

A few words on the readings

Acts 8:26-end This account of the baptism of a gentile shows how the Early Church was led by the Holy Spirit and was ready to seize every opportunity of proclaiming the gospel. Philip was one of the seven Greek-speaking men of good standing chosen to be deacons (Acts 6:5) with the task of distributing food to the Greek-speaking widows. After Stephen's death the focus switches to Philip who flees from Jerusalem to Samaria preaching the gospel as he went and then moving on to Gaza where today's story takes place. The Ethiopian is reading from the Hebrew scriptures and Philip explains to him the significance of Isaiah's prophecy in terms of the good news of Jesus. Philip responds immediately to the Ethiopian's request for baptism. This is an important milestone in the development of the Church's outreach following on from Philip's success in Samaria. Philip's swift departure from the scene is similar to Christ's disappearance after breaking the bread with the two disciples at Emmaus but he continues his work of evangelisation as he pursues his journey to Caesarea.

1 John 4:7-40 John seeks to show that love and faith are linked together. God showed us his love by giving his only son to die upon a cross. Love not only comes from God, it is the very essence of God. Through our faith we are called to love one another. **We love because he first loved us.**

John 15:1-8 Jesus uses imagery already used by the prophets and especially Isaiah who compares the people of Israel to a vineyard. Jesus takes the comparison much further making the vine itself an image of himself in relation to God and ourselves. **He is the true vine but we are the branches** which are a living part of Christ's body and as such we are to produce fruit which shows his presence amongst us. In doing so we bring glory to God, our Father in Heaven