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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

A1717 ~ Philip, the Deacon.

Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.

In the New Testament, there are four men by the name of Philip. Two of these were from the family of Herod the Great. The third, the Apostle Philip came from Bethsaida, at the northern end of the Lake of Galilee, as did Andrew and Peter. When called by the Lord Jesus to follow Him, Philip lost no time in bringing his friend, Nathanael, else known as Bartholomew, to Jesus too.

When our Lord was about to perform the miracle of feeding the 5,000 people, He asked Philip where they would buy bread to feed the crowd. Jesus said this to test Philip, even though He already knew what He was going to do. Philip replied that it would take a lot of money to give each person even a little to eat. However it was Andrew who came up to Jesus with a small boy holding his food of five loaves and two fish. And we know what miracle Jesus did in front of Andrew, Philip and that small boy – Jesus blessed and distributed that food among all the people and there was some left over.

On the day of the Lord Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem, some Greek people wanted to speak with Jesus. They approached Philip and he made arrangements for them to do so. Yet it was Philip who asked Jesus to show the disciples His Father. Philip thought Jesus was just a man and not actually God Himself. Those who look at Christ without faith will only see a man. Those who look at Christ with faith, will see God.

The Apostle Philip is mentioned in the Upper Room, after the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. However, the rest of his life isn't recorded in the Scriptures. It's believed that Philip died a martyr's death in the western region of present-day Turkey.

In today's *Bible Adventure*, we look at the fourth Philip. He was the 2nd-named person of the seven deacons appointed to serve the widows and the poor in the church community.

Stephen had been put to death and many from the fellowship were leaving Jerusalem to live in other towns for protection from the savage ways of Saul of Tarsus and his cruel helpers.

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Saul of Tarsus was a Pharisee and behaved like one. He knew all the doctrines of the Old Testament but he didn't have the love of God in his life. Getting such doctrines right is a matter of life and death but holding onto these doctrines with the right spirit is essential too. We need to be courageous in our stand for biblical truth but also need to be gracious in our words and interaction with other people. A superior spirit leads to pride, but a humble spirit turns away anger and arguments.

In 1 Peter, Chapter 5, it says: "Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble'." Some people may react to the Gospel with resistance from their sinful nature, but they are right to expect kindness from us. Christians believe that they understand truth only because God has revealed it to them and that this is entirely dependent on the kindness of God.

When people say and do evil things, believers are not to be argumentative or be side-tracked into unimportant issues. We're to be patient and endure such while trusting in God. When someone needs correcting, we're to do it with gentleness.

Although Philip the Deacon was appointed to look after the poor and needy, God had a far greater role for him to play. After the death of Stephen, when many Christians fled Saul's persecution in Jerusalem, Philip moved to Samaria. There he preached the Gospel to the Samaritans. These people had split off from the Jewish people about six centuries earlier and had intermarried with other people groups. Most Jews considered Samaritans to be outsiders and looked down upon them. But the Samaritans received the message Philip preached to them with great eagerness.

Philip performed many miracles among the Samaritans. Some were healed and others had unclean spirits driven from them. As a result, there was great joy in the city of Samaria. Philip baptised many converts but none of them received the Holy Spirit. When Peter and John came from Jerusalem and laid hands on them, then they received the Spirit.

Peter and John were there specifically as representatives of the Apostles gathered in Jerusalem. It may very well be that Philip wanted to make sure first that the receiving of a group of Samaritans into the Church had the official support of the Apostles. Some Jewish believers would certainly have found acceptance of this a difficult thing to do.

Through God's Holy Spirit, Philip became a powerful witness in the face of growing adversity. It was Philip that the Lord sent to introduce the Gospel to the Ethiopians, and hence Africa. Philip became known as 'The Evangelist' and later lived in the seaport of Caesarea. In Acts, Chapter 21, the Apostle Paul and his companions had finished their third missionary journey at the port of Tyre. Then they moved down the coast to visit Philip and stayed there a while.

What is the work of an evangelist? Paul in 2 Timothy, Chapter 4, said to Timothy: “As for you, always be steady, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil your ministry.” What is the work of an evangelist? It’s to preach the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ as the virgin-born eternal Son of God who died as a substitute for sinners, so that they could be forgiven and freed from eternal separation from Him. Jesus was buried but on the third day, He arose from death. One day, He will return to judge the world.

The Apostle Paul tried as much as possible to adapt himself to his listeners. Even though he was free from the customs and traditions of men, he willingly submitted himself to many of these so he wouldn’t give any unnecessary offense to those he was trying to win for Christ. Even though Jesus had cancelled the ceremonial law, Paul was still under the ‘moral’ part of Christ’s law. This is to love God and one’s neighbour.

An elder in an evangelical church was one of those killed in 1996 when a hijacked plane ran out of fuel and crashed into the sea. After the pilot announced he would attempt an emergency landing, the elder stood up and spoke to calm passengers on the flight. He then presented the gospel of Jesus Christ and invited people to respond.

A surviving flight attendant said that about 20 people accepted salvation, including a flight attendant who didn’t survive the crash. We preach as dying people to dying people. Many people around us are ‘dead in transgressions and sins’. What should catch our attention most is their need of a Saviour.

In 2 Timothy, Chapter 4, the Apostle Paul told Timothy to preach the message, to insist upon proclaiming it (whether the time is right or not), to convince, reproach and encourage, as he taught with all patience. There is no time when we can change that commission and no time when that method of ministry can be set aside for something else. Preaching the Word of God is to be done all the time. Our greatest legacy will be those who live eternally because of our obedience and love to share Jesus with others.

One of the best known evangelists whose fame and sermons have continued on after his lifetime, is Dwight L. Moody. Moody lived in the 19th Century in the United States and was only 4 years old when his father died. His mother gave birth to twins soon after her husband's death. This made Dwight the 7th child in the family. His mother struggled to support the family, but even with her best effort, some of her children had to be sent off to work for their room and board. When he was old enough, Dwight was also sent out to work. Regardless of this, Mrs Moody continued to send them to church.

When Dwight turned 17, he moved to another city to work in his uncle's shoe store. Part of this arrangement was that Moody had to attend a certain church. There, his Sunday School teacher talked to him about how much God loved him. His Sunday School teacher said he had seen few people whose minds were spiritually darker than Moody's when he came to class. Yet Moody's conversion to Christ became the start of his life as an evangelist.

An observer noted that Moody had started some meetings in a disused building at night time. Moody was trying to read the story of the Prodigal Son to a boy by candlelight but he didn't know a lot of the words and had to skip over them. The observer thought that if the Lord could ever use such a person for His honour and glory, it would be amazing. However, as the result of Moody's tireless labour and God's blessing, within a year of Moody starting, the average attendance at his school was 650, while 60 volunteers from various churches served as teachers.

Moody's building and services became so well known that the just-elected President Lincoln visited and spoke at the meeting there in 1860. Moody's name and fame gave him many invites to speaking engagements and conferences. He visited England and his large revival campaigns there impacted other places through the publishing of his books, newspaper articles and tracts. Moody majored on the literal interpretation of the Bible and the need to prepare for Jesus' Second Coming.

Moody had many sayings that he used to teach people. He said many things like:

“Let God have your life; He can do more with it than you can.”

“There is not a better evangelist in the world than the Holy Spirit. Grace means ‘undeserved kindness’. It is the gift of God to man the very moment man sees he is unworthy of God's favour. We talk about heaven being so far away, yet it is within speaking distance to those who belong there. Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people.”

“I believe hundreds of Christian people are being deceived by Satan now on this point, that they have not got the assurance of salvation just because they are not willing to take God at His word.”

“I find a great many people who want some evidence that they have accepted the Son of God. My friends, if you want any evidence, then take God's word for it. You can't find better evidence than that. You know that when the Angel Gabriel came down and told Zachariah that he would have a son, Zachariah wanted a further token than the angel's word. He asked Gabriel for it and the angel answered him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of the Lord." Gabriel had never been doubted, and he thundered this out to Zachariah. But Zachariah still wanted a further sign, so Gabriel said, ‘You shall have a token: you shall be dumb till your son shall be given to you’.”

“Believing and confessing go together; you cannot be saved without taking them both.”

"With the mouth, confession is made unto salvation."

“If you are ever to see the kingdom of heaven, you have to confess this way.”

“Attitudes determine our actions, either for good or bad. If we walk with the world, we can't walk with God. We can stand better in affliction than we can in prosperity, for in prosperity, we forget God.”

“I know the Bible is inspired because it inspires me. The Bible will keep us from sin, or our sin will keep us from the Bible. There's no better book with which to defend the Bible than with the Bible itself. The Bible was not given to increase our knowledge but to change our lives. When we know our Bible, it is then that God can use us.”

Some of Moody's sermons are available on the Internet these days. Even after a century since his death in 1899, some people have read his books and found the way of salvation to bring them to Christ. We praise God for this man's dedication to Him and pray that we also, will be a good example of a Spirit-filled life for those who will follow after us.

The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.

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