

17.7.21 am

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 17 July 2022

Preacher: George Barrie

[0 : 0 0] everyone and welcome to our morning service today and we welcome George Barney who will be preaching this week and next week as well and we pray for God's blessing upon his ministry while he is here and there is a summer Sunday school throughout the holidays and that is available for children of primary school age so any visitors who have children with us they're welcome for their children to attend that and the children go out to Sunday school after the second singing tea and coffee is served after the service to which everybody is welcome and then we have the evening service tonight at 6 p.m and then through the week we have our usual activities of little fishes on a Tuesday parent and toddler group from 10 until 12 road to recovery meets on Tuesday night at 7 p.m as usual and the prayer meeting on Wednesday at 7 30 both in here and on zoom at 7 30 and that will be led by George as well he'll preach at that on Wednesday night and the while the minister is on holiday

Reverend Ian McRitchie will provide pastoral support in the case of any pastoral emergency but in the first instance please feel free to speak to one of the elders these are all intimations and so I'll ask George if he'll come now and lead us in worship good morning our call to worship today is from psalm 42 psalm 42 at verse 1 as the deer pants for streams of water so my soul pants for you my God my soul thirsts for God for the living God when can I go and meet with God let's sing to God's praise from Psalm 46 Psalm 46 in the Psalter God is a refuge and our strength in straits a present aid therefore although the earth remove we will not be afraid let's stand and praise God together if we can

God is a refuge and our strength in straits a present aid therefore although the earth remove we will not be afraid God is a refuge and our strength in straits a present aid therefore we will not be afraid the hills amidst the seas because the waters roaring may I'm troubled being over the hills by swelling seas to shake God is a refuge and our strength in straits a present aid for God our river is to streams to blood the city of our God the holy place where in the Lord most high as it is aboard

God in the midst of her doth dwell, nothing shall her remove.

The Lord to her and help her will, and that right there he proved.

[4 : 0 4] Be still and know that I am God among the heathen eye.

Will be exalted, I on earth, will be exalted high.

Our God who is the Lord of hosts is still upon our side.

The God of Jacob, our refuge forever will abide.

Let's pray together. Our Father, how glad we are to be in your house, in your presence, and with your people.

[5 : 1 0] Our Father, we marvel at your creation, especially on a morning like this, and especially here on such a beautiful island. But Lord, more than just looking at creation, we marvel at your word.

And we ask for each one of us, Lord, that we would come to your word more and more. And help us this morning as we read from your word, as we think about it.

Lord, we would be open to what you have to say, to teach us about yourself, to remind us about you, and Lord, to speak to us on a personal basis.

And too, as a congregation. Lord, we thank you in your word we find out about your character. About your love, your faithfulness, your loyalty, your majesty and compassion.

Lord, and we thank you most, most of all for you, the gift of your son. That first Christmas when the Lord Jesus was sent, he arrived as a small baby.

[6 : 19] And his mother having an inkling that this was no ordinary baby. But so many people around not knowing he was a baby like any other.

And yet, he was far more than anyone could have realized. And Lord, we thank you that he was willing to leave heaven. Heaven they had never left before.

And that you, our Father, you were willing to part with him for our sake. Lord, we thank you for people gathered in this room. And listening on the telephone.

And watching on the internet. Let people who have come to know you. And who have become sons and daughters of the living God. Lord, we thank you for each one.

And we thank you for their testimony and their witness to you. And Lord, we thank you that even though in relative terms we're a small group of people here this morning.

[7 : 14] We are part of a worldwide family. And that's ever extending. Lord, we do just want to pray for brothers and sisters today who are going through things that we cannot even think about.

Lord, we think of our brothers and sisters in persecuted places. Lord, particularly today in North Korea. And in Eritrea. And Afghanistan.

Lord, would you strengthen their feeble knees. Would we thank you that you've called them to be like you've called us to be salt and light wherever we are and wherever we go.

Lord, we do just pray too for our brothers and sisters in Ukraine. All going through the hardship and the heartache. Lord, would you be with each one of them. Lord, we want to pray for people who have never come to faith.

Who are perhaps here today. And Lord, or perhaps listening on the telephone or listening on the internet. And Lord, how delighted that we are that they're with us.

[8 : 17] Whether virtually or whether in reality. And that you would speak. And way above the voice of a man, they would hear your voice. And they would hear you calling to them.

Lord, we confess as Christians that sometimes we've been very lukewarm in our attitude towards you. Lord, how we ask you to rekindle. Rekindle our cold hearts.

And forgive us for things that we've done, things that we've not done. Our Father, we want to pray for this congregation. We want to pray for those who would love to be here but are unwell.

We want to pray for those who are perhaps too elderly to come out. Lord, we want to pray for those who've been bereaved recently. And Lord, just that you know the heartache of bereavement.

And Lord, when we think of you when you heard the loss of your friend Lazarus. That we read these words that Jesus wept. Lord, we ask you to be with them in their tears.

[9 : 22] And in their heartache and in their loss. That they would know you because you've promised to be with us in every situation we face. Lord, we want to pray for this congregation as a witness.

A witness wherever they work. Wherever they shop. Wherever they have coffee. Wherever they are. And even in their own homes. Lord, we pray particularly for youngsters who have just sat exams.

Whether school or university. Or to do with their work. And Lord, may be anxiously waiting for results. Be with them. And guide them. Lord, we thank you for the elders and deacons of this church.

And we thank you for everyone that's working in whatever capacity. And Lord, we do remember David. And thank you for his ministry here. Lord, we thank you for his preaching.

And we thank you for his pastoral care. And Lord, be with his wife Mary. And be with his daughters Anna, Grace and Lois. To refresh them during this holiday time.

[10 : 27] Lord, we think of nationally and what's going on. And we think of the Keswick Convention. And Lord, we think of camps that have either been or are going on. Lord, we think of the situation with us looking for a new prime minister.

Lord, we do just pray that the man or woman of your choosing would be the one. Lord, we do just want to spend a moment in silence.

Because we have things in our hearts and in our minds. Which perhaps no one else knows about. But Lord, we know that we can bring them to you. And Lord, sometimes it's things we need to confess.

But we know that we can bring them to you. And that you understand. And that if we come to you in repentance, you will forgive. Lord, hear us now.

And our Father, how glad we are when we pray. Whether we pray here collectively or whether we pray at home. You are a God who hears and answers prayer.

[11 : 29] And you answer it according to your will. So we commit these prayers to you in Jesus' name. Amen. Now, I wonder if I could ask the children if they would come down to their usual spot at the front.

It's really nice to see you. And if you're visiting, feel free to come down. We would love to see you. Yeah.

Oh, it's great. Now, don't be so happy. Because you folks are going to work hard this morning. You are going to tell me. I'm not going to tell you very much.

You are going to tell me. So, are you ready? All of the people are ready. Do you know, I sometimes watch you online. Occasionally, I see you online. And I think, wow.

Yes. I love seeing these children online. Because they answer questions and they give answers. Now, there's no such thing as a wrong answer. Yes.

[12 : 36] Yes. It's shampoo. It is not shampoo, but you're nearly there. It's shower cream. Okay. Now, I'm not planning to have a shower in the middle of the service. You'll be glad to hear.

And I'm not planning to give you a shower. You'll be glad to hear. But I've brought this shower cream for a reason. Now, I'll tell you what it says. It says palm olive naturals with moisturiser. Milk and honey shower cream.

It says a few things on the back. But, you know, it's like, I don't know about you, but I never read anything on the back of these things. Yeah. So, now, here's the question that you have to answer.

And I'll take a turn. Don't all, you know, sometimes the one person says the same thing. Usually in school, it was George Barney. Oh, they would say, shut up, Barney. You know, please don't answer every question.

So, now, if there's something like that, you just remember what George Barney was told when he was young. He's maybe not still listening. Anyway, so, now this says on it, this says on it, here it is.

[13 : 37] All these things I've told you. And you can see this shower cream. What has this to do with God? What has this to do with... Oh, oh, oh, oh, yes.

Clean your sins. Is it clean your sins? Clean? Clean your sins. Clean your sins. Yes. Very good. That's one of the...

There are several answers, so if you've got other answers, feel free. But let's just say, clean your sins. But how can we do that? How can we clean our sins? Or how can our sins be cleaned? Right, we'll come back to you in a minute.

Clean. Good. It's Jesus, isn't it? He is the only one that can clean us of our sins. Because he died for our sins on the cross.

Very good answer. So, it's to do with being clean, isn't it? Now, we all love being clean. Especially when we come out on a Sunday. But not just a Sunday. But, yes. Anything else?

[14 : 35] Anything else anybody can think of? Will I read it to you again? You maybe don't need the Pomolo. But it's called... I'm not going to open it up because we'll go everywhere. But it's called... It's shampoo. It's called milk and honey.

Now, does that ring any bells with anybody? Milk and honey? To do with the Bible? To do with God? Any ideas? No?

Right. I'm going to have to work slightly harder than I thought. Right. Because I know you're on holiday. So, everybody's stopped thinking. Haven't they? God said to his people.

Way back. It started off in Genesis. You know, the first book of the Bible. He said to his people. I am going to give you a land of your own.

A place where you can stay and it will just be God's people. I'm sure. Good one. The promised land. And he said this promised land would be...

[15 : 39] Milk. Yes. Milk and honey. And what about the milk and honey? He's like milk and honey. Is it something... Yes. You're on the right lines. You're on the right lines.

Yeah. He said it would be a land flowing with milk and honey. He said it would be a land flowing with milk and honey. What strikes you as a bit strange about that?

Can you imagine the land? Here's Harris. And it's flowing with milk and honey. Absolutely. Whoa. Any ideas? What's going to bit strange about that?

Any ideas? It's weird. Oh, yes. It sounds weird, doesn't it? A land flowing with milk and honey. Now, I like milk.

I like milk. I used to drink a lot of milk when I was your age. And I love honey. But, you know, I'm not supposed to take too much honey. But what does that mean, a land flowing with milk and honey?

[16 : 36] Any ideas? Ooh. Ooh. What does that mean? Tell us what you're thinking, because that sounds good. Are you?

Yeah, go on. Oh, we'll come back to you. Well, what God was meaning is a strange expression. And probably for us as adults, when we first saw the expression, we thought, a land flowing with milk and honey, what's that all about?

And what it was, it was a land where everything was beautiful. The fantastic fruits. The fantastic fruits. Yeah? Shiny and sweet like honey.

Yes. It would be a bit like that. It would be shiny. Even to look at honey. Shiny. You know, I never thought about that. But that's really good. Shiny and sweet.

A beautiful land that he was going to give them. Now, he promised that in Genesis. But then he said a strange thing. He said, now, I'm not going to give you that land immediately, because you are going to.

[17 : 39] Now, where did God take his people to? Do you remember that he took them down to another country? Do you remember the name of the country? Yeah? Remember the name? Yeah?

Remember the name of the country? It starts with the letter E. Egypt. Egypt. Oh, yes. Good. He took them to Egypt. And he said, now, first of all, before you get to this land, I'm going to take you to Egypt.

In Egypt. There's no way down there. Oh, yes. Yes. Oh, you're way down the line. Yes. And he said, now, you're going to be there for, that's everything, in hundreds of years.

They were going to be there for hundreds of years. How many hundred? Make three guesses and see who gets nearest to it. Eternity. Not quite eternity. No, no, not quite eternity. Not quite as long as that.

We're coming back to that. Two hundred. Two hundred? No, no. Who's going to go for the third guess? Girls, so that we can guess. Four hundred. Yes, it was just over four hundred years.

[18 : 39] He was going to take them to Egypt. Then he was going to get them out of Egypt. And he was going to take them to the Promised Land. Now, we were talking about that when we come to know Jesus, he will clean us.

He will clean us from our sins and it's by his blood. And then he's going to take us on a journey. And our journey's called life. Now, what age are you?

Who's the oldest person in this group? Who's the oldest? Who's the oldest? Right, Jono, what age are you?

Eleven. Is anybody older than eleven? No, it's Jono. Right, you're the oldest person. So, you and all the younger ones, you're going on a journey, aren't you? Are you finished with primary school, Jono?

No, one more year. One more year. So, you've got primary school. You've got secondary school. Maybe you might go on to university. Or a job. Or college.

[19 : 40] Or you might get married. And you might have children. You might have grandchildren. Oh, all of that. That's what we're going to. But where is God leading us to? Where is our Promised Land for Christians?

Where is our Promised Land? Where is, yeah. It's heaven. And he, when we believe in Jesus, and when we follow and trust Jesus, he will lead us one day to heaven.

Just before you go, I want to pray for you as you go to the Summer Sunday School. And can I just say, when I've popped into Summer Sunday School, you are in for a big surprise.

Let me, let me pray for you. Our Father, we do just thank you for each boy and girl who's here today. Lord, we thank you for them. And we thank you that they mean so much to you.

And Lord, thank you that they can learn more and more about you as the time passes. Lord, we do just thank you for the boys and girls who are normally here, that are away on holiday or not here today for other reasons.

[20 : 45] That you would be close to them. Be with them as they go through school, as they go through secondary, and in all the other aspects of their lives. And Lord, we do just pray that you would draw them closer and closer to yourself.

We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Thank you very much indeed. We're going to sing our second item of praise is, What a friend we have in Jesus.

What a friend we have in Jesus. All our sins and griefs to bear. What a privilege to carry. Everything to God in prayer.

What a friend we have in Jesus. All our sins and griefs to bear.

What a privilege to carry. Everything to God in prayer.

[21 : 56] Oh, what peace we often forfeit. Oh, what needless pain we bear.

All because we do not carry. Everything to God in prayer.

How we try all some temptations. Is there trouble anywhere?

We should never be discouraged. Take it to the Lord in prayer. Can we find a friend so faithful?

Can we find a friend so faithful? Who will all our sorrows share? Jesus knows our every weakness.

[22 : 59] Take it to the Lord in prayer. Are we weak and heavy laden?

Take it to the Lord in prayer. Precious Savior, still our refuge.

Take it to the Lord in prayer. Do thy friends despise forsaking?

Take it to the Lord in prayer. In His arms He'll take and shield thee.

Thou will find us all in prayer. As the boys and girls leave us, we're going to be reading from Genesis 37, starting at verse 1.

[24 : 16] Genesis 37, at verse 1. Jacob lived in the land where his father had stayed, the land of Canaan.

This is the account of Jacob's family line. Joseph, a young man of 17, was tending the flocks with his brother, the sons of Bilhah 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 an ornate 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 corn out in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered round mine and bowed down to it.

[25 : 30] His brother said to him, do you intend to rule over us? Will you actually rule us? And they hated him all the more because of his dream and what he had said.

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 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 flocks near Shechem. And Israel said to Joseph, as you know your brothers are grazing the flocks near Shechem. Come, I'm 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 him off from the valley of Hebron.

[26 : 38] When Joseph arrived at Shechem, a man found him wandering around in the fields and asked him, what are you looking for? He replied, I'm looking for my brothers. Can you tell me where they are, where they're grazing their flocks?

Yes. 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, they plotted to kill him. Here comes that dreamer, they said to each other.

Come now, let's kill him and throw him into one of these cisterns 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 cistern here in the wilderness, but don't lay a hand on him. Reuben said this to rescue him from them and take him back to his father.

[27 : 42] So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe, the ornate robe he was wearing, and they took him and threw him into the cistern. The cistern 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 Gilead. Their camels were loaded with spices, balm and myrrh, and they were on their 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 hands on him.

After all, he's 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 cistern and sold him for 20 shekels of silver to the Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt.

When Reuben returned to the cistern 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?

[28 : 47] Then they got Joseph's robe, slaughtered a goat, and dipped the robe in the blood. They took the ornate robe back to their father and said, We found this.

Examine it to see whether it's your son's robe. He recognized 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, I will continue to mourn until I join my son in the grave. So his father wept for him. Meanwhile, the Midianites sold Joseph to Egypt, to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard.

Amen. And may God bless his reading. Our next phrase is going to be from Psalm 1, and we're going to be singing in Gaelic.

[29 : 59] It's from Psalm 1, and we are singing the first three verses in Gaelic. Can I just say to visitors that I am not a Gaelic speaker, so I won't be leading the singing, but glad of those who are.

And it's very much part of the tradition of this island to be singing and praying at times in Gaelic. And you will find it just a joy, even though you don't sing in Gaelic.

Many of you will have been in that position where you've been in other countries, you've gone to church, and you've listened, and you have sung in another language. And there is a special thrill about just being with God's people, even though we don't understand the language.

So let's sing from Psalm 1, That man hath perfect blessedness, who walketh not astray, in counsel of ungodly men, nor stand in sinner's way.

Let's sing to God's praise. All right.

[31 : 22] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[34 : 54] Thank you. Please turn with me back to Genesis 37 from where we read. Thank you. Thank you.

Many of us will remember 1968 when the musical, the original of the musical, Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat came out.

A musical by Andrew Lloyd Webber and the star, Joseph the star was Philip Schofield and there were 17 amazing songs. And if you were around in 1968 and you saw the music, these songs are probably still with you to this day.

There's now a new version out. It's just come out, I think, last year. And it's a great show. But there's something worth remembering that this is based on our biblical version, but it is not the biblical version.

From chapter 37 of Genesis right through to the end of the book of Genesis, chapter 50, is the whole story, the biblical view.

[36 : 05] I don't know about you, but I can sometimes get mixed up with what I've heard on the musical and what is actually in the Bible. So it's really well worth another look.

As well as being a magnificent story, a wonderful story of Joseph and with all its intrigue and all that's happening, it's also such a significant part of the history of the people of God.

Now, nowadays, people talk about the dysfunctional family. But then, when you think about what was happening here in Genesis 37, here were 12 boys, 12 sons, one father and four mothers.

And some people call the Bible old-fashioned. This could be 2022. Go back to Joseph's father for a moment, Jacob.

Jacob, when he and his brother, his twin brother, came out of the womb much at the same time, Jacob's name has two meanings.

[37 : 10] One is heel. And the understanding is that when he was coming out of the womb, he wanted to be first with all the privileges of the firstborn.

But, of course, it was Esau who arrived first. He was second. The other meaning of Jacob is he deceives. And, boy, was he a deceiver.

He was a deceiver with a capital D. First of all, out of his birthright, out of Esau's birthright, he deceived him. And he exchanged, Esau exchanged that for a plate of stew.

And then out of his father's blessing. But then Jacob went on to, he arrived at his uncle Laban's and he met his match.

The deceiver met the arch-deceiver. As soon as he arrived, he fell in love with Rachel. He just saw this beautiful woman.

[38 : 10] And he was head over heels in love. And he wanted, he wanted, he asked his uncle if he could marry his daughter. This was his cousin. But that was quite common back in the day.

And his uncle said to him, yes, on one condition. You will work for me for seven years. Now, I wonder, some of it used to be quite a thing back in the day that people would have a very long engagement.

But an engagement of seven years was quite a thing. And then, of course, on his wedding night, the uncle Laban exchanged the girls and gave him his other daughter, Leah.

And the only way he would respond to Jacob was to say, you will work for me for another seven years. For the woman he loved, he worked for 14 years.

How was God to build his kingdom on such shaky foundations? And yet, what choice did he have?

[39 : 12] And then when we move forward into the New Testament and we see the disciples that Jesus chose. And you realize that one of these men would betray him. Would betray the Lord Jesus, his Savior.

And the others, when the going was getting hard, they would disappear. Then we move down to today, to 2022.

And we look at his church. We look at his church in North Harris. And we look at his church around the world. And we think, how on earth is he to build his church using us?

Now, sociology very much teaches us that we're all basically good. But just some of us go wrong. The Bible has the exact opposite view when he says we are all sinners.

Every single one of us. I always talk about people as, oh, they're nice sinners. And, you know, they're very middle class. Maybe a bit upper class. And you wouldn't realize they were sinners because they behaved so well.

[40 : 17] And they're so generous and hospitable. But we're all sinners. And we need a Savior. Why else would Jesus have come? And we realize that if we come to him in repentance and faith, and many of us have done that already, he will use us.

Even us. And we're building his kingdom. And, again, if you're not a Christian today, if you're not a Christian today and you're here or you're listening in or you are looking in, we are just delighted that you're with us.

And we do just thank you for being with us. But just to think, we would ask you to read through one of the Gospels. Say the Gospel of John. And just see how much Jesus loves you.

You could never be more loved than you are by him. And then, of course, when we think about the building of the church, the reality is that Jesus is the foundation.

He is the cornerstone. It's not us. Now, Jacob had very obvious flaws. We can see in verse 3 one of his flaws.

[41 : 32] So, in Genesis 37, verse 3, it says this.

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 an ornate robe for him. Do you see what caused the brother's jealousy?

Just that love that he had. And then, again, we see one of Jacob's faults in verse 10. When it says, when he told his father, as well as his brothers, about the dream, his fathers rebuked him and said, what is this dream you had?

And don't you wonder, is this the first time he had ever rebuked this boy? Seemingly, Joseph was an incredibly handsome man. Obviously a favorite, born to one of his favorite wives.

But yet we've got to be careful, don't we, in our families that we treat our families, we treat people equally. And discipline is so essential.

[42 : 42] It is so essential. He made the same mistake with Benjamin. But we see why. Because it was the woman that he loved and Benjamin's mother had died in childbirth.

Preferential treatment, too, when he gave him and none of the others the ornate robe. The designer gear of the day. And then we go on to look at Joseph.

Joseph had his faults, too. Can't you tell in just the beginning of the section that we read, there's an incredible arrogance there. The arrogance of, come and listen to my dreams, and you're all going to bow down to me.

He didn't, of course, know what he was talking about at that time. And then telling his brothers about the dream. And then telling the parents about the dream. And breaking the cultural norms of the day.

When the older would never bow down to the younger. It was the other way around. No wonder the brothers hated him. And notice, even in the start of the passage we read, that hatred intensifies.

[43 : 55] And eventually they wanted to kill him. But instead of that, sold him to the Ishmaelites. Now just a moment to stop and think about dreams. What do we make of dreams?

What do we make of that? Now, medics say that we all dream. I'm certainly very conscious. I'm very conscious of having had a dream.

And I'm sometimes very disappointed that I can't remember the dream in the morning. But I'm very conscious I've had a dream. Sometimes a nightmare. But there are some people who don't remember any dreams at all.

And are not conscious of having dreamt. I've got a couple of recurring dreams. One is going back to university and sitting my final exams again.

Well, that wasn't a dream. That was a nightmare at the time. And the fact that I passed, I was just stunned by that. And to go back and go through all that again would be an absolute nightmare.

[44 : 55] So that's one. That dream occurs to me regularly. And isn't it interesting, right throughout the Bible, Old and New Testament, there are 60 or more references to dreams.

It might be worth time when you're doing something different. In your readings, just to go through and get a concordance and see where dreams are mentioned in the Bible.

It's interesting when you talk to Muslims, or you hear Muslims' testimonies of how they came to Christ, they will often speak about seeing Jesus in a dream.

What we've got to remember with dreams is our chief way of hearing from God is hearing through God's word. Joseph had no idea that these dreams would come true.

His brothers certainly didn't think they would come true. But his father, his father, there was something in his father that just stopped him in his tracks.

[45 : 59] It would be 20 years before these dreams would come true. Now, we sometimes say 20 years. Now, we think back. There are some people in this room, and possibly at home or listening or watching, some people who haven't seen 20 years of life yet.

But for all of us, 20 years is quite a long time. We're back at 2002, if we go back the way. And if we go forward, we're at 2042.

Lots to happen. And there'll be changes in Joseph's character. And there'll certainly be changes in his brother. Now, every time we come to God's word, whether at home or whether here together or whether in the Bible study or wherever, three things to think about.

One, what do we learn about God? God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit. Secondly, what do we learn about people that we're dealing with? What are we learning about Jacob and Joseph and the brothers and Pharaoh and all of that throughout Genesis?

And what are we learning about ourselves? Because in some ways, the Bible is like a mirror. The way that God speaks to us. Even though it was written all these years ago, it's like God saying to us, it's you I'm speaking to.

[47 : 21] It's you I'm speaking to. When we look at the themes throughout Genesis, they are umpteen themes. Themes of jealousy, deception, surrogacy, resentment, sibling rivalry, childlessness, anger, competition, polygamy, favoritism.

And it would make a great TV drama. There's so much in it. And sometimes I think to myself, it's good to reread.

Even though I've read this many times, the story of Joseph, right throughout the 14 chapters, it's good for us to reread. And can I commend that to you? Now with all that going on, God is building his church.

He's building on the damaged foundations. He's building in spite of us. And he's calling the most unlikely of builders. It's interesting to know that through all of this, through Joseph, God will have his people in Egypt for over 400 years, as he promised to Abraham way back in Genesis 15.

And through Joseph, God will save his people from death due to famine. And then eventually he will bring them out, spectacularly bring them out of Egypt.

[48 : 48] And the 70 or 75 that came into Egypt, and it's part of Jacob's family, will become well over a million people. And isn't it a wonderful picture of just the salvation through Jesus, that he takes us out of the slavery of sin to the freedom in Christ.

And he takes us to our promised land, to heaven at the end of the day for the believers. What about the ornate robe that we see in verse 3?

It's often called the coat of many colors, and it's beautifully visualized for us in the performance of Joseph and the amazing dream coat. And the emphasis is on the coat and how it looks.

But that was not the emphasis in Old Testament times. The coat had significance. It was the sign of nobility, and it was the mantle of authority.

That is to say, bestowed on the one who would become the leader of the household. Now that should have been Reuben. But in Genesis 49, we read that Reuben had defiled his father's marriage bed.

[50 : 05] Not only had he committed incest, but he had usurped his authority. Joseph, throughout the 20 years, has known harsh reality.

He went from being a favorite son of his father's to being a slave. He went from being in the pit to the palace to prison. Back to being more or less first minister or prime minister.

He went from his home to being in exile. From a native language to a foreign language. From having himself and 11 brothers to being alone. And there's a reality for us, too.

Isn't it? That life has not necessarily turned out the way that we thought. When we were young, or if you're still young today, you have dreams. You have dreams of what you're going to do, where you're going to go, and what you're going to achieve.

And how life works out for you. We all have these dreams. But there are times when dreams can become nightmares. Sometimes due to health problems.

[51 : 16] Family problems. Finance. Relationships. Lack of relationships. Exam results. Our job. But just as Joseph knew when he was going through all of this, he knew that the Lord was with him.

Repeatedly we read that phrase. The Lord was with Joseph. And so, for every believer, whether we're here, or we're watching, or listening, for every believer, that the Lord will be with us, whatever our situation.

And sometimes irrespective of our situation. How we often wish that our circumstances were different. But, whatever our circumstances, that he is with us.

Joseph was demoted by becoming a slave. But he was never demotivated. And for many years, unaware of what God is doing.

And maybe you and I can be at that stage too, just in the situations we're facing at the moment, unaware of exactly what God is doing. And we never know this side of eternity.

[52 : 30] But what we've got to remember is we are working to God's timetable, which is far different from us. I love the way Psalm 105, verse 19, puts this in the New Living Translation about Joseph.

It says this, Until the time came to fulfill his dreams, the Lord tested Joseph's character. The Lord tested Joseph's character.

Maybe that's what he's doing with us just now. Maybe he's testing our character. Now, if God had told you very early on all that you would have to go through to get where you are right now, how would you have handled it?

How would I have handled it? And when we live in yesterdays and we end up with a dose of if-onlys, if-only I had gone that way, if-only I had married that person, if-only, if-only.

Or when you try to live in the tomorrows, you get a case of the what-ifs. I love this song, I think it's by Sidney Devine, where he says, One day at a time, sweet Jesus, that's all I'm asking of you.

[53 : 48] Just give me the strength to do every day what I have to do. Yesterday's gone, sweet Jesus, and tomorrow may never be mine.

Lord, help me today. Show me the way one day at a time. And Joseph, of course, was a type of Christ.

For example, Joseph was sold for 20 pieces of silver. Jesus for 30. In Genesis 41, as you read on over the weekend or into next week, as you read on the story, you will see in Genesis 41, verse 45, Pharaoh gave him an Egyptian name.

And his name is Zaphonath-Paneah. Now that's got two meanings. It means either revealer of secrets, and we see why he was called that, because he was very much a revealer of secrets.

And it also means saviour of the world. How Joseph had saved his people and the Egyptians from certain death through famine.

[54 : 59] And of course, there's Jesus, and in the very name he's given, Jesus, meaning the Lord saves. these men were both humbled and exalted, both loved by their father, both felt abandoned, but the difference was Jesus volunteered for that.

It's only in Jesus that we see perfect humanity. We often look for that in other people. Now, it's often in the people that we call the posh sinners.

We often look at people's lives, we look at their hospitality, we look at their giving, we look at their looks, we look at them, and we often see what we think, that's perfect humanity, I see in them.

I don't tend to see that in the mirror. We're not going to see that perfect humanity in anyone, because as we said before, we're all sinners. We see it in Jesus, and we see it in him alone.

What humanity should have looked like had Adam not sinned. I love the way that Hebrews 10 and 13 is translated in the Message Bible when it says this about Jesus.

[56 : 23] It says, a perfect sacrifice by a perfect person to perfect some very imperfect people.

A perfect sacrifice by a perfect person to perfect some very imperfect people. Meantime, God continues to build on these damaged foundations but all of the time he is refining us.

Every day he is working on making us, ordinary us, more like Jesus. Every day, sanctification.

Sometimes to be fair, we will resist that like mad. We will resist it, but God is keen to do that for every one of his adopted sons and daughters.

He is keen to make us more like Jesus. As we all know, God only had one son, the son Jesus, and he tells us in Scripture, we hear the voice of God saying about Jesus, this is my son whom I love.

[57 : 41] Listen to him. and then he chooses to adopt people into his family. And I just, I just, I'm absolutely amazed at just the whole idea of adoption.

That some people will take a child into their own family and bring up that child as if he or she was their own.

But that's exactly what God is doing for any one of us when we come to faith. He is taking us and he's making us his own child.

We got all the benefits of being his child. He promises us an inheritance. And one day, and one day, we too will be perfect.

May God continue to work in our lives and as we read his word, as we continue in prayer, may we be drawn closer and closer to him so that he will be allowed to do that work in our lives to make us, ordinary us, more like Jesus.

[59 : 11] Amen. Let's sing our final song. We're going to sing, Will Your Anchor Hold? Will your anchor hold in the storms of life?

When the clouds unfold their wings of strife, when the storm tides lift, the strong tides lift and the cables strain, will your anchor hold or firm remain?

Let's stand if we can and sing to God's glory. Will your anchor hold in the storms of life?

When the clouds unfold their wings of strife, when the strong tides lift and the cables strain, will your anchor drift or firm remain?

We have anchor that keeps the soul steadfast and sure while the billows load, fastened to the rock which cannot flow, grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love.

[60 : 31] Will your anchor hold in the straits of fear, when the breakers roar and the reef is near, while the surges rage and the wild winds blow, shall the angry wave venure bark o'erflow.

We have an anchor that keeps the soul send fast and sure while the billows roll, fastened to the rock which cannot move, drowning firm and deep in the Saviour's love.

Will your anchor hold in the floods of death, when the water's cold, chill your latest breath, on the rising tide, you can never fail, while your anchor holds within the veil.

We have an anchor that keeps the soul, steadfast and sure while the billows roll, fastened to the rock which cannot move, grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's ground.

Will your eyes be whole through the morning night, the city of gold and the harbour bright, will your anchor sail by the heavenly shore, when life's storm surpassed forevermore, we have an anchor that keeps the soul, steadfast and sure while the billows roll, fastened to the rock which cannot move, drownd it firm and deep in the Saviour's ground.

[62 : 53] Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with each one of us now and forevermore.

Amen. Amen. Amen.