

Jesus Commands My Destiny

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Date: 17 January 2016

Preacher: Gordon MacLeod

[0 : 00] The end of the service. The service this morning will be conducted by Gordon MacLeod, and I'm thankful for that. And the service this evening will be conducted by Callum McKinnon, and I'm thankful for that as well.

Ladies' Bible study meets at 8 tomorrow at 32 McQueen Street. We will be at a Women for Mission meets Monday tomorrow in the Weaverborough Free Church Hall to hear a presentation by representatives of the Western Isles Pregnancy Crisis Group.

There will be a Road to Recovery meeting on Tuesday at 8 in the Community Centre. Prayer meeting at half past 7 in Kilda Cruisers. Again, let me underline that to encourage you to come to that.

I think it's such a crucial time in the life of this congregation. We need to be praying. There will be a Road to Recovery meeting on Tuesday in the Community Centre as usual.

And the North Harris and Scalpy Free Church Joint WFM will meet. In Kilda Cruisers on Thursday 21 January 7.30pm, where Kevin Norman from Scalpy will give a presentation on his trip to Sri Lanka.

[1 : 07] Donations of any baking or handcrafts to be sold at the meeting would be most welcome to raise funds for WFM projects. The Discipleship Explored course will commence in the restaurant of the Hotel Hebrides on Thursday 29 January at 8pm.

The course is particularly aimed at assisting young believers growing their faith. But it's also suitable for anyone who wishes to know what it means to be a follower of Jesus.

And if you want more information on that, please speak to Duncan McPherson or Marion McDonnell, Nurse Mary, who will be giving a lead on that course.

The services next Sunday, 17th January, will be at 11am and 6pm. And God willing, we'll both be conducted by myself.

Just a word as well to say thank you again to everyone who has been so supportive over the last week or so.

[2 : 10] Anna is definitely improving. She's on two weeks of antibiotics at home. And she's just been told to lie low for a few days and get her strength up. But she's definitely improving but needs to get a bit of colour in her cheeks and a bit of flesh in her bones.

And if you could pray on for a recovery, that would be very much appreciated. Thank you for your prayers. Thank you for your roast chickens.

Thank you for your looking after my children, Grace and Louis, over the course of the last week. Thank you for your phone calls. Thank you for your visits. Thank you for your cards.

Thank you for your support.

We'll just pray and then I'll hand over to Gordon for the rest of the service. Our Heavenly Father, we thank you for this new day and we thank you that we are found here with the desire, with the opportunity to draw near to the one true God in worship.

[3 : 50] We thank you for your support. We thank you for your Lord. We thank you for your love. At■■■ for your Lord.

We thank you for your love. Our God to magnify. Our God to glorify. and Lord God we thank you for who you are we thank you for revealing yourself to us we thank you for making it possible for us to come to you in and through Jesus Christ your son we thank you that we come as sinners broken, fallen and yet redeemed if we are trusting in Jesus and Lord we pray that as we seek to draw near that you would receive us in Christ we pray that you would bless us in this time we pray that truly our hearts would be tuned to sing your praise and to worship we pray for your servant Gordon this morning and Callum this evening we ask Lord that as they speak that you would speak through them and as they know their own weakness and sense that nerves that fills us on your day as we stand in this place we pray that they would know that your strength is made perfect in our weakness and your grace is sufficient for all of us we pray that you would be glorified in this place this morning

Lord God we pray that Jesus would be lifted up and that all of us would be drawn in faith to him thank you for hearing our prayers thank you for answering our prayers we thank you that Anna is in recovery in the word we thank you for the sense of your people as the family of God the body of Christ who support at times of need and we pray that you would protect that you would build that you would strengthen the unity that you give us in the word Jesus hear our prayers lead us by your spirit we pray we pray all these things in Jesus name Amen good morning there is worship God singing to God's praise in mission praise 975 mission praise 975 before the throne of God above

I have a strong a perfect plea a great high priest whose name is love whoever lives and pleads for me my name is graven on his hands my name is written on his heart I know that oil in heaven he stands no tongue can bid me thanks depart and may that be the prayer of each one of us and the testimony of us this morning before the throne of God above I have a strong a perfect plea that is found there how gracious and how a blessed Lord we thank you that we can come before you this morning that we can come before your throne and that heavenly Father that if our hearts are turned unto you our lives are indeed hid in you and that heavenly Father your arms are round about us your arms protect us your arms shield us and we thank you heavenly Father that we can come in freedom before you this morning and that heavenly Father that no tongue can bid us thanks depart and that heavenly Father no matter what man says or does to us the bond that we have with you cannot be broken and we thank you that that bond is there through your son Jesus and as we come before you this morning and as we remember your son and all that he has done for us we thank you most of all for the forgiveness of our sins and heavenly Father we thank you for the freedom that that gives us to come before you that we can indeed try

Abba Father we pray that as we bow this morning that heavenly Father as each one of us examine our hearts before you that we will see our need of you heavenly Father that we will also recognise that it is good for us to come together to come together and worship you for you are indeed worthy of all glory honor and praise to come together and read your work for heavenly Father we have so much to learn from your work and we pray that you would give us a light to see and to understand that heavenly Father that your work will indeed be a word and season for us that heavenly Father you know our hearts you know the trials the tribulations that we go through and your word is indeed a word of comfort you tell us to come unto you you tell us heavenly Father through your word to be still before you that in being still that we will rise up on wings as eagles that we will run and not go weary that we will walk and not be and heavenly Father may we come and wait in that expectation before you that we would indeed know your promises bless us as we gather here may we know your continued hand upon us and may all that we say and all that we do be to your glory in Jesus name

[9 : 31] Amen Boys and girls would you like to come down to the front how are you all this morning how are you what happened there I put my hand out and Anish put his hand out because he knew what was expected of him my action got a reaction bear with me just one moment I was late this morning you can see I had to get dressed and put a suit and a collar and tie on took me a wee bit more time than usual so I never got a chance to finish my tea you don't mind if I have a wee drink just now no you ok with that it's gone cold I don't want it you ok every action that we have has a reaction what happened there for right through the cup the guys here thought there was water there was an expectation that something was going to happen so they knew who gasped over here thinking

I can't believe that man's going to throw water over these guys at the front everything we do has a consequence and it says in the bible in the book of Matthew that in everything do to others what you would want them to do to you this is what is written in the law and in the prophets so every time we come into contact with somebody we've got to think about how we act towards them I don't know if you remember when I was here before speaking that we spoke about fingerprints and I was saying to you that every time you touch something you leave a trace of yourself on it so when your mum comes in and she says who put the hands on the glass wasn't me or whose fingerprints are these they found out every contact that we have leaves a trace every action that we do so when I come in and I say hello Anish how are you it demands a reaction it provokes a reaction when I threw the water

Cammy his head moved as quick as anything because he thought something was going to happen but not only did Cammy move Kirsty thought well this is going to hit me as well so it's not just one person that's impacted by it somebody else might be impacted by it now in preparing for doing this talk I had to do a risk assessment you know what that means I had to think about what my actions might result in Cammy might have stood up and tried to punch me because he's thinking what are you doing throwing water at me thankfully he didn't he and his mother might have spoken to me at the door on the way out he probably couldn't every action ends up with a reaction so as you grow up and as you go through school you've got to think about how you interact with other people and how you treat other people what you've got to think about is why do people behave and do things that they do okay my reaction there was

I thought that was my work phoning me sorry there was an action in my pocket there I could feel it vibrating so I had to react to it we have to think about how we impact other people's lives it's fine for me to come up and say hello Anish how are you but hi I'm round and I go to John I'm speaking to you John's then aren't you John yep how are you today so John feels better now so every time we come into contact with somebody think about what we're leaving with them are we leaving something positive or are we leaving something negative and the other thing to think about is that if you treated somebody badly would you have wanted to be treated like that as well so if you decide not to turn your back on John just now John doesn't feel very good about it would you have liked to have felt like that

Anish no nobody likes to feel like that so what we've got to think about is Jesus told us that in everything that we do that we've got to think about how we would want to be treated in similar situations okay it's a golden rule what do I do for a living does anybody know what I do in a day to day business Bethany I work as a policeman okay so I put on a uniform and I go to work and I come into contact with lots and lots of people and I have some rooms in the office that I work in they're not very nice rooms they're just a wee bed on the floor and a wee toilet in the corner and do you know what they're called does anybody know what they're called it's called cells now sometimes people get themselves into a wee bit of bother they don't treat people properly and they end up having to go and sleep in one of these rooms at my office okay but just because they've done something wrong doesn't mean that I can go and ignore them

[15 : 29] I still have to bring them a meal I still have to make sure that they're able to get washed because I have to treat them fairly and I have to be able to say just because they've done something wrong I don't know what situation they were in before they did that and if I was in the same situation I want to be treated well as and looked after so we've got to think about how we interact with people and show people love in all that we do because who showed us the most love Alistair that's right God and how did God show us love what did he do who did he send he sent Jesus and what did Jesus do for us what was the biggest action that Jesus did for us he died on the cross he stretched his arms were stretched out on the cross and he died for us that was the greatest action that Jesus did for us and what does that action demand of us it demands that we react to it now we can react in two ways we can run to Jesus and ask Jesus for forgiveness for our sins or we can reject Jesus and my prayer and the prayer of everybody here today is that each and every one of you react to

Jesus by running to and asking for forgiveness because that is the greatest gift that anybody can give and that's what God gave to us somebody can come to you and say sorry and you say okay and things move on but God has given forgiveness to each and every one of us so that our sins are forgotten forever so when Jesus came and died on the cross each one of you will one day and I hope it won't be too long we'll have to make a decision as to whether you're going to run to Jesus and ask Jesus for forgiveness or are you going to walk away we're going to sing God forgive my sin and he forgave it freely we don't have to pay to come to Jesus his arms were stretched out he didn't ask us for anything he just said come to me and how are you going to react to that Jesus gave himself for us we have to react to it we're going to sing

God forgive my sin in Jesus name 181 and in Jesus name I come to you so when you come to Jesus and you go out to meet other people you go out in Jesus name and again think about what we said how you act and react to what people say Jesus forgave you so you go out and act in the same way God forgive my sin in Jesus name I've been born again in Jesus name okay let's turn to turn to God's word and we'll read in Luke of Genesis and Genesis chapter 37 and we'll read from the beginning of the chapter Jacob

Jacob lived in the land where his father had stayed the land of Canaan and this is the account of Jacob Joseph a young man of seventeen was tending the flocks with his brothers the sons of Billa and the sons of Zilpah his father's wives and he brought their father a bad report about them now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons because he had been born to him in his old age and he made a richly ornamented robe for him when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him Joseph had a dream and when he told it to his brothers they hated him all the more he said to them listen to this dream I had we were binding sheaves of grain out in the field when suddenly my sheave arose and stood upright while your sheaves gathered round mine and bound down to it his brothers said to him do you intend to reign over us will you actually rule us and they hated him all the more because of his dream and what he had said his brothers then he had another dream and he told it to his brothers listen he said

I had another dream and this time the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me when he told his father as well as his brothers his father rebuked him and said what is this dream you had will your mother and I and all your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you his brothers were jealous of him but his father kept the matter in mind now his brothers had gone to graze their father's flock near Shechem and Israel said to Joseph as you know your brothers are grazing the flocks near Shechem come I am going to send you to them very well he replied so he said to him go and see if all is well with your brothers and with the flocks and bring word back to me then he sent them off from the valley of Hebron when Joseph arrived at Shechem a man found them wandering around in the fields and asked them what are you looking for he replied

[21 : 39] I am looking for my brothers can you tell me where they are grazing their flocks they have moved on from here the man answered I heard them say let's go to Dothan so Joseph went after his brothers and found them near Dothan but they saw him in the distance and before he reached them now let's kill him and throw him into one of these systems and say that a ferocious animal devoured him then we'll see what comes of his dreams when Reuben heard this he tried to rescue him from their hands let's not take his life he said don't shed any blood throw him into this system here in the desert but don't lay a hand on him Reuben said this to rescue him from them and take him back to his father so when Joseph came to his brothers they stripped him of his robe the richly ornamented robe he was wearing and they took him and threw him in the system now the system was empty there was no water in it as they sat down to eat their meal they looked up and saw a caravan of

Ishmaelites coming from way to take them down to Egypt Judah said to his brothers what will we gain if we kill our brother and cover up his blood come let's sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him after all he is our brother our own flesh and blood his brothers agreed so when the Midianite merchants came by his brothers pulled Joseph up out of the system and sold Ishmaelites he took them to Egypt when Reuben returned to the system and saw that Joseph was not there he tore his clothes he went back to his brothers and said the boy isn't there where can I turn now then they got Joseph's robe slaughtered the goat and dipped the robe in the blood he took the ornamented robe back to the father and said we found this examine it to he recognised it and said it is my son's robe some ferocious animal has devoured him

Joseph has surely been torn to pieces then Jacob tore his clothes put on sackcloth and mourned for his son many days all his sons and daughters came to comfort him but he refused to be comforted no he said in mourning will I go down to the grave to my son so his father wept for him meanwhile the Midianites sold Joseph in Egypt to Potiphar one of Pharaoh's officials the captain of the guard Amen and may God add his blessing to this reading of his holy word and ask Neil to come and lead us in prayer at this in Gal Amen how he is a laserwah He is not more hope he is not not having grave or you can remember 120

Of course you can enjoy, With Let us pray with what We were doing, and these two Peace ofIN condition would be healing for us.

Let us pray, and let us pray from God. Let us pray with us, let us pray, let us pray. Let us pray with the soul.

[25 : 50] Firstly, when they were ■■■■ ■■■■cibly, they would dzia■ in the world .

I hope weather is well yet this morning während of your country hours we're familiar with morning traveling life everyday weather weather beating■pilling, just wadeie ■■OSE to■o It was the eternal I love.

■ So I was going to get to him, and theanta was trying, so I turned to him and he found it that he just knew what he had.

I was going under his güzelms, but you were going under the umbrella of the same thing.

They were not looking for the overnight, The commanded us, this teach us and it makes the most secure prayersión through the■■■■, And we konu■ a lot and be honest about the things that we will have.

[28 : 20] We Sullivan raised the support of the Dharmaélites and students on anTIONmental influence on the pouvait name of the Holy Master, with all you■■ lay there in the■■■ Exclusive.

There are a Sr. Feisa Bloyeongsafs... Arms of sweet przep dtravitate visas from tenía amornovas como de verdad.

I did not have many exhausted. I would like to see him, which kind of Pro erectile me going to cover himself.

lored in bits and■■■th the world when to British prison. And to life I played a series on the Lor Büche and the Rossellonie ingr ■ and if you wear something at least this is your actions this speech blows from the light and the tribulation and the progress of the order that looks to■■■ three words the Blessed spirit Rifuertos, julie 19 Standing back US husbands, interviewed On John's mental career on John Young's comic books like Armen, the in iron ■■■i in iron

Sad man's now got his ass, And shot around the beach, It was his hand at the typhobe He problem doing things When thenea can have leads, take my mind.

[31 : 05] I tell myself, Earth that'sbé worm is lost■■■■'s life.

I faith that you know, That many people you are told to obey, They are for the following 10 minutes, ???

ak m-nheazka anyway Doodak ur shay pana There are 20 platforms that don't have to at■■■ diese zayung And you might find the way you are coming in and you might know you're going to Obed your disciples and Silas, that will help you all.

Amen. I'm going to continue to sing to God's praise this time in Gaelic and we'll sing in Psalm 16 the words will be on the screen Psalm 16 and verses 7 and 8 I bless the Lord because he doth by counsel me conduct and in the seasons of the night my reigns do me instruct before me still the Lord is set so that he doth ever stand at my right hand I shall not move at thee let me share the Lord

I shall not move at thee I shall not move at thee Amen.

[33 : 53] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Dear Heavenly Father, as we come before you, as we come to study your work, may we indeed, Heavenly Father, still our hearts and our minds before you.

May we focus, Heavenly Father, on what you have to say to us through your work. Each and every one of us in this room, from the speaker to the hear, may we tell my Father that we would hear you clearly.

Your word, Heavenly Father, to us, whether a word of correction or a word of direction. May we tell my Father that we would indeed focus upon you. May we pray that in looking to you, may we tell my Father that there would be no darkness within us, that your light would shine around and that we would know the glory of the Lord.

[36 : 55] Guide us we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Well, as we come to study God's word, I had an email from Aman in preparation for the sermon.

For the sermon going on to the internet. And he asked one or two questions around what's the title, what's the main theme, what Bible verses are you going to be using.

I have to apologise, I didn't respond to Aman's email. But what it did do was made me think. What is the title of the sermon this morning?

And the title that I've given it is, Jesus commands my destiny. Now can you say that as a statement yourself? That Jesus commands my destiny?

Or is it a question? Does Jesus command my destiny? We read in Genesis 37 the dreams that Joseph had and the impact and the reaction that Joseph got from his family members as he shared these dreams with them.

[38 : 15] My question to you is this morning. What is your vision? What affects your vision? And a word of don't lose sight of the vision.

So what is your vision? How many of you have booked a holiday? You've been in work. You've agreed the dates that you're going to take off with your employer.

And now you decide where am I going to spend my holiday? So you sit down at the computer. And you go and you get your holiday brochures. And you sit down and you start flicking through the pages.

Pictures look beautiful. Nice hotels. Nice sandy beaches. Nice villas. Promises of sun.

Promises of snow. Promises of snow. Depending on what your interests are. Or promises of plenty of fish to be caught. Pictures make the destinations look really attractive.

[39 : 21] The accommodation might look really spacious and comfortable. So once you've had a look through. You've got in your own mind's eye what it is you're looking for.

You're down to the real sifting process. Am I going to go abroad? Will I go for a week? Will I go for 10 days? Will I go for 2 weeks? Will I go to a hotel? Will I go self catering full board, half board?

Will I go by plane? Will I go by boat? Or will we take the car? So many different decisions that have to be made. But anyway.

You've come to the final decision. You've decided you're going to book the holiday. So you've got the holiday dates set. And your holiday is now booked.

And you're back at work. Work's pretty difficult. Kids are struggling at home, struggling at school.

[40 : 20] But you've got this vision in your mind. 6 weeks to go on a holiday. Something to look forward to. So no matter how difficult things get. You've got this vision in your mind.

You know exactly what the date is when you're going. You know exactly what time you're going to fly. What time your boats are. Just leaving from here. You know how long it's going to take you to get there.

And you know exactly what it's going to look like. You've seen the pictures. So you have something to look forward to. Every one of us has a different vision.

Of what type of holiday we're going to go on. Every one of us is going to go on holiday at a different time. Is it like we want to go on holiday together? Maybe. Maybe that's something we can think of.

But the important thing is. That we know that the date is marked on the calendar. It's marked on the calendar. And we start taking the days off as it gets closer. It's like a child waiting for Christmas. How many weeks to go. How many days to go. How many sleeps to go. And then you go on holiday. And your vision is realised.

[41 : 19] It might be a positive experience for you. It might be a negative experience for you. It might not live up to the expectation that you had. But that vision is what keeps you going until you actually go. You understand? You have that vision of who you're going to go on holiday.

And you know exactly the time and date that's going to appear. Imagine if you will. That a rich friend comes to visit you.

And this man is very, very rich. And he owns a yacht in Monte Carlo. And he comes to visit you.

And he says, I'm going to take you to Monte Carlo. I'm going to take you. This is my yacht. It's got lovely pictures of it. I'm going to take you. And we're going to go and spend time on my yacht in Monte Carlo.

Now, don't forget. I will give you a call. And we will go. And we will spend time on my yacht in Monte Carlo. It's no date been set for it.

- [42 : 46] But the promise is there. That they're going to come. And call you. And take you on this trip. The destination of where he's going to take you once you get to that yacht.
- Hasn't been revealed to you. But you know that you're going to get on that yacht. This is somebody you can trust. And they've made it clear to you. That you just have to be ready.
- When they call you. Initially you're filled with great excitement. Lots of questions that you have to ask. That have been made about the offer.
- But all they say is. Just wait. You'll see. I will call. Just be ready. You share what you've been told with others.
- Questions come back. Why would they offer it to you and not to me? Or. Aye. Very good. Someone offered you a holiday. What's the catch? There's no catch.
- [43 : 46] They said just to be ready. And they would call. And I trust them. You trust the person. They've never let you down before. They've always been true to their word.
- Days. Weeks. Months. Months. And then years. And nothing. The holiday hasn't come. The Elfhap has never been spoken about again.
- The offer seemed so real at the time. In fact they said it twice to you. It wasn't just a one off comment. Still nothing has changed. No call. You've seen the person since.
- Despite their business interests. Which are many and varied. They've always been around. And they've always been a help. But even in the darkest moments. They haven't come and spoken about holidays. During the time in hospital.
- They were there visiting daily. Bringing in what they needed. And they were there. And they were there. And they were there. And they were there. They were there visiting daily. And they were there visiting daily.
- [44 : 46] And they were there. And they were there visiting daily. Bringing in what you needed. They read to you. And ensured that you were looking. Looked after. Even though others that had been close before. Had stopped visiting.
- They were there. But there was no mention of the holiday. Yet they had been so clear. And so honest about it. When they spoke. There were times over the years.
- That you thought about asking them about it. But the time was never right. And it seemed inappropriate to ask. But they had spoken so clearly. The pictures of the York.
- During the time that you had waited. You had even renewed your passport. Then one day. When you thought all was lost. The phone rings.
- Early in the morning. It's your friend on the other end of the phone. I'm coming for you. We'll be leaving at 2pm.
- [45 : 43] Not much time. You wash. You change. You get your bag. And sure enough at 2pm your friend turns up. You're on the boat.
- And before the end of the day. You're on the yacht. In Monte Carlo. How you got there. Is a completely different story. But the vision had been realised.
- The promise had been fulfilled. And when you came back from your holiday. You were able to show your own pictures. And share your experience. With those that had previously doubted.
- Wouldn't that be amazing? Well in the story of Joseph before us. That's more or less exactly. What we've got. The unbelievable vision.
- That Joseph had been given. Became a reality. And no one. Other than the one who gave the vision in the first place. Could have brought this to be.
- [46 : 42] What vision. Has God given to you. For yourself. For your family. And for this church.

Can you still see the vision? Or is the impact of life taking its toll? And has the vision become blurred? And is it not so clear anymore?

And are you starting to doubt. Was there really ever a vision from God in the first place? As we go through. And we look. And we look.

At Joseph. Joseph. Joseph. Had more reason to doubt. The vision. The first been given. And I want to just look at.

What affects our vision sometimes. When we are given a clear vision of something. What can affect. That vision. That vision. As we read. In Genesis 37.

[47 : 38] Joseph. Was given a vision. That one day. He was going to be in a position of power. So much so. That even his family. Were going to bow down. Before him. An amazing vision. And you would ask the question. Why wouldn't he share it with his family.

However. After we have this account. Of the vision. Been given to Joseph. At the start of chapter 37. We never hear any more about it. Until. The end of the day. The end of the day. It.

The end of the day. As we have. To have a vision. For the day. And. To have a vision. And. And. To believe. For the day. And.

To have a vision. And. To have a vision. At the start of chapter 37. We never hear. Any more about it. Until. It is fulfilled.

But we do know. Is that Joseph never lost sight. Of that vision. No matter how others acted. Or reacted towards Joseph. Even those within his own family receive that it was not going to change the fulfilment of the vision that had been given to him 13 years before.

[48 : 41] In Genesis 37 and at verse 2 it says, Joseph was a young man. He was 17 years old. 17 years old when he received the vision.

And then in Genesis 41 and at verse 46, Joseph was 30 years old when he began serving Pharaoh. 13 years from the time he first received the vision to when the vision was actually fulfilled.

During that 13 years, we can read the chapters in between. And I'm sure each and every one of us know it. I haven't been taught it in Sunday school. But during that 13 years, Joseph had been thrown into a pit by his brothers.

He'd been sold into the hands of the Ishmaelites by his brothers. He'd then been sold into slavery in Egypt and thrown into prison for a false report of rape.

We read that he spent over two years in prison. And that was after he'd explained the dreams of the butler and the baker.

[49 : 55] And we read how in chapter 40, at the end of chapter 40 and into the beginning of chapter 41. The chief cupbearer, however, did not remember Joseph.

He forgot him. When two years had passed, that's when we then have the next stage of happening. Joseph had been cast into prison and there he had languished for over two years.

How clear do you think Joseph's vision was after that 13 years? Well, the one thing that's clear throughout all that happened to Joseph, despite the way he was treated by his family, despite the false reports that were made about him, the fact that others forgot him, one thing is true, is God did not forget him.

God was with him in everything that he did. In Genesis 39, verse 2, when he was in the house of Potiphar, we read, The Lord was with Joseph and he prospered.

And then when he was cast into prison, in verses 20 and 21, But while Joseph was in prison, the Lord was with him. He showed him kindness and granted him favour in the eyes of the prison warden.

[51 : 31] Life for each and every one of us can be difficult. We can be taken through trials and tribulations. We may be let down by people, even those closest to us.

But the one thing that's true is that God has promised, and we can read it in Joshua 1, verse 5, I will never lead you, nor forsake you.

Joseph had been given a vision. Now we don't read that he'd grumbled against God, asking what the vision was about. But we do see that a true belief that the vision was going to come to pass.

And this may have been his motivation and comfort through all that he was going through at the time. We read, or we read, sorry, in Genesis 37, verse 5, Joseph had a dream.

And then verse 9, then he, Joseph, had another dream. Why do we think that Joseph was so focused on that vision going to come to pass?

[52 : 42] Well, if we read on into Genesis, when Joseph is before Pharaoh, he says to Pharaoh these words, the reason the dream was given to Pharaoh in two forms is that the matter has been firmly decided by God, and God will do it soon.

Not only had Joseph received the dream once, he had received it twice. And in Joseph's mind and in Joseph's understanding, that meant that this was truly from God, and that God was going to bring this to pass.

And that's what he said to Pharaoh, because that's what he truly believed himself. What great faith he showed, what great trust was displayed in God at that very point.

Joseph had been put into the very pit of earth in the prison. But here he was before Pharaoh, the most powerful man in Egypt, and Joseph was not afraid to honour God.

At no time was Joseph taking any credit for what his ability was to interpret dreams. We read that in chapter 41 and at verse 16, I cannot do it, Joseph replied to Pharaoh, but God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires.

[54 : 13] Joseph had been brought through trial, he had been brought through many tribulations, more than what most people could bear. But the one thing that was true was that Joseph hadn't lost his vision, and he hadn't lost his vision of God and what God could do.

Apostle Paul was maybe thinking of Joseph and Joseph's example when he wrote in 1 Corinthians 1 verse 31, Therefore, as it is written, let him who boasts boast in the Lord.

And then again in Galatians 6 and 14, May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. These verses remind us that we have to maintain our focus and our vision on God, not on ourselves.

As soon as we lose focus on God, we lose sight of where we're going in life and what is important. All too often our focus can become internal.

Why is this happening to me? Why am I the one that has to go through this? Why am I being treated like this? We may even ask, why does God let this happen?

[55 : 36] Last week David spoke in the sermon and sometimes the question we have to stop and ask ourselves is what is God teaching me through this? When we focus on ourselves we have a skewed vision.

We think we are the most important person in the world. We want to see our own needs fulfilled and we don't see the needs of others round about us. our motivation becomes for ourselves and as I said our vision can be skewed.

Don't get me wrong we may think that it's correct in doing what we're doing. I've been given a vision and I'm just working out what that vision is. God has made it clear to me where I'm going and I'm just going to get there no matter what.

we don't see that with Joseph. He waited upon God and he went through the pit. He was lifted from the pit and he was set up on a high place.

What he learned going through those experiences shaped and moulded them into the person he became. While there was much to distract him along the way we do not read there on giving up or questioning God.

[56 : 53] In Psalm 40 the first four verses come to mind. I waited patiently for the Lord. He turned to me and he heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and the mire.

He set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God. many will see and fear and put their trust in the Lord.

There are many obstacles in life and sometimes they come out of left field. Joseph's brothers let him down big time. Joseph did not let this skew his vision.

He maintained his focus. I'm going to read a hymn. Apologies that it's a bit long. I think you'll know the purpose from me reading it.

But the hymn writer wrote, God is working his purpose out as year succeeds to year. God is working his purpose out and the time is drawing near.

[58 : 03] Nearer and nearer draws the time, the time that shall surely be when the earth shall be filled with the glory of God as the waters cover the sea. From utmost east to utmost west whatever foot thoth throod.

By the mouth of many messengers, God's forth goes forth the voice of God. Give ear to me, ye continents, ye isles give ear to me, that earth may be filled with the glory of God as the waters cover the sea.

And then a question to ourselves. what can we do to work God's work, to prosper and increase the brotherhood of all mankind, the reign of the Prince of Peace?

What can we do to hasten the time, the time that shall surely be when the earth shall be filled with the glory of God as the waters cover the sea?

March we forth in the strength of God with the banner of Christ unfurled, that the light of the glorious gospel of truth may shine. we do work throughout the world. Fight we to fight with sorrow and sin to set the captives free that the earth may be filled with the glory of God as the waters cover the sea.

[59 : 20] And then finally, all we can do is nothing worth unless God blessed the deed. Vainly we hope for the harvest time till God gives life to the sea.

Yet nearer and nearer draws the time. the time that shall surely be when the earth shall be filled with the glory of God as the waters cover the sea.

God is working his purpose out in the lives of each and every one of us. There are things that we may think that we can do to assist in working out God's purpose.

And that is right, as the hymn writer says at the end there, all we can do is nothing worth unless God blessed the deed. So only if that deed that we are doing is blessed by God will the true purpose of God be worked out in this world.

And then just thinking about the vision that you've been given and who's given you that vision. don't lose sight of the vision or the giver of the vision.

[60 : 36] Last week in the youth fellowship with the youth we were looking at Hebrews chapter 12. Therefore since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame and sat down at the right hand of God.

Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

Are you persevering? The race is marked out for you? Have you lost sight of where you are going or what your purpose is?

If you think that you are starting to lose sight of your vision, sometimes when we are looking at a screen it becomes blood and we have to blink and we have to be focused.

[61 : 58] What the apostle tells us here is it's not a case of blinking, it's a case of fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.

Have you lost sight of the race that's marked out for you? Have you never really thought there is a purpose to your life? Well my encouragement and prayer is that you would take hold of these words this morning, that you'd re-establish your vision, the vision that God has ordained for you, that you would throw off everything that hinders you and the sin that so easily entangles you.

Joseph had plenty to give up on. He had seen the vision, the boy had even bruised and had even battered.

His brothers had cast him into the pit, his brothers had then sold him into slavery. He must have been through many dark moments, but the one thing that was true as we reflected on earlier on, God did not forsake him, God did not turn his back on him.

And Joseph's vision of God was that God was there and God blessed him, even in the difficult times, even in the hard times. God allowed Joseph's hand to prosper and he found favour with those round about him.

[63 : 37] And he was given positions power and authority, even inside the prison. And these things shaped him and they moulded him into the man that he became only second to Pharaoh.

God had given him a vision. He got there irrespective of the interference of his brothers, irrespective of the false accusations, irrespective of the forgottenness of his fellow man.

God remembered him, God answered his prayer and God gave him the vision. The vision may have diminished for each and every one of us.

It may even have become fuzzy. But if we fix our eyes on Jesus, if we set him as our compass, we have an opportunity to know exactly where we're going.

We might not know how we'll get there, but we know who's leading us there and who's directing us there. And life may be difficult, life may be tough, and yes, sometimes we might think that the vision is being blurred, but if we fix our eyes on Jesus, we read that he's the author and he's the perfecter of our faith.

[65 : 14] No matter what you go through in life, what challenges you face, don't shift your gaze from the one that is able to keep you from falling. No guilt in life, no fear in death, this is the power of Christ in me.

From life's first cry to final breath, Jesus commands my destiny. No power of hell, no scheme of man, can ever pluck me from his hands, till he returns or calls me home.

Here, in the power of Christ, I'll stand. Can you say that this morning? that no guilt in life, no fear in death, this is the power of Christ in me, from life's first cry to final breath, Jesus commands my destiny.

No matter what hell us to throw at us, no matter what scheme man might put in our way, we can never be plucked from the hands of Jesus. And he is coming back.

We have that vision, we have that promise. Till he returns or calls me home, here in the power of Christ, I'll stand. May that be the prayer of each and every one of us here this morning, that we know where it is to stand in the power of Christ.

[66 : 43] Let us pray. Dear Heavenly Father, we commit ourselves to you again. And Heavenly Father, that we would truly fix our eyes upon you as the author and perfecter of our prayer.

Heavenly Father, that as we leave this place, that each one of us would leave examining our hearts and see our need of you. Heavenly Father, no matter what difficulties, no matter what trials we may go through, that if we put our trust in you, you have promised that you will never leave us, you will never forsake us.

No power of hell, no scheme of man, can ever pluck us from your heart. Here in the power of Christ I stand. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

As we bring our service to a close, I'm going to sing the modern version of Psalm 23. Lord, the Lord's my shepherd, I will not want.

He makes me fly in pastures green. He leads me by the still, still waters. His goodness restores my soul. And I will trust in you alone.

[68 : 05] For your endless mercy follows me. Your goodness will lead me home. May that indeed be the prayer of each and every one of us, that even though we walk through the darkest paths, we will fear, we will not fear the evil one.

For you are with me, and your rod and your staff are the comfort I need to know. And I will trust in you. Mission Praise 1008. The Lord's my shepherd, I will not want.

Dear Heavenly Father, as we come before you, we do indeed acknowledge that you are our shepherd. And we pray that you would indeed be with us. That you would watch over us, and that our trust would indeed be firmly placed in need.

And with the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship and communion of the Holy Spirit, be with us all. Amen.