

The Twelve: Walk A Mile in Their Shoes

Philip: A Pessimistic Pragmatist

John 6:1-9

What we know about Philip...

- **Name Means:** In the Greek, it means 'lover of horses'
- **Occupation:** Fisherman (most likely)
- **Home Town:** Bethsaida (Northern shore of the Sea of Galilee)
- **Hellenist:** Philip would have been part of the Jewish population that had adopted much of Greek culture following the conquest of Alexander the Great in the 4th Century BC.

"The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip & said to him, 'Follow Me.' Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew & Peter. Philip found Nathanael & said to him, 'We have found him of whom Moses in the Law & also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.'"

John 1:43-45

"Philip was the classic 'process person.' He was a facts-and-figures guy—a by the book, practical-minded, non-forward-thinking type of individual. He was the kind who tends to be a corporate killjoy, pessimistic, narrowly focused, sometimes missing the big picture, often obsessed with identifying reasons things can't be done rather than finding ways to do them. He was predisposed to be a pragmatist & a cynic – & sometimes a defeatist—rather than a visionary." **John MacArthur**

Main Idea: Without Faith in Jesus, It is Impossible to Faithfully Follow Jesus

Three Parts of Philip's Pessimistic Pragmatism:

I. The Scene

"After this Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. And a large crowd was following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing on the sick. Jesus went up on the mountain, & there he sat down with his disciples. Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand." **John 6:1-4**

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, & do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, & he will make straight your paths." **Proverbs 3:5-6**

II. The Test

"Lifting up his eyes, then, & seeing that a large crowd was coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, 'Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?' He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he would do." **John 6:5-6**

"And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists & that he rewards those who seek him."

Hebrews 11:6

III. The Results

"Philip answered him, 'Two hundred denarii worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to get a little.' One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, 'There is a boy here who has five barley loaves & two fish, but what are they for so many?'" **John 6:7-9**

*"Now when it was evening, the disciples came to him & said, 'This is a desolate place, & the day is now over; send the crowds away to go into the villages & buy food for themselves.' But Jesus said, 'They need not go away; you give them something to eat.' They said to him, 'We have only five loaves here & two fish.'" **Matthew 14:15-17***

"His thoughts were pessimistic, analytical, & pragmatic-completely materialistic & earthbound...Philip was obsessed with mundane matters & therefore overwhelmed by the impossibility of the immediate problem." **John MacArthur**

"The reason why there was a failure in Philip's faith was because he had calculated without Christ...Jesus was far more grieved over the lack of faith than He was the lack of food. Nothing pleases God like faith..." **James Merritt**

The most disappointing & destructive part of Philip's lack of faith in the POWER of Jesus is that it brought lack of faith in the PERSON of Jesus.

*"Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go & prepare a place for you, I will come again & will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way to where I am going.' Thomas said to him, 'Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?' Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him & have seen him.' Philip said to him, 'Lord, show us the Father, & it is enough for us.' Jesus said to him, 'Have I been with you so long, & you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father?' Do you not believe that I am in the Father & the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father & the Father is in me, or else believe on the account of the works themselves.'" **John 14:1-11***

Word of Encouragement: If you know the story of the feeding of the 5,000, you know that, in spite of Philip's lack of faith, Jesus still let him take part in a miracle. Jesus took the 5 loaves & 2 fish, blessed them and fed the multitudes. There was enough left over to fill 12 baskets for the disciples.

Will I place my faith in God or instead place faith in myself?

"The righteous shall live by faith." **Galatians 3:11b**

Sources and Further Reading Opportunities:

- *Bible Exposition Commentary* – Warren Wiersbe (1996)
- *New Bible Commentary* – D.A. Carson (1994)
- *New American Commentary Series* – Craig Bloomberg (1992)
- *Daily Study Bible Series* – William Barclay (1976)
- *Word Pictures in the New Testament* – A.T. Robertson (1933)
- *MacArthur New Testament Commentary* - John MacArthur (1987)
- *Tony Evans Book of Illustrations* – Tony Evans (2009)
- *Matthew Henry's Commentary* – Matthew Henry (1994)
- *Tyndale Bible Dictionary* – W.A. Elwell (2001)
- *Twelve Ordinary Men* – John MacArthur