

24TH JANUARY 2021

FERINTOSH PARISH CHURCH

WORSHIP AT HOME



www.ferintoshparishchurch.org.uk

No doctrine is more excellent, or necessary to be preached and studied, than Jesus Christ, and him crucified. (John Flavel)

HYMN

Be still for the presence of the Lord
The Holy one is here
Come bow before him now
In reverence and fear
In Him no sin is found
We stand on Holy ground
Be still for the presence of the Lord
The Holy one is here.

Be still for the glory of the Lord
Is shining all around
He burns with Holy fire
With splendour He is crowned
How awesome is the sight
Our radiant King of light
Be still for the glory of the Lord
Is shining all around.

Be still for the power of the Lord
Is moving in this place
He comes to cleanse and heal
To minister His grace
No work too hard for Him
In faith receive from Him
Be still for the power of the Lord
Is moving in this place.

PRAYER

Gracious God and ever blessed Father, as we turn now to the Scriptures, we ask for your blessing. As we read, as we study, as we seek to find what you would have to say to us in this season of our lives, we pray that by the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit you would minister to us individually and corporately as a church family. And we ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING

GENESIS 39: 20-23 (NKJV)

20 And Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, the place where the king's prisoners were confined, and he was there in prison.

21 But the LORD was with Joseph and showed him steadfast love and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison.

22 And the keeper of the prison put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners who were in the prison. Whatever was done there, he was the one who did it.

23 The keeper of the prison paid no attention to anything that was in Joseph's charge, because the LORD was with him. And whatever he did, the LORD made it succeed.

LORD'S PRAYER

*Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.*

SERMON

Joseph learned something in his life which made that period of lockdown meaningful and purposeful. We read four times in this chapter in verses 2 and 3 and 21 and 23 that the Lord was with Joseph. It's a very important statement.

God was with Joseph. You remember the words of Jesus in the Great Commission, some of the final words that He ever spoke, "I will be with you always to the end of the ages." God with us, Immanuel. And here in Genesis 39, God, Immanuel, Jesus, if you like, is being displayed through the lens of providence; that as Joseph's life is being navigated in a certain direction by circumstances that are beyond his control, God is ensuring that His redemptive purposes for saving His people are being kept.

It was important that Joseph be kept because he is in the line and lineage of Jesus. God had made a promise in Genesis 3:15 that the seed of the woman would crush the head of Satan. He had made promises to Abraham that through his seed the Gospel would spread to all the world. And God made similar promises to Isaac and to Jacob and now Joseph is being kept even as he's being sold into slavery in Egypt. There's a broad sense in which God is saying, "I'm keeping my promise, do you see?" And He wants the readers of Genesis to understand, that even now, even in these strange circumstances, God is working out His plan and purpose but also in the details of Joseph's life. We can say that Joseph was being providentially preserved because God has a purpose.

William Cowper, wrote, "God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform, He plants His footsteps in the sea, And rides upon the storm. Deep in unfathomable mines, of never failing skill, He treasures up His bright designs, And works His sovereign will."

Well, God was also with Joseph for a purpose he did not yet know in his imprisonment. God was with him. And first of all, God was with him in the relationship he had with his jailer, but all of that was to lead to his relationship with the Pharaoh. Joseph has a skill set. He can interpret dreams and he interpreted the jailer's dreams, and then when Pharaoh has a series of dreams that he cannot understand about fat cows and thin cows and you remember the story, it is Joseph who comes to the Pharaoh's aid and he foresees a time in the near future when there would be a drought and a famine, and Joseph, who then is put in charge of Egypt and the granaries and so on, sets in motion an event that would save Egypt but it would also save Israel, filling the storehouses with grain so that when the famine and drought came they would have plenty of food.

And eventually, we remember, Joseph's brothers and Joseph's father, Jacob, would come down to Egypt and they would be rescued, and Israel would spend 400 years in Egypt only later to be delivered. You remember the words Joseph uses in Genesis 49 when his brothers come to him and they don't recognise him, "You meant it for evil but God meant it for good." Their actions were morally accountable. They were accountable for their actions and their actions were evil. They sold him into slavery and their intent was evil but God was overruling. In every moment, in every action, even in sinful actions, God is still in charge. God is still overruling.

John Flavel, the Puritan from Dartmouth, wrote a wonderful little book called "The Mystery of Providence," and in that book he says something that's very true. He says that providence needs to be read in the same manner that Hebrew is to be read, backwards. You don't understand what's happening now but from the perspective of distance, looking back over the years you can see the hand of God at work.

God was with Joseph but in a manner that he didn't fully understand right then, and that's probably where you and I are just now. We range from one view to another as to what we're doing just now. We've probably thought of everything from A to Z about it. But one thing is for sure: while we are in this very strange set of circumstances, in this lockdown, may we use this opportunity to learn as Joseph learned, to learn about ourselves, to learn about our weaknesses, to learn about frailty that we are jars of clay, and to learn about God who is the same yesterday, today and forever, to learn about our Saviour Jesus, to love him more, to follow him more closely, to spend time in prayer, to catch up on the reading that we promised to do years ago. God moves in mysterious ways, his wonders to perform.

HYMN

Abide with me, fast falls the eventide
The darkness deepens Lord, with me abide
When other helpers fail and comforts flee
Help of the helpless, oh, abide with me

I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless
Ills have no weight and tears no bitterness
Where is death's sting?
Where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still, if Thou abide with me.

PRAYER

Father, we thank you for your word, we praise you that it is infallible and inerrant. We pray, Lord, this morning that we might learn in these seasons of our lives what it is that you want to teach us when we are in this situation. Bless us, we pray. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

BENEDICTION

And now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all this day and forevermore, Amen.

WORSHIP

As we are now in another lockdown it means that we are no longer able to meet in the church building. As well as the video recording and the Worship at Home material which will continue to be made available through the church website and Facebook page, we will start a Zoom-service on Sunday mornings. The Zoom-service will begin at 11am for about 30-40 minutes. If you would like to join the Zoom-service, please contact the Session Clerk
SessionClerk@ferintoshparishchurch.org.uk Please continue to take care and stay safe.

LADIES BIBLE STUDY

The Ladies Bible Study meet on Wednesdays at 9.45am on Zoom. We are looking at five studies called Living Christianity: following Jesus in every area of life. If you'd like to join us please contact jintys@btinternet so that an invitation can be sent to you.