtually every country of the world, people of Israel all over the world, in my estimation, are going to undergo what we would call a genuine revival

[32:57] There is going to be an enormous turn of Jews to Jesus as their Messiah, and the Antichrist is going to see a bullseye painted on the back of every Jew, and there is going to be an open season on them.

It will be a time of incredible persecution, the likes of which that will make the Holocaust pale by comparison. It's going to be open season on Jews worldwide, and the Antichrist will be at the head of that.

And prior to the Battle of Armageddon, which will be shaping up in Revelation 19, Christ is going to return, and he will defend his people, and he will fight for them as he fought in the days of old, and we are told in Romans chapter 11, and so all Israel will be saved, and that means the nation of Israel is going to come in faith of this very one whom their ancestors rejected thousands of years ago.

And Zechariah tells us that when Christ comes, that the Jew, Israel, will look upon him whom they pierced.

What's that mean? They will look upon their Messiah whom their ancestors nailed to that cross, and they will mourn. It will be a morning of repentance and regret and remorse over what they did to their long-awaited Messiah when he came, and he will defend his people.

[34:25] The Antichrist will be defeated, and the Battle of Armageddon or the Campaign of Armageddon will end in an incredible carnage and victory for the Lord Jesus. Are there any questions or comments anybody else has?

Anyone? Feel free. Roger? Did they have a saying when they baptized people on that day? I'm sure it wasn't in the name of the Father. Did they have a saying?

Yeah, there was a certain when they were baptized baptized or fell would they have said certain things? I think it was just in anticipation of the Messiah and his role.

And they were baptized in the name of Christ. And when Peter preached that message on the day of Pentecost and there were 3,000 Jews and by the way these were all Jews no Gentiles.

There were 3,000 that believed Peter's message and responded. And Peter said when they asked when Peter told them that they had crucified the Messiah and a number of them had come to that conviction that what Peter was saying was true these guys said and there were thousands of people there and Peter had their command he was teaching and they said well men and brethren what shall we do?

[35:49] What can we do now? Okay, so Jesus was the Messiah and we crucified him we killed him but we can't undo that we can't go back and do it over again what shall we do now?

And Peter said there's only one thing you can do you can repent you can change your mind you can admit you were wrong you can take responsibility you can own up to it you blew it are you big enough to admit that?

And if you are then you be baptized in the very name of the one whom you crucified and that will show whether or not your belief is genuine and there were 3,000 that did it was a monumental time in biblical history and it's all recorded there in Acts 2 and Acts 3 any other comments or questions?

Yes sir? So in Zechariah and also when it's repeated there in Revelation when it says look he's coming in the clouds and the whole world will see him even though it will pierce him I guess I was talking about the actual soldiers but that's the Jewish nation as a whole that is being referred to there That's a good question and I wish I had as good an answer I'm not all that sure I think that when he comes and Matthew 24 the Olivet Discourse spells this out too and we are told that when Christ returns he will come in such a way that the whole world is going to see him and we wonder how can that be?

Because when he comes he's coming to Edom he's coming to Basra he's coming to the area of Petra and he is going to march north from the south and the Antichrist and his army God says he's going to gather all nations together to battle and they are going to assemble on the field of Esdraelen the plains of Armageddon and there they will muster and they will march south and Christ will be coming from the south to the Mount of Olives and they are going to meet right in front of Jerusalem the valley of the Kidron and we are told that blood will flow to the horse's bridles this is Revelation 19 the time of carnage is going to be absolutely incredible and there this great last conflict of the ages will take place right before the holy city

Jerusalem and it will be amazing and when the scriptures say that every eye shall see him we don't know how that's going to be a reality because the earth will be engulfed at this time in a great darkness but let me tell you something when Christ returns for the second coming he brings his own light with him it is the light of the Shekinah the Shekinah glory that filled the temple when Solomon dedicated it and he is going to bring his own light with him and all the world will see him how can it be that all the world could see him how can they see well you can watch in your living room what's happening in Gaza right now and you can see the rockets going over into Israel as they launch them that will not be a problem I think every eye is going to see him because CNN is going to be there so is all the other networks

BBC is going to be there everybody is going to be there this is going to be monumental only they won't know that he's coming or when he's coming exactly but when he comes the whole world is going to see him and we are told that every eye shall see him and as someone has put it so well Jesus Christ is coming again and this time he will not be in a good mood other questions or comments anybody Dave Israel is going to be in a good way Israel I don't have any doubt about it Israel was from the beginning under Abraham Isaac and Jacob God's chosen people and he makes it very clear why he chose them he said God says I didn't choose you because you were the greatest nation in the world didn't choose you because you were the beggars didn't choose you because you were smart I set my love on you just because I loved you you see if God is going to choose anybody he has to choose somebody and God has always given himself to choosing people to using human instrumentality to accomplish his goal

God wants to use you to do something that nobody else can do only you can do it and I have no idea what it is but nobody else can do it because you are the only one who has the chemistry the gifts the abilities the opportunities to do what God is going to call you to do all you have to do is be open available and willing and say Lord here am I use me for whatever you want to use me for I want to be at your disposal that's an obedient heart well thank you again for being here I appreciate your presence so much