

**Prayer Meeting Address**  
given at  
**Old Baptist Chapel, Chippenham**  
by **Mr. G. D. Buss**  
on **Wednesday evening, 2<sup>nd</sup> September, 2010**

**Text:** *“Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?”*  
*John 14, verse 9.*

Of the twelve apostles – eleven of them being in the election of grace, and the one sad, solemn case, Judas, the son of perdition – little is known about the disciple, Philip, in our text this evening. Yet, as we read in John 1 concerning his call, (and it was a very precious word that John was inspired to record) we read: “Jesus would go forth into Galilee.” And there He found Philip. There we have a very determined act on the part of the Saviour; a determination to seek out and find this man, Philip, and bring him to be one of His followers. Only two words did it: “Follow Me.” Those two words were accompanied with such divine power, because they were the words of a King. “Where the word of a king is, there is power.” There is omnipotence and authority that cannot be resisted nor gainsayed. Thus Philip became a follower; one of the early followers of the dear Saviour in His ministry. And yet we find him still, as it were, a slow learner. Not that I have any stones to throw at Philip, because, dear friends, I think if we were aware of how much there is to learn by the blessed Spirit, and how little we have learned, if anything, we too would have to say: ‘Philip, we are yet in the same class as you.’ Slow learners. But, the Lord Jesus Christ deals very graciously with this slow learner, Philip. And I am thankful that the Lord does deal graciously with such. How tender He is with the lambs!

“...to Him the weakest is dear as the strong.”

*J. Hart*

Philip was just as dear to the Lord as Peter was. Peter, who could so boldly say: “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Philip was just as dear, but, with Philip, his experience had not brought him quite the same depth of comfort that Peter and perhaps John himself had. Where there is weak faith, there is weak comfort, and where there is stronger faith, there is stronger comfort. That is why the Lord Jesus Christ exhorted His disciples to pray for more faith. Oh that we might be praying for that blessed gift to be more abundantly bestowed; to be more settled in our minds, and more established in our thoughts concerning this glorious Person, the Lord Jesus Christ!

But, weak though Philip’s faith was, (and we know that, from when the five thousand were about to be fed. It was Philip who did the calculating and tried to measure how much bread might be needed and pondered where they might get it from, and was completely baffled) yet we read of him on two occasions bringing sinners to Christ. It was Philip who went and found Nathanael, as we read in chapter 1 of this gospel. “Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found Him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph. And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.” And it was Philip who brought the Greeks to the Lord Jesus, who had said: “Sir, we would see Jesus.” He found Andrew, and together they brought those enquiring, seeking Greeks to the Saviour. Philip was not an inactive disciple. He was one who was moved with the love of Christ and one who was used by God in bringing sinners to Christ.

But here, Philip is baffled. The great point that was exercising Philip was this – the Father. Let me just remind you of what I have told you many times. The God whom you and I adore, (if we do adore Him, and if we adore Him aright we have been led of the Spirit so to do, for none can adore Him without the Spirit’s work) is a Triune God. That is, a Trinity of Persons. We do not believe in *three* Gods. We believe in *one* God, but one God in three Persons. We read of God the Father. We read of God the Son. We read of God the Holy Ghost. It is *the same* God who is God the Father. It is *the same* God who is God the Son. It is

*the same* God who is God the Holy Spirit. Yet, (and this is a deep mystery) they are distinct in their personality. There is the Father, whom Philip, in our text, desires to see. There is the true and proper Son, eternally begotten of the Father. There is the Holy Spirit, eternally proceeding from both the Father and the Son. These are deep mysteries – you and I are not called to explain them. We never could. But, when God gives that precious gift of faith, there is an embracing of these truths, for we see in those three glorious Persons the whole of salvation accomplished. The Benediction that we often repeat reminds us of the love of the Father, the grace of the Son and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost. Three strands of salvation – electing love, redeeming love and quickening love from this one God in those three Persons.

But here, the Lord Jesus Christ had been answering Thomas, who himself was baffled when the Lord Jesus Christ had said: “The way ye know.” Thomas had said: “We know not whither Thou goest; and how can we know the way?” The Lord Jesus said: “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.” Then He expanded on that blessed truth: “If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also: and from henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him.” Now Philip joins in this conversation (if I may use that word reverently) with the dear Saviour. “Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.” What Philip wanted to see was something tangible with his natural eyes. He had seen the Son. But now the Lord declares a most blessed and sacred truth. We will come to the way He lovingly rebuked Philip in a moment, but just to reiterate this truth: “He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?” God the Father has revealed Himself in more than one way. First of all, there are His creative works. There is no doubt that the handiwork of God is seen there. Those who have believing eyes discern the Father’s hand in creation.

“Nature with open volume stands,  
To spread her Maker’s praise abroad,  
And every labour of His hands,  
Shows something worthy of a God.”

*I. Watts*

Then there is the written Word of God, which is an even closer and more distinct revelation. Blessed Book that is, as well!

But then we come to the most distinct of all revelations that God will give. That is Christ Himself. He is spoken of as the “express image” of the Father. So closely related are the Father and the Son, that he who views the Son by faith, and the glory of that dear Son of God, is also viewing the glory of the Father. This is a deep mystery, but one which the Lord sets before Philip. “He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.” One of our hymns expresses it very beautifully. It speaks of the Father’s throne above, and our Lord sitting on it:

“Adoring saints around Him stand,  
And thrones and powers before Him fall;  
The God shines gracious through the Man,  
And sheds sweet glories on them all.”

*I. Watts*

It is through God the Son that God the Father shines, with all the glory He has, upon sinners saved by grace. This is a wonderful truth, because this is the way God has made Himself approachable – in and through the dear Saviour. “No man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.”

But now, poor Philip (and we do not throw stones at him) seems not yet to have grasped this blessed truth. “Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip?” This could be said to many a child of God who often stands in doubt about one thing and another – their standing; their relationship with God. If God were to say this to you, this evening hour, how far back would He have to go? For some of you it is many, many years since He called you by grace. And though you have been through many, many changes, how long a time He has been with you! Trouble, joy, sorrow, affliction, temptation; prayers have been answered, promises have been fulfilled, deliverances have been granted – oh, child of God – He has been with you! He has never left you! True, you have not always seen Him. Often he has hid

his face behind a cloud. But, look back. Trace it out. How “long time” has He been with some of us now, we humbly trust! And yet, what do we know of Him? “Yet hast thou not known Me, Philip?” The way the Lord deals with His dear people is to teach them to know Him. “That I may know Him,” was Paul’s desire. The prophet said: “They shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest.” The dear Saviour Himself said that to know God is life eternal, as it is also to know His dear Son. This knowledge is something which God brings to pass. It is through experience. It is not by learning it out of the commentaries; though they have their place in instructing the Church. But, dear friends, it is by experience. One man said: ‘I have learned by experience.’ Have you? What have you learned of this great God, by experience? What did Philip learn? Philip had seen the five loaves and the two fishes broken, and five thousand fed. Philip had seen our Lord walk on the water towards that boat in which he and the other disciples were. Philip had seen the Lord stand in the midst of the boat (on another occasion) and command winds and waves to be silent. Philip had heard precious sermons. He had watched lepers being cleansed. What more, we say, could Philip have seen?

“O my distrustful heart,  
How small thy faith appears!  
But greater, Lord, Thou art,  
Than all my doubts and fears.  
Did Jesus once upon me shine?  
Then Jesus is for ever mine.”

*W. Hammond*

“Consider how great things He hath done for you.” Look back, believer, over the months and years of your experience of God’s goodness. Has He ever failed you? No. You have failed Him; how we have failed Him! But He has never failed us. “Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip?” And, I believe, just as it was with the two on the road to Emmaus, so it was here. Philip’s eyes were opened as the Lord spoke to him so lovingly, so tenderly. We read: “their eyes were opened, and they knew Him.” They recognised

Him; who He is – the dear son of God, in a nature like our own, sin excepted.

“Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip?” I think it might be a good prayer for many of us here tonight to beg the Lord to so increase our faith and deepen our knowledge that we may know what Peter spoke of: “Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” I always think of my late mother, with this text. Only three weeks before she died, she received a sermon on this text through the post. She had been in great distress of mind and soul, and felt she wanted something clear concerning her salvation. She read that sermon, and it was such a help. It opened her eyes as to what the Lord had been to her over many, many years. She felt lovingly rebuked for the doubts, the fears and the unbelief that had so plagued her mind. The Lord cleared her sight, and in three weeks she was in glory. “Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip?” I do believe some of us here do know His voice, and we would know if He spoke. We do know His presence, and we would know if we felt it again. And we do know Him as that prayer-hearing, prayer-answering God; that promise-giving and promise-fulfilling God. We would be liars if we denied it. “Having therefore obtained help of God” we continue. May the Lord deepen our knowledge, establish our faith and keep us close to Him. And may we be so graciously persuaded of this truth that it may be as it was with the disciples: “they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.” May God add His blessing.

*Amen.*