

Acts Series Part 21

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 15 November 2009

Preacher: David MacPherson

[0 : 00] What is the most amazing thing you could do this week, this week that has begun as we project ourselves to the week ahead?

Just imagine for a moment something really amazing that you could do this week. Do you have any ideas, any thoughts as to what that might be? Well, allow me to suggest one amazing thing you could do this week, and it is this.

That you would share with somebody the good news about Jesus. You are persuaded that there is indeed good news to be told.

Well, this is something you could do. You could tell somebody else. Now, you might say, well, that's not particularly radical. We've heard that before, but I want to think about this matter in particular this morning.

And I suppose I would say, let's all be honest and get real. And maybe we could do that by thinking, well, did we do that last week? You know, in this week that has passed.

[1 : 07] The week that is ahead is an unknown. We don't know what's going to happen. We can make plans, and this would be one. But let's think about the week that's passed. Have we done that? Have you done that?

My intention isn't to make you feel guilty. It's simply to, as I say, let's just get real and ask the question. Is this something that we do? Is it something we've done in the week that has passed? But I ask that question simply as, I suppose, a point of reflection, and I would hope a spur, that we might say, well, if it's the case that we didn't, well, we have a new week that has begun, pregnant with possibilities, exciting possibilities.

And I would certainly commend this as being one activity that we consider and give priority to, telling somebody the good news about Jesus.

But will we? Will I? Will you? Will we perhaps allow another week to go by and say nothing? This morning, I want us to learn from and be challenged by Philip the Evangelist, as he is presented to us here in the passage that we have read.

[2 : 22] Now, as I commented on just before we read the passage, we've already preached on this passage. But we did so, it was two weeks ago, two weeks ago on Sunday morning, we did so from the perspective of the Ethiopian.

And that was the angle, if you wish, from which we approached the passage. Now, I want to consider the same passage this morning, but from the perspective of Philip, and what Philip can teach us in this matter of evangelism, and in this case, personal evangelism, one-to-one, face-to-face conversation, presentation of the good news concerning Jesus.

And the way in which we will consider the passage and derive from it, I hope, helpful lessons, is by asking one question and answering it in a number of ways.

And the question is a simple one. What does the passage that we have read tell us about Philip? In Acts chapter 8 from verse 26 through to the end of the chapter, what do we learn about Philip? What does it tell us about Philip? And particularly, the manner in which he was involved in telling this other person, telling this Ethiopian, the good news concerning Jesus.

[3 : 46] So, there's a number of answers to that question that together, hopefully, do justice to the question. What does the passage tell us about Philip?

The first thing I want to stress, and actually, of all the things I'm going to say, this one isn't explicitly in this passage. It's something we've maybe learned about Philip already in previous references to him.

And it is this, that Philip was a regular guy. He was a regular guy. He wasn't one of the apostles. He wasn't a prophet. He wasn't one of the really, really important people in the church in Jerusalem.

He was one of the seven deacons elected by the believers to serve at tables, to take charge of the daily distribution of food for the widows. We know the occasion when there was this difficulty, and the apostles were having their time occupied by this task, important, but it was distracting them from the preaching of the Word.

And so, men were elected by the believers to serve at tables, to provide food for the needy, for the widows in particular. And Philip was one of those, so elected.

[4 : 58] It was important, but it was, perhaps, in the estimation of some, a fairly simple task that he was given. He wasn't, perhaps, in the estimation of others, a particularly important figure in the church there in Jerusalem.

He was, as I say, a regular guy. When the persecution broke out following the death of Stephen, the apostles remain in Jerusalem. It's strategic that they be there, but the rest, including Philip, are scattered elsewhere in Judea and Samaria.

So, it was the case with Philip. But Philip, though he was an ordinary Christian, he was one of the many ordinary Christians who understood that the sharing of the good news was not a specialist activity reserved for the professionals.

You know, we sometimes maybe have that idea, well, that's not for me. That's not my gift. I don't do that kind of thing. You know, I don't do evangelism. I'm not good at speaking. That's why we have ministers, and that's why we have people who are paid to do that kind of stuff.

Well, Philip wasn't of that opinion. He was a believer. He had received freely, and it was his privilege to give freely also.

[6 : 25] So, as we continue considering what we can learn about him in the passage particularly, let this first truth be very clear, that none of us can say, well, this really doesn't apply to me.

If you are a Christian, if you love Jesus, if you have received freely from him, then this very much applies to you. But let's continue, and let's focus in on the passage in particular, and what we can learn about Philip in the passage.

And the next thing I would say, or the first thing from the passage specifically, is that he was sensitive to the voice of God. Philip was sensitive to the voice of God.

We could, we won't, for reasons of time, we could ponder and consider in some detail the manner in which God spoke to Philip. The manner described is, certainly to our ears, quite unusual.

We read, for example, just to notice on a couple of occasions, at the beginning of the passage, an angel of the Lord said to Philip, go south to the road, the desert road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.

[7 : 39] We have that in verse 26. And then in verse 29, once again, God speaks to Philip. We read there, the Spirit told Philip, go to that chariot and stay near it.

And we could ask questions about the means used, or the way in which God spoke to Philip. We could ask, well, why was an angel employed for this purpose?

We could ask, was the voice of the Spirit, as we read in verse 29, was it an audible voice that Philip heard? Or was it a God-given hunch, if we can use that kind of language?

Well, a simple reading of the passage certainly suggests that it was a clear and audible voice that was heard. Presumably interior, not something that others would have heard, but that Philip very clearly heard with clear and precise instructions.

That would certainly seem to be what is being described to us in the passage. And we might conclude from this that all of this seems quite alien to our experience.

[8 : 52] And we might then conclude, I would suggest wrongly, that it's of little practical application. Well, I don't have angels telling me where to go and what to do.

I don't hear a clear, audible voice saying, do this or do that or speak to him or speak to her. So, you know, this has nothing to do with me.

But I think if we were to conclude that, and as I say, we're not going to dwell on how we understand in every detail Philip's experience of God speaking to him. But if we were to conclude that it has nothing to say to us, we would be quite wrong.

The bottom line is that Philip was sensitive to the voice of God. God decided how he would speak to him. That wasn't Philip's concern.

It wasn't Philip's prerogative to say, well, you have to speak to me this way or that way. God chose how he would speak to Philip. The point is, Philip was listening. Philip was listening.

[9 : 51] He was sensitive to the voice of God. He had ears to hear. And that is the stress that I would want to make this morning. And the question I would ask, what about you?

Are you listening? Are you sensitive to God's voice as he speaks to you? He still speaks. But do we hear?

He speaks in his word. Indeed, on this matter, he is speaking to you through his word right now. He is speaking to you. But are you listening?

Are you sensitive to the voice of God? He speaks to you and will speak to you, I am sure, throughout the week. He will prod you as opportunities present themselves to speak a word for Jesus.

But will you notice that he is so prodding you? Will it simply pass you by? And as you come to the end of the week, if you were to be challenged on this matter, you would say, well, I was ready, I was willing, but no opportunities presented themselves.

[11 : 02] If they had, I am sure I would have been prepared to say something. Might it not be that God spoke to you and prodded you and presented you with opportunities, but you were not sensitive to his voice and to his prodding.

If you really want to hear him, at the very least, you would ask him to speak to you. You would begin this week by saying, Lord, give me opportunities. Help me to hear your voice. Help me to see the opportunities as they present themselves and give me the words to say and the courage to speak. We would certainly, at the very least, ask God that he would so speak to us. Well, we can say of Philip. And as I say, without going into great detail as to the manner in which God spoke to him, Philip certainly was sensitive to the voice of God.

It reminds me, and this just kind of comes to me as a thought, which I think is applicable. It reminds me very much of Noah. And we think of Noah and we say, well, why did Noah build the ark? Why did God ask Noah to build the ark? And the conclusion, certainly, I've come to in considering that matter in the past is he's the only one who was listening because he walked with God.

[12 : 23] He was listening and so he was the only one listening. God, in a sense, didn't have the option of giving this task to anybody else because nobody else was listening. But Noah walked with God.

Noah was close to God. Noah was listening to God. And so he was given this great task to perform. Well, Philip was also sensitive to the voice of God.

He was a man described previously as a man full of the Spirit. This was necessary that he would be elected for the task that he was elected.

He was sensitive to the voice of God. But another thing we want to notice, and it's very much connected to this one, but it introduces perhaps a further element to it, and it is this, that Philip was obedient to the commands of God.

Not only was he sensitive to the voice of God, not only did he hear God when God spoke to him, he was obedient to the commands of God. He heard, yes, and he obeyed.

[13 : 25] It was not enough, obviously, just to hear. It was not enough for Philip to say, wow, an angel speaking to me, this is pretty cool, and then do nothing. Obviously, he not only had to hear the voice, he had to obey the voice.

It wasn't enough for him to say, wow, the Spirit's saying to me that I've got to speak to this guy. Well, yes, that was important, but then he had to do it. And Philip was obedient to the commands of God.

And notice that the command he was given was a very strange, and I think we could say a very unappealing one. Philip is in the middle of a revival, we might say. He is being used greatly of God. This ordinary guy is being used greatly of God. We've read in the previous chapters how the crowds were listening to him. We've read how the Samaritan city, where he was, was filled with great joy. Why? Because of the message that Philip had brought. There was a great interest in what he had to say. The crowds wanted to hear him. And then he's told, go to the desert.

[14 : 28] Then he's told, leave all this blessing, leave all these tasks that are being greatly blessed by me, and go to the desert where there's nobody. It was a very strange command, and certainly a very, I would imagine, very unappealing one.

But it was God's command. And so it was not for Philip to quibble. It was not for Philip to question. It was not for Philip to negotiate. God told him, that is where you must go.

And so he had to go. And he is sent to the desert. It doesn't make sense in many ways, but he obeys.

So Philip not only was sensitive to the voice of God, he was obedient to the command of God. Are you obedient to God's command?

If God were to ask you to do something that was very difficult and unappealing, perhaps ask you to go somewhere that you don't really want to go to, would you be willing?

[15:31] As we think of the missionary expansion of the Church of Jesus Christ, it has been made possible, it has reached the point, it has reached in great measure because of men and women willing to do things that they didn't want to do.

Obedying God's command to go to difficult places, to leave comfortable circumstances, to go to the desert, or go to where they would never naturally or ordinarily have chosen to go.

A bit like Philip. But what else can we say about Philip? What else do we learn about Philip in this matter? And the next thing I want to notice is that Philip was prepared to approach and engage with somebody very, very different to himself.

This encounter between Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch is the encounter between, if not opposites, certainly very, very different people. The Ethiopian was different from Philip ethnically, culturally, socially, economically, even sexually.

He was a eunuch. He is so very, very different to Philip. Almost in every conceivable way, they are very, very different people.

[16:52] Just a little bit of the background to the position that was held by this Ethiopian. And it is a fascinating insight into that particular kingdom of Ethiopia that those who have explored and considered these matters inform us relates largely to what today we would know as Sudan, certainly part of Sudan.

The king of Ethiopia was venerated within his kingdom and culture as the child of the sun. That was the position he was granted.

That is how he was viewed by his subjects. And as such, given this divine identity that he was afforded, he was considered far too important and sacred a personality to discharge secular functions like worrying about the economy or such matters.

They were beneath him. He was the son of the sun, the child of the sun. So, those functions that need to be performed if a kingdom is going to advance or even function were performed by the queen mother.

She was given these mundane, as it were, very important but everyday duties. And so, when we're told that the Ethiopian eunuch was in charge of all the treasury of Candace, the queen of the Ethiopians, in this case, the queen mother, effectively, what we're being told is that he was in charge of the economy of that kingdom, the chancellor of the exchequer in our context.

[18:33] He was a very, very important person. And from Philip's perspective, he was from a different planet. And not just from Philip's perspective.

It's interesting, again, those who have studied these matters in greater depth share with us that in Homer's *Odyssey*, a very famous classical piece of literature, the Ethiopians are described there as the last of men.

You know, those who live right on the edge of civilization. The Greeks viewed Ethiopia geographically as on the edge of the world. Perhaps a parallel for us would be the way a century or so ago, I certainly hope that it's in the past, I think it's true that in the past, some considerable time in the past, we would have spoken about, or in Britain, we would have spoken about darkest Africa. Maybe it was never a very appropriate way of describing that continent, but that's how it was described. And the idea is, you know, way out on the edge of civilization. You know, just totally different from us, totally alien to what we know about and are comfortable with.

So, Philip would have viewed Ethiopia and those from Ethiopia. And so, in the light of all of this, there were two obstacles, I think, Philip had to overcome.

[19:57] The first obstacle, I imagine, that he felt, and there is a measure of speculation here, but I think reasonable speculation, he would have had to overcome the obstacle of feeling intimidated in the face of this very important, wealthy, powerful man.

What could he say to such a man who was so much more wealthy than he was? Possibly, though we can't state this categorically, but likely much more educated than he was?

What could he say? What could he possibly bring to the table in a dialogue, in a conversation with this man? But these things do not hold him back.

He is not intimidated, though it might have been reasonable to think that he would have been, he evidently was not. And the reason he is not intimidated is that his confidence does not reside in his social station or his polished rhetoric.

His confidence is in the Gospel and in the Jesus of the Gospel. Therein lies his confidence. So it doesn't matter who the man in front of him is. It could have been the emperor in Rome.

[21 : 12] It could have been Caesar. It doesn't matter who it was, how educated he was, how many PhDs he had, how many letters at the end of his name, how many zeros in his bank account balance.

It didn't really matter because his confidence was not that he was an equal economically or intellectually or socially. His confidence resided in the Gospel that he was bringing to this man. And he said, it doesn't matter who this man is. What I have is good news for him. It doesn't matter how different he is or how rich he is or how powerful he is. I have good news for this man. And so he is not intimidated. But what about you? Are you sometimes intimidated? You think, oh no, he wouldn't be interested.

No, he, you know, there's no point in speaking to that person, to that colleague or to that neighbor. You know, he knows so many things. He's lived such an interesting life and I, you know, I have really nothing to say to him.

[22 : 18] I wouldn't know where to start. How would we even broach the subject? And we feel intimidated and overly cautious and tentative and we hold back and we wait for a better opportunity that never seems to come.

Philip approaches this very, very different man confidently. But not a confidence in his own abilities, but a confidence in the gospel that he has to bring.

but there's another obstacle that could have stood in his way and it is the obstacle of prejudice.

There could have been a sense of prejudice on the part of Philip in terms of approaching this man or certainly insecurity as he is placed in a situation outwith his comfort zone.

And again, it's related to what we've already said but maybe just developing it a little and maybe immediately bringing that obstacle to practical application.

What about you? What about me? What about us? What fears and insecurities and perhaps even prejudices hold you back from speaking to those who are very different to you?

[23 : 31] You know, sometimes we speak about a congregation in a city like Aberdeen, a free church congregation and we say, well, I wonder what free church people there are in the city that aren't coming to church.

If we could find out what free church folk there are and we could bring them to church and by all means, if there are free church people in Aberdeen who aren't coming to Bon Accord, by all means, let's bring them in.

But does that not betray an unwillingness to go beyond free church people to very, very different people who stand in just as great a need of the gospel of Jesus Christ?

Very different to us and sometimes we are reluctant and we feel insecure and afraid to approach such. The homeless guy on Union Street or in our own church hall this coming winter.

Our Muslim neighbor, our gay colleague, the Polish plumber who works in our home or comes to our home, the teenagers who hang about this very church building.

[24 : 36] It's a bit scary, isn't it? Speaking to those who are very different to us or at least we perceive them to be very different to us. Perhaps when we actually engage with them we find they're not that different at all.

But our perception is that they are very different and we're scared and we're insecure and we hold back. And I would say to you if that is true of you, as it most certainly is true of me, listen to the words that God spoke to Paul in Corinth when he was afraid.

Do not be afraid. Do not be afraid. Keep on speaking. Do not be silent. Here is Philip. He approaches a man, he engages with this man who was so very, very different to himself.

We too are called to that kind of engagement. But what else can we say in the brief time that remains to us? Well, we can say this, that Philip really wanted to tell this man about Jesus.

As we read in verses 29 and 30 there is an interesting point, perhaps curious point to just notice. We read in verse 29, the Spirit told Philip go to that chariot and stay near it.

[25 : 55] Notice that, stay near it. Then we continue reading, then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. And what does Philip do? He asks them immediately a question, do you understand what you are reading?

Now, there is a sense here in which the verb translated, stay near it, there in verse 29. Go to the chariot and stay near it. It is true that that could be understood or translated in different ways. But as it is translated here and seems to be the view of most that that is a right and proper way of translating it, you'd have to say that Philip doesn't follow the instructions as precisely as he is given. He's told to go up and stay near the chariot. As it were, be available for a dialogue with this man. But when he does that and he hears that the man is reading from the prophet Isaiah, he is so enthused by it.

He hadn't expected that and he can't hold himself back. He launches into this conversation and asking this question, do you understand what you are reading? He is, you might say, itching to engage.

[27 : 02] He really wants to tell him about Jesus and when this opportunity presents itself, he grasps it with both hands. God grant that that would be true of us, that we would really want to tell people about Jesus.

You see, if we don't want to, then it really will be an uphill struggle. If it's not something we want to do, if it's not something that we think is of any merit or profit, then, you know, we can try and drum up the enthusiasm and listen to all that is said, but it will be very difficult.

Philip wanted to. He really wanted to tell this man about Jesus. He'd been sent to the desert and here there is somebody to speak to and he'll do. He wants to tell him about Jesus.

But how does he engage as we move on and as we answer, continue answering the question, what can we learn about Philip and the lessons that it has for us? Well, we can say this also of Philip, that he engages with this man appropriately and respectfully.

His enthusiasm that we've already noted is moderated, if you wish, or accompanied by a concern to engage respectfully and appropriately.

[28 : 17] And these two things should go together. There's no reason why we shouldn't be enthusiastic and bubbly, if you wish. How that finds expression will depend on our personalities, perhaps.

But it is good to be enthusiastic, but it's interesting how here he's enthusiastic, he really wants to, but he is able to, if you wish, combine that. Moderate maybe isn't the right word, but to combine that with a respectful and an appropriate approach.

And why do I say that? Well, for example, in verse 30, what we've already noticed, he begins with a question. Do you understand what you are reading? It's a very polite approach.

He doesn't even presume that the man doesn't understand. He doesn't say, well, you can't possibly understand what's being said there. You're an Ethiopian. How could you possibly understand these Hebrew scriptures about, about, from Isaiah?

You're lost. You haven't a clue. No, he says, do you understand? I imagine he presumed that he didn't, but he is very polite in the manner in which he approaches. He avoids simply launching into a one-size-fits-all gospel presentation.

[29 : 26] He doesn't say, well, here's a pagan, here's an unbeliever, here's an unconverted person, and I've got my speech that I learned on an evangelism course, and he's going to get it from start to finish. And if he repents, amen, and if he doesn't, well, that's his problem.

No, he engages respectfully and appropriately. He asks them a question concerning something that evidently is of interest to the Ethiopian.

Also note, what we read a little further on concerning how the dialogue or the conversation continues in verse 35, then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told them the good news about Jesus.

Now, this point is often highlighted, and I'm sure you've heard it made before, but the frequency of repeating the point doesn't make it less significant and instructive, and it is this, that he scratches where the man is itching.

This is the passage the man is reading. Well, let's begin there. Now, in God's providence, it was a very appropriate place to begin, and it made it a relatively simple task to move on from there or begin there and develop who Jesus is and tell the good news about Jesus.

[30 : 37] But the point is that he begins where the man is. He addresses the man's concerns. He engages with them respectfully and appropriately.

But what else can we say? Well, we can also say, and these things we'll simply mention and move on, important though they are, the next thing that we can say is that his message, the message that he brings is a message grounded in the Bible, and that has Jesus at its heart.

He is greatly aided, of course, by the fact that this man was indeed in God's providence reading from the Scriptures. And so, he builds on that, he develops that, and he takes that passage and takes it to its ultimate fulfillment in the person of Jesus, and he tells him, as we read textually, he told him the good news about Jesus.

Now, this is a simple thing to say, but it is an important one. As you would speak to others, remember that everything you need to say is in the book.

Stick to the book, and you won't go far wrong. Stick to the Scriptures. By all means, apply them and develop them and present them in a way that is contextually appropriate, but stick to the book.

[31 : 56] And remember that the heart of the matter is Jesus. We need to tell people about Jesus. It's interesting how even the name Jesus sometimes creates a reaction and people are uncomfortable with Jesus being mentioned.

Well, so be it, but this is the heart of the matter. This is our message. The good news about Jesus, who he is and what he has done. His message is grounded in the Bible and has Jesus at its heart. But another thing I want to say, and it is this, he goes beyond simply presenting the truth. And I say that for two reasons. In verse 31, we read the Ethiopian answering the question that Philip has posed about whether he understands, and the Ethiopian says, how can I unless someone explains it to me?

And this verb explain is interesting. It's a verb that goes beyond simply an intellectual presentation of truth. What the Ethiopian was looking for wasn't simply a professor of theology who would explain to him these things.

When he says, unless someone explains it to me, the idea is, unless somebody guides me in these matters, I need a guide. I need somebody to take me by the hand and to take me where I need to go.

[33 : 13] This is more a question of someone who would disciple him and who would guide him to his destination, more than simply some who would explain truth and present truth, though that was obviously fundamental to the task.

So, in that regard, we can be sure that Philip responded with that a great willingness to do more than simply explain the truth, but to guide the man, to guide the man to where he needed to be, which was in the place of commitment to Jesus.

And that this was Philip's intention is also evident by what we read further on in the passage when, and this is something we were considering a couple of weeks ago, the Ethiopian, at the conclusion of their dialogue, of their conversation, asked to be baptized.

Now, why did he ask to be baptized? Well, he asked to be baptized because Philip had explained to him that this truth that he is reading about necessarily involves a response from him.

He doesn't need to only understand what the prophet is talking about. He needs to respond to the Messiah that the prophet is talking about. He needs to respond to Jesus. He needs to repent of his sins. He needs to put his trust in Jesus.

[34 : 26] And evidence of that will be that he takes the step of public commitment that is baptism. He needs to do these things. And this was evidently explained to him. And why was it explained to him?

Because Philip had an expectation that this man would believe. Philip's expectation is that this man would be brought to faith. He's not simply saying, well, take it or leave it. This is the truth about Jesus.

If you want to believe, fine. And if you don't, well, that's your problem. No. Philip engages with this man in the expectation that he would hear, that he would understand, and that he would respond. And thank God he did. Now that doesn't always happen, clearly. But surely there is a lesson for us that we should also engage with people in that faithful, full of faith, faithful expectation.

That what we are engaged in is not simply presenting truth, though we are doing that, but that we are seeking to guide men and women to faith in Jesus Christ, to that place where everyone needs to be.

[35 : 28] So, Philip goes beyond simply presenting the truth. What about us? Finally, we can say this of Philip as we come to the close of the passage, and we can say this, that he moves on faithfully and persistently in his task.

Having completed the commission given to him concerning this man, he is removed from the scene in somewhat mysterious ways.

We read there in verse 40, once the man has been baptized, we read, Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and traveled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea. With the baptism, his job is done. Now, this was due to the peculiar circumstance of the encounter. Perhaps ordinarily, there would have been more to do, but in this occasion, that was all he had to do.

And so, he moves on. And does he say, well, now, I can have a rest and simply await more angelic instructions to see who the next man I have to speak to is?

[36 : 33] No. What he does is he continues preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea. This is his normal mode. This is his default mode to tell people about Jesus.

It's not something he does on special occasions. It's what he always does. And you say, well, this very keen man always speaking about Jesus, he probably burnt out or he probably cooled down at some point.

Well, the next time we meet Philip is 20 years later and he's still in Caesarea. He has a wife and four daughters, all evangelists like their dad, prophetesses who speak about Jesus and there he is described as Philip the Evangelist.

20 years on, you see, he moves on and continues to engage in this, the most important task he could possibly do, be it with an Ethiopian or be it with his neighbor in Caesarea.

He tells the good news about Jesus. If you've been counting, I've said nine things and it would be criminal to leave something at nine.

[37 : 44] We must surely reach number ten. So number ten is this. What about you? Are you sensitive to the voice of God?

Will you obey his commands? Will you overcome your very real fears and insecurities and you're not alone? I imagine most of the people gathered here share your fears and insecurities.

And will you approach and come alongside and as God grants you opportunity, speak and tell others the good news about Jesus. Do so politely, do so appropriately, do so respectfully, but also do so enthusiastically and confidently.

And you might just be surprised by the response. Let us pray. Heavenly Father, we come to you.