

*I am so pleased that Peter Byatt is recovering from his recent illness and will be sharing his reflection, on Zoom. Taking us a little deeper into our Gospel passage this morning and our reading of Acts. **Leisa***

### **A Reflection – from Peter Byatt (Christ Church)**

Possibly the main thrust of the passage in John is the statement by Jesus; “I AM the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me”. A very well-known passage to Christians and a very encouraging message to hold onto in these difficult times. It is also however, for many, a controversial statement that brooks no argument. But this morning I would like to take a different focus for my reflection.

I am going to look at two of the characters in the passages we heard read. Stephen, appointed by the apostles to join the team in Acts 6v5, and Philip, an apostle who had been with Jesus from the beginning of his ministry, who is mentioned in our reading from John.

Stephen ministered to many and spoke out boldly in the name of Jesus to the point of upsetting many in the Synagogue. Hauled before the Sanhedrin, facing accusations, many of which were false, he refused to back down on his preaching about the Lord which so angered the Sanhedrin that they dragged him outside and stoned him to death. Stephen was so uncompromising and certain of his faith that, like his master, he willingly faced death.

Philip had, as previously mentioned, been with Jesus from the start and yet, like Thomas, still needed answers, still questioned what Jesus was telling them. Understandable, because what they were asked to believe and accept was totally beyond human comprehension. Yet Stephen, who had never met Jesus, had no doubts whatsoever. We hear no more detail about Philip the apostle, as the Philip in Acts, was like Stephen, one of those appointed to join the team.

I believe that we all have a mixture of Stephen and Philip in our Christian make-up. Sometimes I am full of the spirit raring to go, but at other times I want to ask questions, I need answers, and yet for all that doubt and uncertainty it doesn't stop me from still wanting to serve the Lord, however He may call me. He doesn't let me go. He is patient and faithful.

Jesus loved Philip just as much as he loved Stephen just as much as He loves you and me. We are all his people regardless of what we do for Him, regardless of our strengths and weaknesses, because we all love our Lord Jesus and He loves us.

Remember then, these words of Jesus: “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, trust also in me” (John 14 v1) **Amen**