



May 17 – Circle of Faith

How did you come to believe? Did your faith just appear magically? Probably not. Most likely there was a person or two who helped you along the way. And who have you helped along the way to find their faith? The apostle Paul did not just stumble across his faith, he had to be hit over the head with a two-by-four, and only after years of learning was he able to help others with their faith. The faith journey is a circle, and no matter where you are along that journey, God has a message for you. Come and hear of some familiar circles, and

how your faith fits into a familiar story. You may learn that you are more influential than you thought.

Scripture:

Colossians 2:1-7 The Message version¹ I want you to realize that I continue to work as hard as I know how for you, and also for the Christians over at Laodicea. Not many of you have met me face-to-face, but that doesn't make any difference. Know that I'm on your side, right alongside you. You're not in this alone.²⁻⁴ I want you woven into a tapestry of love, in touch with everything there is to know of God. Then you will have minds confident and at rest, focused on Christ, God's great mystery. All the richest treasures of wisdom and knowledge are embedded in that mystery and nowhere else. And we've been shown the mystery! I'm telling you this because I don't want anyone leading you off on some wild-goose chase, after other so-called mysteries, or "the Secret."⁵ I'm a long way off, true, and you may never lay eyes on me, but believe me, I'm on your side, right beside you. I am delighted to hear of the careful and orderly ways you conduct your affairs, and impressed with the solid substance of your faith in Christ.⁶⁻⁷ My counsel for you is simple and straightforward: Just go ahead with what you've been given. You received Christ Jesus, the Master; now live him. You're deeply rooted in him. You're well constructed upon him. You know your way around the faith. Now do what you've been taught. School's out; quit studying the subject and start living it! And let your living spill over into thanksgiving.

Acts 8:26-40 **26** As for Philip, an angel of the Lord said to him, "Go south down the desert road that runs from Jerusalem to Gaza."²⁷ So he started out, and he met the treasurer of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under the Kandake, the queen of Ethiopia. The eunuch had gone to Jerusalem to worship,²⁸ and he was now returning. Seated in his carriage, he was reading aloud from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

²⁹The Holy Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and walk along beside the carriage."³⁰ Philip ran over and heard the man reading from the prophet Isaiah. Philip asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?"³¹ The man replied, "How can I, unless someone instructs me?" And he urged Philip to come up into the carriage and sit with him.³² The passage of Scripture he had been reading was this:

"He was led like a sheep to the slaughter.

And as a lamb is silent before the shearers,
he did not open his mouth.

³³He was humiliated and received no justice.

Who can speak of his descendants?

For his life was taken from the earth."

³⁴The eunuch asked Philip, "Tell me, was the prophet talking about himself or someone else?"³⁵ So beginning with this same Scripture, Philip told him the Good News about Jesus.³⁶ As they rode along, they came to some water, and the eunuch said, "Look! There's some water! Why can't I be baptized?"³⁸ He ordered the carriage to stop, and they went down into the water, and Philip baptized him.³⁹ When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away. The eunuch never saw him again but went on his way rejoicing.⁴⁰ Meanwhile, Philip found himself farther north at the town of Azotus. He preached the Good News there and in every town along the way until he came to Caesarea.

Questions:

- Who helped you find your faith? Say a prayer of thanks for them.
- Who have you helped grow in their faith? Say a prayer of encouragement for them.
- Ponder this circle of faith... and consider checking in with those who helped you, and those who have been helped by you.

Reading for the Week:

Monday: 2 Timothy 1:5-7

Tuesday: 2 Timothy 2:1-2

Wednesday: 1 Samuel 23:16-18

Thursday: Psalm 78:1-7

Friday: Acts 18:24-26