

# Philip: Learning to Trust

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[ 0 : 00 ] Learning to trust. I love that this is the theme today. And I think that our word, thank! you Sonia for bringing that. I could listen to you read all day. So much steady peace and clarity for us to hear what God is saying to us this morning. I just pray Lord as I speak this morning.

Amen. Holy Spirit would you come and open our hearts to hear what you would have us hear. Lord I offer to you in my hands what I've prepared and Lord I pray that you would take it and you would use it for your glory. In Jesus name. Amen. So Tim I didn't know you would be praying for TLG this morning, Transforming Lives for Good. Lots of you know it's the organisation that I now work for and we have in one of our booklets, one of our resources, a lovely activity that we do with children and it says who I would get to hold the rope for me and you can't probably see it very clearly but there's a little person hanging off a cliff holding desperately onto a rope and there's nobody at the top and we just do some colouring together and we chat about who might you like to be at the top of that cliff holding tight onto that rope and who would you trust to do that? So just hold that in mind as we explore this passage this morning and I'm going to invite you to just connect with your inner child or perhaps as an adult this is something that you find easy to do anyway. I'm going to ask you to use your imaginations. I think some of us just are like yes let's just imagine and probably some of us are like not so easy but I'm going to ask you to imagine yourself into this passage this morning. I've been doing the same. So I imagine being swept into this huge crowd we get to hear that there's 5,000 men there but we know that there would also have been lots of women and probably children who would have travelled following Jesus. Desperate to see what might happen next on this incredible adventure that was unfolding. Let's remember our perspective is 2,000 years later at this moment in time where we are now in our imaginations we're following Jesus wondering are we going to see any more miracles? Are we going to see anything else that is going to convince us that this man is the one chosen by God to be the Messiah? And now here we are in a spacious place. We're on the far shore of the Sea of Galilee. Sounds delightful but there's a problem because we've been travelling for a few days and we are hungry and we don't have enough food. In fact we don't have any food food to go round. Now Jesus' disciples are closest to him and we notice them. They're having a little bit of a chat and we overhear two interactions and what do we notice in our response as we hear this? Well firstly we hear Jesus asking Philip where to buy bread for all these people.

I think I see that Jesus cares. He cares that we're hungry and that we need to be fed. But Philip replies well we just can't. We would need more than half a year's wages in some translations that's how it comes through. More than half a year's wages to be able to buy enough bread for all these people. So it's a bit of a no-go. But then we hear Andrew. Andrew draws Peter's attention, Jesus' attention to this young lad who actually does have a little bit of food. He's got five loaves and a couple of fish.

Now what are you thinking at this point? Are you thinking well we've seen some miracles happen maybe maybe we might have another miracle or are you thinking Andrew you're mad?

[ 5 : 01 ] as a child he's got five bread two fish. He's probably quite capable. When it was a child it might have been kind of a young teenager. I've got two well not only one of them is still a teenager but I'm thinking could easily get through five loaves of bread in about five minutes.

So perhaps it's a bit irrelevant and a bit unhelpful Andrew that you're pointing out that there's a child with five loaves and two fishes. But before we know it what are we seeing? We're seeing Jesus break this bread, give thanks to God for it and then it's starting to be distributed and it goes on and on and on and on. In fact we hear that there was more than enough for everyone and then at the end Jesus asks his disciples to just gather up all the leftovers.

That blows my mind. It's so confusing that there's stuff left over enough for 12 basketfuls. I like the numbers here. It's very specific isn't it? Five loaves, two fish, feed more than 5,000 people, 12 baskets left over. Crazy. What have we just seen happen? An absolute miracle.

Something outside of what we can understand or imagine. What have we noticed? And what does God want us to notice today and learn from this?

Well interestingly when Jesus asked Philip about where to buy the bread, thinking as if there's just going to be like a corner shop, we're told that he only asked this to stretch Philip's faith.

[ 7 : 01 ] To stretch Philip's faith. He already knew what he was going to do. Jesus of course already knew what he was going to do.

And Philip uses his logic and his kind of human perspective of what he sees in front of him to conclude that it's actually impossible to feed everybody.

So that's the first thing I notice. And I wonder how often do we immediately engage our logical thinking, our human perspective of the resources that we can see in front of us and swiftly conclude or assume that this situation is impossible.

It's not going to change. But then there's Andrew's response. A bit of a contrast. He notices this small boy with barely any food, but at least there's something.

A starting point. So I wonder if faith was stirring in Andrew. If he was remembering recent experiences, seeing Jesus heal a paralyzed man in Jerusalem.

[ 8 : 15 ] Or that son that he brought back to life from the dead. Or the miracle in Cana, when Jesus had turned all that water into wine.

Andrew does the noticing. He looks around and he sees what there is, not what there isn't. And the young boy simply offers what he has in his hands.

And Jesus does the rest. And the result is multiplication and abundance. Not a little bit more.

Multiplication and abundance. How often are we seeking God's intervention?

Wanting him to bring change to things that we are facing? Quite often would be my response. Quite often I'm having that conversation with God.

[ 9 : 22 ] But how often do I forget that what he is wanting is for me to notice what I've already got in my hands? What little do I have that I haven't really noticed that I can bring before him no matter how small and trust him to multiply it or grow it.

Maybe in a miraculous, incredible, in the moment kind of way. Or maybe steadily over time when we get to then one day look back and see, oh yeah, I remember that moment in time when just that tiniest bit of faith that I was managing to muster encouraged me in my spirit to offer to God what I have in my hands.

And we see the fruit. I believe that Jesus is always asking us to look at what we've got in our hands no matter how inadequate it might seem or how inadequate we may feel.

And in today's passage I think something that I am learning again is through the actions of a small child that child-like response.

Here. Yeah, have it. Have what I've got. He gives all that he's got to Jesus. He doesn't say oh go on then you can just have one loaf I'll keep the rest.

[ 10 : 58 ] He clearly gives it all to Jesus in the hope that it can be so much more. So again I wonder how often are we so focused on what is in our hands and judging it to be a very very limited resource or insignificant offering that we forget to look up to have our head lifted by God and see his invitation to bring it fully totally and offer it.

or perhaps we recognise the feeling of knowing and noticing what's in our hands we can see what's there but we cannot quite trust God enough to let it go to bring it to offer it and trust that he is able to do so much more than we can do alone.

Maybe faith in action is this learning to trust that if we take the little we have and offer it to Jesus it's this very act of obedience and hope that we'll see God change the circumstances and the situations that we've written off as impossible to change.

No point in trying. So let's just pause and just consider just in your own spirit what areas of life perhaps that you've noticed over the years or right at the moment do we struggle to trust Jesus with?

Where are we holding on just a little bit too tightly to our own resources desperately just trying to make them enough for the situations we're facing when really we need a miracle.

[ 13 : 21 ] as I thought about this I felt God prompt me to share three little things that I noticed have noticed over the years so my background is in teaching I loved teaching I thought I would teach forever and when we had Tom our youngest child I had an experience that I hadn't experienced before I felt a very clear call on my life and I had help from others around me to discern that and it felt like it was a call to the church and in the end I concluded that it must have been God because it really wasn't something that I was planning or particularly thinking would be like a next step for me but in that period of time something very practical happened as I sort of like prayed and journeyed a little bit about what would that look like to maybe move and work for the church

I explored ministry it definitely was like full-time ministry whatever that's called ordination but it wasn't the right time for that God had other plans but I was thinking practically you know I'm supposed to be going back to work God and in that time a couple from our church came forward and without knowing our circumstances fully I don't think at the time offered to support us financially a little bit each month so I didn't go back to work I started doing quite a lot of work with the church but it wasn't a job and we had this financial support from this couple but what I didn't know at that time as well there was something called child tax credit and we then became eligible for this and cut a longer story short the first month that we should have had my salary back for teaching I hadn't gone back to teaching we had the support that we were being given by this couple and this child tax credit that was new to us and do you know the amount that came into our bank account that month was exactly the same to the pound that was my teaching salary if I'd gone back to teaching it was such an exact thing it felt like something that God was showing us trust me and you will be resourced for this period of time and then

I found in my the oldest Bible I've got at the moment from when I came to faith I would say I came into a relationship with God in my early 20s when I did an alpha course and I bought this Bible at that time and then I found in Proverbs where it says trust in the Lord with all your heart and it says baby and that was after Peter and I had got married and we were hoping that we would have a family we weren't sure if that was going to happen and someone read this verse to me and I've got it underlined and we now have Martha who's 25 so I just remembered that that was somewhere in my Bible and another time that I felt I wanted to share where I was pregnant for a second time and had a lot of complications and the song I'm going to trust in God Martha was little at that time she used to love that song and all the actions but those words are just all over my journal at that time because we needed to trust and the last time or last thing that

I wanted to share was an experience I had when my dad was dying and I didn't know where dad was at with faith he was quite young he was just 60 and I was driving up the seafront and it was such a tangible experience I was praying I was kind of crying out to God I need to know God I need to know like where is dad with faith and is he you know is there something beyond this life for him and I felt it wasn't an audible voice it was like that where you hear God in your spirit as strong as if it's an audible voice and I felt like God said to me you don't need to know Kate you need to trust and that phrase has stuck with me that's 17 18 years ago now you don't need to know you need to trust so for me remembering

God's faithfulness just sharing just a few nuggets of times that I remember where trust was so important remembering those is so important for me it helps strengthen my trust journaling helps me with that keeping notes of kind of what God is saying in this day or this week or this year and being able to look back and see patterns others have different things I know but how else do we grow in trust how else do we learn to trust well thankfully we are not alone in this challenge ask anyone around you and they will have a conversation with you about when it's hard to trust and how they hope to or how they have grown in trust so community together doing life together doing faith together journeying together in faith is so important and then praise God for his word for scripture because it is full of people just like you and I and very helpfully

[ 19 : 58 ] I think at the back just look up the word trust and here are all the verses and I was looking through them yesterday reading them all through just these ones that have been pointed out here like reading about how in 1 Samuel David strengthened himself with trust in his God and how in 2 Kings Hezekiah put his whole trust in the God of Israel and God held fast to him through all his adventures I could go on and on and you don't need me to do that I think all you need me to do is encourage you to either go to a Bible or get online on the Bible on your phone and look up the word trust and allow time for those scriptures to speak to you but the one that stuck out for me yesterday is in the message version in Romans 8 and it says this

I felt like God was speaking this to me and I'm sharing it with you take what you will those who think they can do it on their own end up obsessed with measuring their own moral muscle but never get around to exercising it in real life those who trust God's action in them find that God's spirit is in them living and breathing God obsession with self in these matters is a dead end attention to God leads us out into the open into a spacious free life and that reminded me of our verse this morning talking about being out in a spacious place that can be a real space or it can be a picture of where God wants to draw us to a space that feels spacious enough for us to be safe with him that felt safety so we can grow in our trust of him praying sitting with

God sharing our hearts listening building relationship and wondering in that way of spiritual connection builds trust so we've got one another we've got his word we've got prayer and as we worship and give thanks let's be asking God to strengthen this trust in us and underpinning all of these rhythms is an attitude of being willing to surrender taking what's in our hands and being able to release it surrendering our own worries our resources our circumstances our relationships to the one who is able to do abundantly so much more than we can ever hope or imagine so just as we come towards an end

I want us to just jump back and think about this notion of there being more than enough because that caught my attention and in 2 Corinthians chapter 9 it says this God is able to bless you abundantly so that in all things at all times having all that you need you will abound in every good work as it is written they have freely scattered their gifts to the poor their righteousness endures forever now he who supplies the seed to the sower and the bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge your harvest of righteousness you will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God

Philip's doubt was met with Jesus' multiplication of a limited human resource that was offered to him and because of that he shared a miraculous and abundant provision that fed everyone and there was more than enough let's remember that Philip's lack of trust was gently pointed out to him by Jesus asking a pertinent question I love that so I wonder is Jesus asking us any questions this morning is he asking us to notice what's in our hands is he asking us to notice the need to release what's in our hands to him to trust him with it more to choose him to be at the top holding our rope is he asking us what does more than enough look like and what does it mean to be generous with the enough that we have that is left over for us to share so we're just going to pause and before we draw our time to a close with one last time of worship through song in the quiet let's ask God is there a question he is asking us this morning to stir some noticing in us

[ 26 : 56 ] Lord we pray that you would help us as we go from this place notice what you're asking us today how may we grow in our faith learn to trust you more notice what's in our hands and offer it to you wholly Jesus would you help us we ask in your name Amen Amen Thank you.