

Worship@Home 23rd June 2024
Week 4: Bible Month
With Revd David Speirs

Opening Prayer:

Gracious God, of mercy and forgiveness you are one who loves and cares for us. When we turned away from your Word you did not hold our sins against us. Instead you offered us your Son Jesus Christ that we might find reconciliation with you through him. We thank you for Christ's self-giving love on the cross and the new life that we receive through the power of the resurrection. Renew us through your Holy Spirit and remind us of your good purposes. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

STF 51 – Great is thy faithfulness

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TrPt4CPIDJw>

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father
There is no shadow of turning with Thee
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not.
As Thou hast been, Thou forever will be.

Great is Thy faithfulness

Great is Thy faithfulness

Morning by morning new mercies I see

All I have needed Thy hand hath provided

Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me.

Summer and winter and springtime and harvest
Sun, moon and stars in their courses above
Join with all nature in manifold witness
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love...
[Chorus]

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow
Blessings all mine with ten thousand beside...
[Chorus]

By Thomas O. Chisholm (1866-1960)

Words & Music © 1923, renewed 1951, Hope Publishing Company.

CCLI Song Number: 18723

Please read:

Genesis 50: 15-21

<https://bible.oremus.org/?ql=83998363>

Time to Reflect

The story of Joseph and his brothers, found in Genesis 37-50, is one of my personal favourites in Genesis. This is partly because I have fond childhood memories of seeing the Andrew Lloyd Webber musical 'Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat' and singing songs from the production at school. However, it's also because the story of Joseph is one that reminds us of God's sovereignty and providence working within human history. Joseph faces many difficulties and challenges, including being sold into slavery by his brothers, being taken to a foreign land, and being placed in prison. However, in all of these events God safeguards his purposes and brings about his good through Joseph's story.

In the verses that we have today Joseph's father, Jacob, has died and his brothers have become fearful that Joseph may bear a grudge towards them because of the crimes they have committed against him. So the brothers share the words of their father with Joseph, asking him to forgive them, while they themselves weep and fall down before him, offering to be his slaves.

Joseph responds to his brothers with kindness and forgiveness telling them:

"Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today."
(Genesis 50:20).

This echoes an earlier part of the story when Joseph previously found himself calming and allaying his brothers' fears by expressing a theological perspective that puts God at the centre of all things (See Genesis 45: 5-11). Joseph is able to see how God has been working in his life, and in the lives of others, as well as the events which he has been situated within. Joseph has not been given an easy ride, or withheld hardship and challenge, but through it all God has been with Joseph working his good purposes out.

The story acts as a reminder that God's ultimate good purposes do not depend on our human intentions nor can they be frustrated and quashed by our mistakes. Instead God works through all circumstances to fulfil his

redemptive plans for us and for the whole of creation.

The story of Joseph has some parallels with the story of Jesus in that both speak to God's redemptive purposes for humanity. In Christ God works his good purposes out amongst us. Although Jesus is mistreated and crucified by human beings, God uses the cross as the means by which humanity finds forgiveness, reconciliation, and redemption.

In Genesis 50: 15-21 Joseph shows grace, kindness, and forgiveness towards his brothers who have wronged him and in so doing demonstrates true godliness. God also offers us his loving kindness and forgiveness despite what we have done against him and gives us the opportunity to live in a restored relationship with him. This restored relationship is possible through Jesus Christ and because of what he has done for us on the cross and through the power of the resurrection. Our salvation has therefore not come about because of our own merit or the high standards of behaviour that we have demonstrated. Rather salvation depends on God's grace, offered out to us, and on his action in Christ for us.

As we come to the end of our journey through Genesis we recall a narrative that has celebrated God's sovereignty and purposes being worked out in relationship with humanity and all of creation. We are reminded that God continuously brings about transformation by creating new beginnings and bringing about hope. God invites us to participate in his work and partner with him in a meaningful manner. God's plans for humanity and creation lead to him sending Jesus in order to enable a reconciliation between him and us. Jesus is at the very centre of God's story of creation and redemption, and brings us back to God's creational intentions: That God created all things to be good and is the one to restore that goodness. So let us thank God for his goodness and for the eternal love that he has for us in Jesus.

Prayer of Intercession

You are invited to pray silently for:
The needs of the world...

The Church and its calling...
Loved ones going through difficult times...
For peace, justice, and reconciliation...
In Jesus name. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven...

StF 440 – Amazing Grace

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lxS14vTCPsY>

Amazing grace — how sweet the sound —
that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
was blind, but now I see.

God's grace has taught my heart to fear,
his grace my fears relieved;
how precious did that grace appear
the hour I first believed!

Through many dangers, toils and snares
I have already come;
God's grace has brought me safe thus far,
and grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me,
his word my hope secures;
he will my shield and portion be
as long as life endures.

And, when this heart and flesh shall fail
and mortal life shall cease,
I shall possess within the veil
a life of joy and peace.

When we've been there ten thousand years
bright shining as the sun,
we've no less days to sing God's praise
than when we first begun.

By John Newton (1725 – 1807)

Final Prayer

Gracious God, we thank you for the story of Joseph and his brothers that reminds us that you safeguard and protect your divine purposes for us. We thank for your loving care and for the forgiveness and new life that you offer us in Christ and through the Holy Spirit. Help us to trust in you and in your divine promises revealed to us in Jesus. We ask this in his name, Amen.