



## A Reflection for Fifth Sunday of Easter Readings - Acts 8. 26-40 & John 15. 1-8

*Then an angel of the Lord said to Philip, 'Get up and go towards the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.' (This is a wilderness road.) So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. Then the Spirit said to Philip, 'Go over to this chariot and join it.' So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, 'Do you understand what you are reading?' He replied, 'How can I, unless someone guides me?' And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him.*

Philip is on the road from Jerusalem to Gaza. It is while he is on the road that he overhears the words of the prophet Isaiah being read out loud. On hearing these texts Philip is prompted, may be compelled to engage with the speaker. The text for him is common ground that offers a reason for a conversation to be started. As he makes eye contact with the Ethiopian he asks a question of the man on the road.

Philip asks if the reader of these words understands what he is reading. It would seem logical to conclude that the way in which the prophetic words were being spoken led Philip to consider a lack of understanding. This would be a rational deduction to make. Therefore, as someone wishing to support a person on their spiritual journey of discovery, Philip offers to help.

The Ethiopian does not understand and he is at odds with the text. He possibly may need more background information that includes the contextual religiosity in order to start to understand the prophetic messages that are to be found in Isaiah. Isaiah a large piece of writing that is to be found in the Old Testament.

There is so much that we too may empathise with as we look to the experience of The Ethiopian who has a thirst to read scripture but yet on doing so needs guidance to reveal the truth that is to be discovered in the prophetic words of Isaiah. To fully understand The Jesus Story we too need to have knowledge of the prophetic messages from The Old Testament. For Jesus is the realisation of what a nation had been waiting for. A nation that had been remembering every time the scriptures were opened. It is Jesus himself who declares that the words of the prophet have reached their fulfilment in him. Let us consider the ways in which we too can gather on the road in support of each other as guides and also as those seeking guidance.

Thank you for reading and keep safe.

The Reverend Nick Devenish

*Adrian's music choice for Fifth Sunday of Easter  
Jig Fugue- Buxtehude*

*If you are able, join me for a service of holy communion from The Priory.  
Available from 10.00am. Please go to the Cartmel Priory Facebook or YouTube page.*

*Painting - 'Christ the Vine' by Tanja Butler*