

20th March 2020

Explorers

**“I had determined never to stop
until I had reached my end and achieved my purpose.”**

David Livingston, missionary

The explorer had been gone for a long time. For months the people waited for his return, eager to know what lay beyond their settlement. The great river was the unknown. The explorer would be their salvation, for when he came back they would know for certain whether the great river was their highway to freedom.

When the explorer returned, the people eagerly awaited the news of the great river. But the explorer was perplexed. For so great had been his experiences during his months of travelling that he did not have the words to convey his emotions around all his discoveries, or to describe the wonders he had seen. ‘You must go and see for yourselves,’ he said. And to guide them, he drew them a map on the animal skins provided for him, outlining the twists and turns of the great river; the rapids and the shallows; the sights and the discoveries; the wonders and the images.

The people were ecstatic. *Now* they knew about the great river. They revered the map. They hoisted it between poles in the centre of the settlement. They covered it with a great awning to keep it safe from the sun’s heat and the beating of the autumn rains. They made copies of the map. And all who had a copy, and all who studied the original map, considered themselves experts on the great river. Yet not one of them ever experienced the delights and wonders of the river for themselves.

A prayer for today

Living God, I struggle when I study scripture, but get stuck with the words.

Help me to know the truth of your love for myself.

I look for a map and a guidebook, but you give me feelings and emotions.

May I trust your Word, however it comes, so I can experience you for myself. Amen

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