



Message Transcript | Rev Juleen Partridge

Are you ready for an adventure?

Our Gospel today opens with Jesus going on a journey, verse 43 says:
"the next day Jesus leaves for Galilee."

I think most of us love to go on a journey, the anticipation of a new adventure, new things to see, new people we meet along the way. A new adventure can be challenging, even though we plan a journey we are not always sure everything will turn out as planned.

Derek and I visited Fiji some years ago. We stayed in a quaint little Bure near the water. The food and surroundings were more like a Fijian village. We swam in the sea every day. I enjoyed a gin and tonic every evening, as we watched the sun set over the water and we played euchre. The first G & T is always the best, I only ever had one each evening as we settled into the tropical twilight and our spectacular dinner, a smorgasbord of fresh local seafood and fruit. We were then serenaded by the local Fijians, their voice sounding like angels echoing through the still silent evening, warming our heart and soul.

So, what happened in this pacific paradise? Well towards the end of our holiday there was a cyclone warning. We didn't have to leave early because we were going in two days anyway. The next day the huge wooden cyclone shutters were nailed up at all the windows and a hush fell over the land as all of the staff started preparing the buildings and grounds for a category four cyclone. We started to experience strong wind and rain, however our flight took off on time and we arrived home safely. Fiji did not fair so well. We were saddened to hear of the damage and loss of life as we arrived home.

So, there can be an element of apprehension amid the excitement. I know that many of you visited family over the Christmas period. I guess many of you have travel plans for this year as we feel more comfortable getting out and about now, following some years of COVID, as well as so much unrest in our poor broken world.

Let us now take ourselves from this Holy place to Morisset railway station! Are you ready?

We don't need to take luggage for this spiritual journey, Jesus has called us, we know that we have been called, this is the reason that we are here together today, to draw closer to Jesus and seek out his will for our lives. So, we are sitting here at the station waiting to continue on the next part of our journey, because the journey never ends, not until we find eternal life with Jesus.

We are continually being called to serve Jesus on this earth, to listen for his call as we heard in Samuel, Samuel was called by name several times and did not at first understand who was calling, each time he heard his name he went to Eli.

Eli eventually realised what was happening and directed Samuel to answer the Lord the next time he heard his voice. God kept calling Samuel until Samuel responded.

We see Samuel as an amazing Prophet, faithful and trustworthy as he served our God throughout his life.

And so with us, God does not give up on us, we are his precious children and he waits patiently until we answer his call.

As we reflect where this stage of our journey will take us, we remember the Psalm we read this morning. I find it so amazing, the inescapable God, how wonderful, no matter where we go or what is happening in our lives, God knows exactly what is going on for us. He is with us, surrounding us with his love and protection. One feels totally surrounded by God, embraced by Him.

Such knowledge, the knowledge of God is indeed too wonderful for me, as we hear in the Psalm. I just love to read it over and over, it is so powerful.

Do you find these seats at the station a bit hard? No matter, the train will be along soon !

As well as Jesus calling Philip and Nathanael we also hear of Jesus being recognised as the Son of God. It is also about introducing God to others, by sharing with friends, family and strangers, what God has done for us.

We need to encourage others to find out for themselves, through reading the Scriptures, hearing the Word of God and encouraging them to look for themselves. Philip used the word "come" signifying that he was still there to help: they would do it together.

Philip appears eager to follow Jesus, however Nathanael is skeptical because Jesus is from a backwater town like Nazareth, *"From Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?"*

This introduces a note of irony that will recur over and over throughout the Gospel.

At a surface level Nathanael simply gives voice to the kind of smalltown prejudice common in all human societies.

Philip does not retaliate, he does not argue, he simply repeats the earlier invitation: "Come and see". Jesus also ignores Nathanael's cynical comment and instead makes a positive pronouncement.

"Behold an Israelite in whom there is no guile". Israelite is an honourable title and lack of guile suggests he is not a trickster, a reference found in Genesis regarding other followers.

Nathanael has known the peace and blessing of God on his life. Nathanael will go on to model what being an "Israelite" will mean in the era now dawning with the presence of Jesus.

I think I hear the train coming into the station, are we ready?

You may need a little information for the journey!!

We may like to reflect on our faith and what it means to us, where are we up to in our personal journey with Jesus and our journey together as the people of God. How people might be brought to faith in our community today and how may we strengthen and encourage each other? We may need to let go of our own assumptions and expectations and surrender our whole being to God's desire and plan for us.

We are called into a life of peace and blessing with God: Jesus sees us, he knows everything about us and perceives our deepest need. We know who we are, we know whose we are and we know what we have heard from the beginning. God's own Spirit shows us what is true. There is no need to live in fear, panic or argue about anything, focus on living our faith instead, always being kind to every person we meet, everyone has their story to tell.

Ultimately the importance of having a personal relationship with Jesus throughout our lives is paramount. Jesus wants us to pray to Him, talk to Him, put our trust in him and invite him into our hearts. The Lord is near to all who call on him. Remember the Christian faith was passed from person to person. That is how it started with Jesus, and that is how it's been for over 2,000 years.

Let us continue this great mission in the name of God the Father, Jesus the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.