



VILLAGE BIBLE CHURCH SUGAR GROVE CAMPUS

Come and See:
Philip, the Humble Leader

FOLLOW ME: THE STORY OF DISCIPLESHIP

Various Scriptures
Phil Chapman | July 2, 2023



Today we get to continue in our series called “Follow Me,” where we are exploring the lives of Jesus’ first disciples. We’ve been stepping into the sandals of these apostles, learning Who Jesus is from their vantage point and seeing how they’ve grown and moved forward in their ministries. We’ve even been covering some of the historical information available on how they continued to persevere in their faith.

Pastor Tim has already led us through the exploration of three of the disciples—Peter, Thomas and Judas Iscariot. He’s identified how Peter’s impulsive faith, Thomas’ honest doubt and even Judas’ tragic betrayal still speak to us today. Pastor Steve Lombardo was here this past week and preached on the apostle John, the man who started as the Son of Thunder and who became the apostle of love.

Next week Pastor Tim will be back in this pulpit, teaching on James, the brother of John. Today I have the privilege of preaching on a less well-known apostle, but definitely not less important—and probably the best-named apostle of all—the apostle Philip.

We’re going to be jumping around to several Bible verses, so get ready. We’ll rock and roll around the Scriptures. Right off the bat I want to point out that we have four Philips in the New Testament, so let’s make sure we’re talking about the same Philip. We’re referring to the apostle Philip, one of the original 12 disciples of Jesus. He’s often confused with Philip the evangelist, or even Philip the deacon, who is mentioned numerous times in the book of Acts. Specifically, if you look near the end of Acts 8, you’ll see a story about Philip the evangelist being called by the Holy Spirit. He goes out into the desert and preaches to the Ethiopian eunuch, leading him to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, after which he baptizes him. This is not the Philip we are talking about today.

There are two other Philips from the Herodian dynasty. Both were sons of Herod the Great. One of the Philips is mentioned;; the other is only alluded to and is mentioned in other historical writings. Herod the tetrarch was actually a pretty good leader; the other Philip, not so good. He actually played a part in the beheading of John the Baptist.

So our attention today will be on the apostle Philip. There were 12 apostles who can be thought of in three different groups. Pastor Tim has mentioned this previously, but let me reiterate it now. The first group is Peter, James, John and Andrew. They were

PHILIPS IN THE BIBLE			
APOSTLE	EVANGELIST	HEROD	HERODIAN'S HUSBAND
Matthew 10:3, Mark 3:18, Luke 6:14, John 1:3-46, John 6:5-7, John 12:21-22, John 14:8-9, Acts 1:13	Acts 6:1-6, Acts 8:5-8, Acts 8:26-40, Acts 21:8-9	Matthew 14:3, Mark 6:17, Luke 3:1, Luke 3:19	Matthew 14:3-4, Mark 6:17-18, Luke 3:19

kind of the inner group, the men who were closest to Jesus. They're named in a couple different orders. Sometimes it's Peter, James, John and Andrew. Sometimes it's Peter, Andrew, James and John. Always however, Peter is first. He was the leader of that group, as well as the one who led the whole group of disciples.

The second group is made up of Philip, Nathanael (whose name is also Bartholomew), Matthew and Thomas. The order of this group's names changes throughout the Gospels, except that Philip is always first. Philip is therefore always the fifth disciple named, so we can deduce that he was the leader of this second group.

Our goal today is not to learn from this Philip; our goal is to learn from the Holy Spirit. We want Him to do the teaching, Him to do the driving of whatever the message is to be. But our goal is definitely that we will move forward in our walk with Jesus Christ, or maybe even come to know Jesus for the first time today. The entire sermon message of the Bible is, "Follow Me," which is exactly where we're going to do right off the bat.

Back in the summer of 1991, I was getting ready for my junior year of high school. I was at the neighbor's house, sitting around a kitchen table with a bunch of friends who graduated a couple years before me. We were enjoying a cheese and sausage Tombstone pizza, just having random conversations. I wouldn't remember the conversation at all except that my friend Janae, who was going to be a sophomore in high school, had just attended the Family and Youth Bible Camp. That's the camp we're getting ready for at the end of July. She had a new-found love for Jesus Christ.

We were in Janae's home and when she walked into her kitchen, coming home from that camp, she just started sharing the good news of Jesus Christ. Everyone scattered out of that room as fast as possible—with the exception of me. For whatever reason, that day I could hear Jesus saying, "Follow Me." You see, all my life I had known God, or trusted that there was God. I never denied that there was a God. I remember playing baseball in the back yard. While waiting my turn at bat, I'd look up and see the sun rays coming through the clouds, thinking, "Okay, God. Let this one be a home run." I remember truly thinking that was what I needed to do. I needed to talk to God.

I didn't grow up in a Christian home. I lived in a country town called Helmer, just outside of Newark. They had a church there—and every year they had a two-week Vacation Bible School. My mom, being the wise mother she was with four boys, sent us to that VBS. I am sure that while I was making those match stick crosses and the other craft projects, while singing the songs, many times a leader would say, "Hey, Philip. Jesus loves you. Hey, Philip, you want to give your life to Jesus?" Perhaps I gave my life to Jesus 47 times at those Vacation Bible Schools. I'm not sure.

In 1991, before this gathering in Janae's home, I was attending a youth group in our area led by Pastor Steve Larson. He and his wife Chris welcomed us into their home, which we destroyed every single Sunday night. I'm sure Pastor Steve was frequently saying, "It's time to love Jesus. It's time to throw all these other things away and focus on Jesus. It's time to commit your life to Jesus." But I didn't hear any of that. You see, I was usually more interested in getting back outside and showing off for the girls in whatever sport we were playing at the time. For whatever reason, hearing her testimony that night in Janae's home, I heard Jesus say, "Follow Me." I dropped everything and I followed Jesus. My testimony reminds me of a much older Philip—he apostle Philip, the fifth disciple of Jesus. He has a testimony very similar to that situation, so this will lead us into our first point.

The apostle Philip was a seeker.

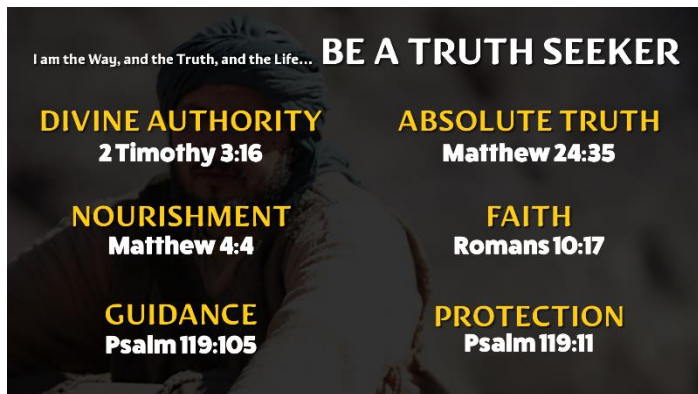
Philip was not just any kind of seeker—he was a truth seeker. He wanted to know the truth of what was happening. We get a quick glimpse into the testimony of this fifth disciple in John 1:43-44: *"The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, 'Follow me.' Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter."*

You see, Janae's words led me to commit my life to follow Jesus, just like these words Jesus spoke—"Follow Me"—incited Philip to drop everything and follow Him. He immediately recognized that this was the Messiah. He had been studying and understanding that there was a Messiah coming; we'll see more of that in the next point. So Philip wasn't just wanting any person to walk up to him. He knew the truth. But Philip had no idea what this journey was going to be about.

Do you remember when you gave your life to Jesus Christ? When you took that step of faith, you had no idea what that journey was going to be about. But it took that first step to start making a difference when you said, "I'm going to follow Jesus." In all of our journeys, we don't know what's going to happen, but we can trust that we're within the sovereign plan of God because we're

following Jesus. There may be a lot of bad things that happen. There may be a lot of weird things that happen. There may be a lot of tears shed. But when you walk behind Jesus, when you follow Him, that's the place you want to be. When we start seeking Jesus, we start getting to know who we really are. We start understanding what our purpose is.

But there's a warning, friends. You see, in this world today, we are seekers, but sometimes we're seeking information in all the wrong places. We're Googling it. We're going to YouTube and asking questions. We're asking random friends at school about the truth and about what this is. We're watching somebody on TikTok. We're gaining information from news radio. We're pulling all this random information and that becomes our truth. Instead, I want to remind you that truth comes from the 66 books of the Bible. If it's against the 66 books of the Bible, it's not the truth. It needs to be filtered through Scripture. That's what a truth seeker does.



Here's a slide showing how you can live a life of seeking truth. These are some verses you can look up later.

Jesus said in John 14:6, *"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. And no one comes to the Father except through me."* Do you understand, friends, that the truth is Jesus? This is an exclusionary statement. I trusted God, but I didn't know Who Jesus was. I didn't have a relationship with Jesus. You need to know Jesus, friends. That's where the seeking needs to happen. The apostle Philip heard Jesus say, *"Follow Me,"* and he knew that was coming from the truth, the Messiah.

The apostle Philip was a servant.

Not only was Philip a truth seeker, he was also a servant. The next two verses in John 1 say, *"Philip found Nathanael and said to him, 'We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote.'" Remember, he's pointing back to the knowledge he has. He's been going to the synagogue. He's been studying. He's been learning. He knows the Scriptures. "Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Nathanael said to him, 'Can anything good come out of Nazareth?' Philip said to him, 'Come and see.'"*

Come and see. Philip's first instinct, after meeting Jesus, was to share it! To give it away. To multiply it. Is that what you're doing? Are you sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with the team you're on, with your coworkers? How about with your children? Some of you here are older and your children aren't walking with the Lord. Are you continuously, in a responsible and mature way, sharing the love of Jesus for them, without exasperating them? How about that guy at the gas station where you always get coffee? What's his name—Joe?

Philip knew what he knew, and now he was a follower of the Messiah, a follower of the King of kings, a follower of the Christ, the anointed one. He wanted to share that with everybody around him.

Now picture Philip sitting by the lake, working on his nets, talking randomly with the guys: *"Hey, Ralph, that was a great thing we saw last night, wasn't it?"* Then all of a sudden he sees this group of guys coming up to him. *"Oh, hey Andrew. Hey, Peter. What's going on?"* They don't even answer him. Jesus turns, looks right in his eyes, and says, *"Follow Me."* In that moment, Philip knew this was the Messiah. He dropped his net and said, *"Ralph, talk to you later."* And he walked off. Then while he was walking off, all of a sudden the Holy Spirit, just moments after that, said, *"You've got to share this."* He's like, *"I don't know who to share this with. Hah, Nathanael. My buddy Nathanael. He needs to know this."* So he went right away and got Nathanael.

As servants of Jesus, we need to be sharing the good news with tons of people. A good buddy of mine here at church and I have been doing some ministry together, talking and strategizing on how we're loving people, how we're loving our family, how we're loving and making connections with other people. One of the conversations we continuously have is, *"How are we sharing the good news with other people?"* Not just the people who are sitting here at church or who are new here at church, but people we come in contact with elsewhere. How are we interacting with them and what are we doing? My friend has written a large testimony of his own, but he also wrote a shorter testimony that he can give to start the process. Then he made a spreadsheet of all the people he's sharing the gospel with currently. He counted 17 people with whom he's actively sharing the good news. There are

several on this list who actually get frustrated and are skeptical. He doesn't say anything but just welcomes their questions. Then he says, "Come and see. Here's my testimony. Come and see all Jesus has done."

Just like Philip had a servant's heart, that's what we're to have as well. Our faith is not for us to hang on to ourselves. Our faith is to be handed out freely to everybody we come in contact with. We also see how Philip had a servant's heart in John 12. Look at verses 20-22: *"Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, 'Sir, we wish to see Jesus.' Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus."*

We don't know why they approached Philip. Perhaps it was because Philip was the only one with a Greek name (Philip is a Greek name meaning 'lover of horses;' we're never told his Hebrew name). Maybe these guys thought Philip was approachable. Maybe he had the reputation that, "If we talk to Philip, he's going to get us in. He'll hook us up."

Maybe you're in college sports and you want to be able to shoot hoops any time you want, so who do you make friends with? The custodian. He's got the keys. "Hey, Bud, can I get in the gym?" "Oh, yeah, you bet, Phil."

Maybe Philip was the guy they knew could get them to Jesus. You see, Philip was always connecting people to Jesus. That was one of his roles. He was a conduit, a bridge, to the Messiah.

And you know what, friends? We're called to imitate that same thing. Wouldn't it be great if people thought you were the connection to Jesus? We have some extended family who sometimes shoot us a text or give us a call, saying, "Hey, we know you're close with God. Would you pray about this?" You see, we want to be connectors. "You know what? Why don't you come and see all that Jesus has to offer." We have to get out of our comfort zones, though. Too many of us are not serving God in real ways. We're just going through the motions. We're too focused on other things. We have to stop doing the normal stuff in our lives and start doing the extraordinary stuff that we can't get credit for, because Jesus is the One Who gets the credit for what's happening. Don't you want to be part of that? Each of our acts of service, no matter how big or how small, are huge in the Kingdom of God. Each listening ear is huge. Each invitation, is huge.

I was getting my undergrad at Northern Illinois University in 1996. Between classes, I went to McDonald's with an outdoor playground in DeKalb. I was in my burgundy Chevy Lumina, but the driver's door didn't open. I was enjoying a ten-piece chicken nuggets order with large fries and an ice-cold Coca Cola, listening to the radio. Then I looked in the mirror and saw some guys holding skateboards in the playground. They had long hair and black clothes. Instantly I could hear the Holy Spirit, not audibly, but I knew it, "Go give them a Bible."

Now, I had recently attended Promise Keepers at Soldier Field, and as we were leaving, they gave us a stack of New Testaments. We could take as many as we wanted, as long as we were going to give them out to other people. So I grabbed one of those New Testaments and walked over to the McDonald's playground. I reached through that fence and said, "Hey, guys. God wanted me to give you this Bible." They just laughed it off. I walked back to my car, holding the Bible, and reach in my window to open my door. I tossed the New Testament in my passenger's seat. Then I just sat there and thought, "Why? Why did You have me do that? Was it a test? Did You want to see if I would go through with it?" Then I just continued eating my nuggets when I saw them coming out the door and making their way toward my Lumina. Oh, boy. What were they going to do? One by one, they passed my passenger side. They didn't touch my car. I thought they might scratch it or something. The last guy passed my window and went all the way to the front of the car. Then he stopped, backpedaled a little bit and he crouched down by my window. He said, "Sir, can I have that book?" I said "You betcha." I don't know what happened to that kid. I don't know what happened to those boys. But I do know that I was being a servant. It had nothing to do with me; it had everything to do with me being willing to let the Holy Spirit guide me into opportunities.

The apostle Philip was a student.

We've seen the apostle Philip as a seeker of truth. We've seen Philip as a servant of Christ. For our third point, let's explore Philip as a student. There's a remarkable story in John 6 about Jesus feeding 5,000 people. Most scholars would say there were probably 15-20,000 people because the 5,000 were only the adult men, not counting the women and children. Just picture all these people gathering together. Here's Philip, thinking, "Okay...five hundred, plus eight hundred, carry the one...oh, my goodness. Hey, Judas. How much money do we have? Two hundred denarii? Oh, my goodness gracious." You see, Jesus knew what Philip was thinking.

He knew everything that was being thought about right then. So Jesus went over to Philip and said this, as recorded in John 6:5-7:

Lifting up his eyes, then, and 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. Philip answered him, "Two hundred denarii would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little."

At this point, chronologically speaking, Philip had already witnessed numerous miracles—numerous things that were impossible that Jesus made possible. He had seen water turned into wine. He had seen a boy healed. Another time he saw a man healed at the pool. He had seen demon possessed people cleansed. He had seen multiple miracles. Yet he resorted right back to his human nature, and thought, "Whew. This is a tough one. I don't know how we're going to feed them." He forgot about the divine power of Jesus. But, he was willing to be a student as he watched this scene unfold.

We see this also in John 14:8-9 during the last supper. Philip again appeared in the role of a student, saying, "*Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.*" Jesus responded, "*Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.*" Philip was still learning. He had been with Jesus for multiple years and was still learning. He was still gaining understanding.

Jesus consistently taught that He and the Father were one. He put it simply in John 10:30: "*I and the Father are one.*" I'm sure Philip was there. Jesus also said in John 8: 58, "*Truly, truly I say to you, before Abraham was, I am,*" connecting him with the Old Testament, saying that He was God. It was very clear that Jesus was teaching about His divine identity throughout all His teaching. Yet these disciples—Philip and probably the other disciples as well—couldn't figure that out. Their journey was one of continual learning.

That's exactly what we should be doing as well. It takes time. You won't know all the answers right away and that's okay. Hopefully when you're 83 years old, you still won't have all the answers, because if you think you do, you're wrong. We need to keep learning, keep growing, keep moving forward, keep maturing.

In both of these situations, Philip took the posture of a student. He didn't take the posture of someone who was arguing. He wasn't thinking, "Oh, He got something wrong; let me set Him straight." No. He just took the posture of someone who wanted to learn, then he started learning. He took the posture of a student, which is exactly what we should adopt. We need to be students on an ongoing basis. We need to embrace these times when we have uncertainty. We don't know what's going on but we need to think, "I don't know why this is happening, but I need to trust in God."

We have the revelation of God through the Scriptures. We have way more information than Philip had, yet over and over and over and over we start thinking like humans, like we have no clue. "Oh, I have no idea how we're going to do this." Good! That's where we're supposed to get to because then it's God's glory—not ours.

I like to work and I can work hard. I can spend many hours doing stuff and striving toward things. But I don't need a pat on the back in the end. When you're a humble leader, you start realizing that it doesn't matter. When you're old enough and have enough grandchildren, you start figuring out it doesn't matter. It's all about Jesus in the end. It's all about Jesus.

We need to be students, and not just for our sake. We don't need to learn just to learn. We can learn all of Scripture and still have no clue. We could be the smartest people in the world and could still be going to hell, because that knowledge doesn't matter. Becoming wise by learning and following Jesus is where we need to be. We must continue to seek Him out, so we can keep sharing this good news.

So how can we apply these teachings? We still have six points to go. How are we going to get through this? I'll tell you what, friends. These six key points are only for people who follow the King. They're only for people who love Jesus Christ. They are only for people who accept John 14:6 and know that Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. These are six principles to live by. If you do not trust in Jesus Christ, they're not for you. Maybe you believe in God, but you don't know Jesus. These six points are for followers of Jesus, just like our communion will be. Our communion is only going to be for people who trust in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. It's a sacred moment to reflect on what Jesus has done for us. So if you don't believe in Jesus, this isn't for you.

Do I have your attention yet? Because if you don't believe in Jesus, I want to invite you to come and see. I want to let you know that Jesus loves you deeply, that Jesus knows your every action, your every thought. He knows your flaws—and He knows my

flaws—yet, He loves us. He cares about us. You see, Jesus offers His unfathomable grace and forgiveness to each of us. Jesus went to the cross for the forgiveness of sins for the apostle Philip. He went to the cross for the preacher that's standing right here, so that I could be forgiven. And He went to the cross for you, and for you, and for you at home. He went to the cross for you.

Let's look at these six application points. They're going to come at you fast. After these points, we're going to go right into communion.

Pursue understanding.

Like Philip, let's seek to go deeper into God's Word, desiring to understand His truth and His promises. Let's invest time in studying God's Word.

When you do, I encourage you to take your phone and chuck it against the wall. If you're like me, 90+% of the time I'm using a device when I'm reading Scripture and that's unfortunate. Because then I get an alert, a text. I get a 'like' on that Instagram that was posted in 2021. I get a YouTube link that something big is happening in Legoland. Then all of a sudden, my thoughts go off the rails.

No. We have to pursue an understanding of God through Scripture. We have to get on our knees. Ask yourself this. Now be true to yourself. When was the last time you literally were on your knees talking to God almighty? If it's been a long time, you're not pursuing an understanding from God. Now, I'm not saying that's the only way to pray, but I am saying there is something fundamental about that. You're kneeling in a posture that indicates you're ready to understand, ready to dig into God's Word, ready to hear from Him.

Honor Jesus.

When you start gathering this understanding, then you can honor Jesus. That's our second point. As Philip honored Jesus by answering His call without hesitation, may we too recognize and honor Jesus in our lives. May we honor Jesus with our thoughts. Maybe most of the time today you've been writing down your list of to-do tasks for after the service. Maybe it's a grocery list. Don't forget to get bread and peanut butter. You're thinking, "Oh, I've got to remember this." Your thoughts are all over the place. Stop! Honor Jesus by saying, "I need You to help me with my thoughts. I need to stop thinking about that other person who is not my spouse. I need to stop doing that thing."

How about your words? I need to honor Jesus with my words. I shouldn't be saying those things to my kids. I shouldn't be saying that to my spouse. I shouldn't be saying those things to my coworkers. I shouldn't be saying those things as I'm driving to Chicago. How are you speaking? Oh yeah, you're at church, you're speaking great: "Hey, hey, how are you doing? What's going on?" But what was the speech like on the way here? What will it be like on the way home?

Introduce others.

We need to honor Jesus, and as we honor Jesus, we should introduce others to Him. Philip's immediate reaction to meeting Jesus was to introduce Jesus to other people right away. We need to follow this example. Who are you talking to about Jesus right now? Get your pen out and you start making a list. Maybe it's that kid at school who keeps frustrating you, yet you're honoring Jesus in all the ways you can so now you're going to start having that conversation. The beauty is, guys, when you start honoring Jesus and start introducing people to Him, you can just get out of the way and say, "Come and see," then let Him do the work.

Listen to the Spirit.

Okay, how do we find these other people? We should be listening to the Spirit. Philip listened to the Spirit's prompting as he went and told Nathanael, "You've got to see this! The Messiah is here." He was sensitive to the Spirit. Are you being sensitive to the Spirit? Are you listening to the Spirit leading you to different places? That's part of getting down on your knees, friends. Ask the Spirit, "Please guide me to the right place. I'm tired of doing the same thing over and over and over and over. I want to listen to You. I want to follow You, God. Help me pass this on to other people as well."

Maybe it's your own children or grandchildren, friends, coworkers, people at your kids' sports. Do you think, "Ah, no, we just go to the sports and watch our kids. We don't want to be those weird people." Look for those opportunities. I met a random guy at Menards the other day and was sharing the love of Jesus with him. I found out it was my friend Chris Branning's dad. I had no idea. I was just listening, waiting for an opportunity for the Holy Spirit to lead me to somebody.

Invite questions.

When we do that, we need to invite questions. Philip welcomed inquiries about Jesus. He served as a bridge and he was patient. He wanted to help people encounter Jesus. May we be open and patient.

Do you know what gets tiring? I have a couple kids and it gets tiring when they say, "Hey. Hey Dad, I've got a question. Hey Dad, I've got a question. Hey Dad, I've got a question." Invite those question over and over and over. I was driving to a funeral in Sugar Grove a couple months ago. Now, I love listening to sermons on the radio. I'll listen through my phone if there's not one on Moody radio. I was picking up like the last five minutes of a sermon and all of a sudden I was into it. I don't even know what he was talking about yet, but I was focused in on it and I didn't want any questions coming from my 11-year-old son in the passenger seat. Hate to admit that, but I get in the zone and just wanted to listen to this sermon.

Then for whatever reason, on our way to the funeral, the Holy Spirit said, "Turn the radio off and let's welcome some questions." My 11-year-old son just started asking me all kinds of questions about the funeral. Then he asked, "Hey Dad, how do I get to heaven?" Then within the 22 lights on the way—my house is literally 22 lights away, south of here—my son asked the question, "Hey Dad, can I give my life to Jesus Christ?" "Yeah. Yes, you can." And he gave his life to Jesus Christ right then.

You see, friends, it had nothing to do with me. If it was up to me, I wouldn't have welcomed those questions. I wanted to listen to that random preacher. I don't even remember who it was or what he was talking about. Yet this was my son's moment when he heard Jesus say, "Follow Me." We dropped everything and he followed Jesus, because we invited questions. Stop getting tired of those questions, friends, being asked over and over. Bring 'em on.

Persevere in faith.

Brothers and sisters, in the end, let's persevere in our faith. Let's persevere. Philip persevered. In spite of making some mistakes, in spite of making some weird things happen, in spite of all the things he did or didn't do, he continued to persevere. He continued to move forward in this journey. And he suffered the ultimate sacrifice of being martyred. Tradition tells us some conflicting stories, so we don't know exactly how, but his focus was on the eternal prize he had at the end. He persevered.

So we want the apostle Philip's life to be an inspiration to each of us. As we go out from here, let's pursue understanding. Let's honor Jesus. Let's introduce others to Him. Let's listen to the Spirit Let's invite questions. And let's persevere in our faith. Amen? Amen.