

# Alton Baptist Church e-Service 11<sup>th</sup> July 2021

## The Lord leads Joseph – The middle and last years

It is a joy to share with you once again whether it is online or at the church. Through these difficult months it has been a blessing to be involved with these e-Services as they have introduced me to new songs and the messages from the scriptures have been an encouragement. May the Holy Spirit be with us as we bring our praise and thanks to such a faithful and loving God, and gain a fresh vision of His involvement in our lives.

Proverbs 29: 18 (King James Version)

“Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.”

**Song:** Be Thou my vision, O Lord of my heart

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6CMclLT\\_Hjg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6CMclLT_Hjg)

### **Prayer:**

Father we praise you that through knowing you we can have a wonderful vision of life, for Jesus said that He came that we might have life and have it to the full. We rejoice that, “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hand.” In acknowledging this we recognise that we fall far short in giving you the adoration and thanks that is due to you as a Holy God who is faithful, loving and compassionate. Forgive us, Lord that we allow the things of this world to distract us from giving you the reverence and awe that is due to you. We ask that the Holy Spirit will be with us as we spend time in your presence so that we will grow in our knowledge and love of you. We pray that we will find in You that peace within our heart and mind that the world cannot give to enable us to serve you faithfully. We pray this in the name of Jesus. Amen.

**Song:** Give thanks to the Lord, our God and King:

For ever God is faithful, for ever God is strong. For ever God is with us

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PGTZq3uCPm0>

**Intercessory Prayer:**

As we come to our time of prayer we can give thanks that we bring our petitions to a faithful God who is strong and always with us in all circumstances.

Let us give thanks for the success of the vaccination programme and for those who developed it and those who have delivered it, for we are a fortunate nation.

We pray for those who serve the community in the NHS, the police force, in government both central and local, for those working in distribution services, in manufacturing, in education and for those in the care industry. May we be thankful for them and not take them for granted.

We pray for God's protective hand upon the nations as restrictions are lifted and that the economies of the world can be restored to preserve the livelihoods of people.

We pray that in these uncertain times Christians will be faithful in proclaiming the gospel message both in word and in action so that people will come to faith in Christ.

Let us remember those within the church at Alton and bring our personal petitions and requests to the Lord.

**Song:** People need the Lord

When will we realise people need the Lord. They must hear the word of life. When will we realise we must give our lives.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1uZcGaixMhg>

**Prayer:**

Father, help us to realise our responsibility to proclaim the good news both in word and by our daily lives. As we look at the life of Joseph may we learn how important it is to keep close to you and allow your Word to be our guide through life. May the power of the Holy Spirit build us up in a greater love and knowledge of the Lord as we study your Word. In the name of Jesus. Amen

## The Lord leads Joseph – The middle and last years

We listened to the song 'People need the Lord' and as we look at the life of Joseph we see the hand of the Lord upon his life. When we looked at the early years of Joseph we ended by reading Genesis 39: 2 "The Lord was with Joseph and he prospered." He has a responsible position in Potiphar's household, however we see the situation change drastically for him. Genesis 39: 6 -10 "Now Joseph was well-built and handsome, after a while his master's wife took notice of Joseph and said, 'Come to bed with me!' But he refused. 'With me in charge,' he told her, 'my master does not concern himself with anything in the house; everything he owns he has entrusted to my care. No-one is greater in this house than I am. My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God? And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even to be with her."

This passage shows how the hand of the Lord is upon Joseph to protect him from falling into sin. There is a persistent attempt by Potiphar's wife to seduce him. We see how he deals with this. We read he refused her advances, this shows that he is resisting the temptation to enter into an adulterous relationship. He resists by stating his loyalty to his master, Potiphar, he acknowledges the responsibility he has and he is going to be faithful in honouring the trust that Potiphar has in him. He clearly states that he is not prepared to sin against God and he endeavours to keep out of her way. The way that Joseph deals with the advances of Potiphar's wife provides a wonderful example to us in the way we can overcome when we are being tempted to sin. In James 4: 7 we are told, "Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." Joseph resisted. But Potiphar's wife was not finished and in Genesis 39: 11 – 18 we read how she attempted to seduce him again and as he fled from her she caught him by the cloak and as he left the cloak remained in her hand. She then made up a story and told her household and Potiphar that Joseph had attempted to sleep with her and when she screamed he fled leaving his cloak with her. Sadly for Joseph her lies were believed and Potiphar had Joseph placed in the king's prison. As in Joseph's earlier life he subjected to injustice and he just has to accept his new circumstances. However we are encouraged when we read in Genesis 39: 20 – 23, "But while Joseph was there in the prison, the Lord was with him; he showed him kindness and granted him favour in the eyes of the prison warder. So the warder put Joseph in charge of all those held in the prison, and he was made responsible for all that was done there. The warder paid no attention to anything under Joseph's care, because the Lord was with Joseph and gave him

**success in whatever he did.”** Isn't this wonderful to read, THE LORD WAS WITH JOSEPH AND GAVE HIM SUCCESS. Even in prison Joseph gains the trust of the prison warder, his lifestyle and integrity is recognised. This is a challenge to us, does our lifestyle show that Christian distinctive that the Lord is with us.

In Genesis 40 we read how Joseph accurately interprets the dreams of the king's cupbearer and baker. The cupbearer is restored to his position with the king and Joseph makes a request to the cupbearer. **Genesis 40: 14, “But when all goes well with you, remember me and show me kindness; mention me to Pharaoh and get me out of this prison.”** Once again Joseph is let down for we read in **Genesis 40: 23 “The chief cupbearer, however, did not remember Joseph; he forgot him.”** How easy it is for us to forget those who show kindness to us? Remembrance is an important part of our walk with the Lord especially that we remember that God gave His one only Son to die upon a cross to restore our relationship with Him. Tragically we often recall all too easily the injustices we consider that people have done to us. We do not see this in Joseph who has suffered many injustices from his brothers and from Potiphar's wife.

We read in Genesis 41 that Joseph remains in prison but, two years after he helps the king's cupbearer, Pharaoh has a dream. No-one is able to interpret the dream. **Genesis 41: 9 “Then the chief cupbearer said to Pharaoh, ‘Today I am reminded of my shortcomings.’** He then recalls how Joseph had interpreted his dream and Pharaoh sends for Joseph.

**Genesis 41: 15 – 16 “Pharaoh said to Joseph, ‘I had a dream, but no-one can interpret it, But I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it.’ ‘I cannot do it,’ Joseph replied to Pharaoh. ‘but God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires.’”**

Joseph hears the dream and he gives an interpretation that satisfies Pharaoh. The details of the dream are given in chapter 41 but the outcome is a complete change of circumstance for Joseph as we see the response of Pharaoh in **Genesis 41: 39 – 40 “Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, ‘Since God has made all this known to you, there is no-one so discerning and wise as you, You shall be in charge of my palace, and all my people are to submit to your orders, Only with respect to the throne will I be greater than you.’ So Pharaoh said to Joseph, ‘I hereby put you in charge of the whole land of Egypt.’”**

Joseph is only thirty years old and he was given great responsibility to oversee the preparation for the time when famine will come to Egypt and the surrounding lands. The Lord is with Joseph and he is successful in

the work he has done and Egypt has grain so this results in other nations coming to Egypt to buy grain. In Genesis 42 we read how Joseph's brothers go to obtain grain from Egypt and details are given in the way that Joseph deals with them for he recognised them but they did not realise that he was their brother. We cannot go into all the detail of the events that take place. However we read in **Genesis 42: 24 "He turned away from them and began to weep."** Joseph is greatly moved by seeing his brothers and it brings him to tears, he has compassion for them and does not hold it against them for what they did to him.

Events develop and the brothers return to Egypt for a second time and Joseph has further dealings with them that are detailed in Genesis 43 and 44, (I would encourage you to read them). In chapter 45 we read the moving account when Joseph reveals himself to his brothers. **1 – 5**

**"Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all his attendants, and he cried out, 'Make everyone leave my presence!' So there was no one with Joseph when he made himself known to his brothers. And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard him, and Pharaoh's household heard it. Joseph said to his brothers, 'I am Joseph! Is my father still living?' But his brothers were not able to answer him, because they were terrified at his presence. Then Joseph said to his brothers, 'Come close to me,' When they had done so, he said, 'I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold to Egypt! And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you.'"**

What a wonderful way that Joseph treats his brothers, he wants them close to him, he does not blame them but assures them that all that happened was part of God's plan for his life.

Chapters 46 – 50 reveals more of the story Joseph and the way that Jacob his father comes to live in Egypt, and once again I would encourage you to read it. However there is one final passage from Genesis 50 19 – 21 that beautifully sums up the way that God had his hand upon Joseph's life. **"But Joseph said to them, 'Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children. And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them.'"**

Once again he reassures his brothers and clearly affirms that this is GOD'S PLAN for his life. He then graciously makes provision for them. Verse 26 says, "Joseph died at the age of a hundred and ten. And after they embalmed him, he was placed in a coffin in Egypt."

We learn so much from the life of Joseph that clearly shows how God wonderfully led him in his journey through life. He was ill-treated by his brothers, sold into slavery, he resisted temptation, was wrongly imprisoned and forgotten yet through all of this he did not become bitter but had a heart of compassion. We can be encouraged that the Lord leads us in our own unique journey through life. We can be a blessing to others and we can encourage others to come to know the Lord. We can also be grateful for all that He has done in our lives so far. Our experience will be nothing like Joseph's but we can be blessed by knowing that Our Saviour, Jesus, will lead us in the remaining part of our journey.

**Prayer:**

Father we thank You that we can be encouraged by the way you led Joseph. That the way he conducted his life is an example to us; that you lead in wonderful ways and guide our lives that they might bear fruit.  
Amen

**Song:** All the way my Saviour leads me  
Jesus led me all the way!

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

**Blessing:** Ephesians 3: 20 – 21

Now unto him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen