

Our journey together...

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Date: 03 May 2026

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[0 : 00] May the words from my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable to you, O my Lord.!

And that's the passage that begins, like a sheep he was led to the slaughter. So prompted by the Spirit, Philip asks the man whether he understands what he's reading.

The man says he needs a guide. He needs a guide. And that's sometimes what we always need in life, isn't it?

Sometimes we just come to a bit of a difficult part of our lives and we need somebody or something to help us through.

In this case, it was Philip. And he was a guide. So Philip used that opportunity to speak.

[1 : 22] And he used that opportunity to speak about Jesus. And as a result of Philip speaking to him, the man immediately asked to be baptized.

Right there and then. After he baptized him, Philip turns back towards Jerusalem. And he proclaimed the good news everywhere.

We can read that. And the man, the Ethiopian, carried on with his journey. That's basically it in a nutshell. But I'm here to talk.

I'm here to talk about the journey. Our journey. And you know, sometimes even stepping out of your own front door can be an adventure, can't it?

It really can. Encountering somebody on a journey. But encountering somebody on a journey might change our lives. You may be saying to me, what do you mean by that?

[2 : 29] Well, that's what we're here for today. We're here today because we know each other. We're on a journey together. And traveling with others can bring new insights.

Now, I've known Jim here for quite a while. I can remember when Jim came to my church at the time in Farn to do his training.

So, I've known Jim for quite a while. And he's given me quite a few insights along the way. He's given me quite a lot of encouragement along the way. Which is great.

That's what we're all about. And it also can bring friendships as well. But Philip, Philip the Apostle and the Ethiopian, they were briefly traveling together.

Just briefly. And that had a huge significance for both of them. Both were on their own travels.

[3 : 36] Both were going to, they both had a mission in mind. But after meeting each other, both of them changed direction.

They both changed direction. And in Philip's case, that was a complete reversal. From going south to going north. And that's how the word tells us.

He reached out to the ends of the earth. I find it funny that people refer to the north as the ends of the earth. We get a bit like that here in this country, don't we?

But, the Ethiopian, he came to Jerusalem to worship. And he went home rejoicing.

He really was rejoicing. He'd been baptized in the name of our Lord God. He's a great pastor. He's a great pastor. Who, as Peter expresses it, shows no partiality.

[4 : 47] None at all. And we're instructed not to be partial as well. It says in the Bible, we're instructed not to make a distinction between them and us.

Okay, so that's a clear instruction. So they're on a journey together. Now, let me give you a little story. Let me give you a story about a journey. There was once a schoolboy who was very, very upset.

He used to get the train in to school. And for reasons, his dad, it's unbeknownst to me, his dad lost his job. And he couldn't afford to send his son to school on a train in the morning.

So what he decided to do was put him on the free bus. So this young boy was quite upset with this. Couldn't understand it.

But what he didn't know was that one of the schoolgirls he met on that bus eventually was his wife in later life.

[6 : 01] Okay? So it's just to demonstrate again that our Lord works in the ways that only he knows the outcome.

And I'm sure if you thought deeply about it enough, you would have similar experiences yourself in your own lives.

Sometimes something totally out of the ordinary can change our lives completely. At the time, it didn't appear to be a nudge from the Holy Spirit that encouraged Philip to hop up on that chariot and speak to the Ethiopian.

However, in retrospect, they both saw the hand of God at work there and then.

And I would like to say to you today that sometimes we do not know what a journey can bring us.

We don't know who we're going to meet.

[7 : 18] We don't know what our deeds, our words, our actions, how much of a profound effect that could have on somebody's life.

Somebody's purpose. And I would like to encourage us today to pray before we set out on any journey. Any journey.

Not simply for safety or travelling masses or anything like that. But for those that we might meet on the way. How about this for another story then?

And this might chime with some of you. There was once a young farm boy. He used to drive a pickup truck into town with all his vegetables on it.

And there was going to be a meeting in a tent outside the town. So what all the folks did was they thought, right, we'll get Bill to take us to the meeting in his pickup truck.

[8 : 29] We can all sit on that. It's a cheap way of transport. So Billy, he did that. And he took all the folks to this tent for this Christian convention.

And he thought when he got there, well, I may as well go and see what this fella's got to say. So he did. He went in.

Now, he didn't realise what kind of an impact that would have on him. But Billy, the guy that was driving the pickup truck, was actually Billy Graham.

Okay? He was actually Billy Graham. And Billy went on to preach to millions around the world.

You'll know that better than me. He preached to presidents.

He preached to world leaders. He preached to many churches. And those churches were reinvigorated. They had a mini revival.

[9 : 35] And there was those in those churches that responded to his call. They got reinvigorated as well. And some of them got out of their seats and gave their lives to Jesus there.

And then at the meetings that Billy's done. You'll have seen that. So my plea to you today is next time you're on a journey, be aware.

Be aware of the folks you meet along that road. And it doesn't need to be a physical road. It could be a meeting.

It could be anything. Think about this. How will you encourage them? Even the smallest act or a kind word can have a huge effect.

Massive effect on folks. Somebody said to me that the tongue in the body is the strongest muscle that we have.

[10 : 46] Just be careful how we use it. Amen. For I, the Lord your God, will hold your right hand.

Saying to you, fear not. I will help you. And then if we go into the book of Hebrews.

Which is in the New Testament. We can say, we can very boldly say. The Lord is my helper. The Lord is my helper.

I will not fear. What can man do to me? So these are passages I've taken. Just to illustrate what I was telling you earlier.

That sometimes in life, we need a helper. Don't we? We really do. But that comes with a wee bit of a warning as well.

[11 : 49] And I can remember one preacher has written. Don't try to hold God's hand. Let him know yours.

Let him hold yours. Let him do the holding. And you do the trusting. And I think, I think that is a beautiful reminder.

That sometimes, we've just got to trust in the Lord. And the Lord's got a hold of us. We don't need to be concerned about anything else.

He's got a hold of us. Let me try and illustrate that to you. How many of us have been to the circus in our lives?

Come on. Put your hands up if you've been. Quite a few of you. That's good. Excellent. So how many of you have witnessed the trapeze artists swinging above you?

[12:56] It's quite spectacular, isn't it? It really is very, very spectacular. And then you've got that flyer going right the way across and all the rest of it.

Somersaults, you name it. And that is quite outstanding. But we've got to remember one thing. That the most important part, the most important person up there in the circus, is not the person that's doing all the acrobatics.

It's the catcher. It's the catcher. He's the big guy. He's the big guy that the lights aren't on.

He's the guy with the big hairy arms. He's the guy that catches the flyer or the trapeze artist. And if he misses, it's just a disaster.

It really is. It's a disaster. And I want to say to you this morning, that our Lord Jesus is the catcher in our lives.

[14:10] He's the catcher. What about a fireman's lift? Does anybody know what a fireman's lift is? Oh, we've got somebody at the back there that knows what it is.

Well, I've done it enough times in this rugby pitch out back here for training. But it's when somebody puts you over the shoulders and they take your arm and they lock you into the legs.

So you can't get off. The fireman's in control. You want to get off at times.

You really do at times when that fireman's got you or in the case of the rugby pitch there, it's when the other guy's got you. But you don't fall. You don't fall when you're in a fireman's lift because the fireman has got you.

The fireman again is our Lord Jesus Christ. And you might feel like letting go.

[15:17] You might say to yourself, I just want to lie down. He's got you. The Lord has got you.

He's saying to you, just rest. Just relax. I've got you on this journey that we're in together. I've got you.

Together. He's saying we can do this. Whatever you're going through in your life just now, we can do this. And we will. So I want you to remember the capture.

I want you to remember him. His name is Jesus Christ. He's there for you. He's never dropped anybody in his life. And he's not about to drop you.

Amen.