



February 2021 Newsletter



WELCOME

LORD'S DAY

Morning Worship—11.00am

Evening Worship—6.30pm

PRAYER MEETING

Thursday—7.30pm (Currently meeting via Zoom)

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WORD FROM THE MANSE

Dear congregation,

It is well known that in the Reformed Presbyterian Church we have liberty as to whether we address God as “you” or “thou”. In our own congregation, among the men who pray, there is a mixture. I have never sought to force anyone to change their practice and no one has ever tried to change mine. Within our congregation I have never heard a contentious word spoken on the subject. Nevertheless some accuse our denomination of irreverence by trying to accommodate God to our level. Therefore, lest these external criticisms unsettle any of us, let us consider – is it irreverent to address God with “you”?

From the outset, we must be clear that in the Bible “thou” is not the reverent form of you. While some associate the pronouns “thou, thee, thy” with a greater sense of solemnity, this is not actually the distinction between them and “ye, you, your”. The historic difference between them was that the former pronouns were singular and the latter were plural. In other words, one person might have been addressed by saying, “Thou art a man”, whereas two or more people by saying “Ye are men.” An example of a verse that uses both is Exodus 4:15, “And **thou** shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth: and I will be with **thy** mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach **you** what **ye** shall do.” In this example God speaks to Moses about Aaron. Initially, He uses the singular “thou/thy” to address Moses, but at the end, He switches to “you/ye” which encompasses Moses and Aaron together.

This singularity vs. plurality is the distinction in the King James version and the Scottish Psalter. It has nothing to do with reverence. Yes, God was addressed as “thou” in the KJV, e.g. Psalm 31:14, “But I trusted in **thee**, O LORD: I said, “**Thou** art my God””, but not because it was more reverent, but because God is one God. Compare it with Genesis 3:9, “And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, ‘Where art **thou**?’” If the “thou” of Psalm 31:14 is reverent, logic would demand that the “thou” of Genesis 3:9 be considered reverent too. But no! The LORD God was not speaking reverently to Adam who had just fallen into sin. Rather he was addressing him as an individual and so the King James translators use the singular pronoun: “thou”. Or what about when the LORD addresses Satan “Whence comest **thou**?” No linguistic gymnastics can substantiate us concluding that God was honouring Satan simply by using “thou”. Was it reverence that caused Jehu to say the following to Joram before killing him, “What peace, so long as the whoredoms of **thy** mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts are so many?” In summary, in King James usage, there is no reverent-familiar distinction of address. A king would address the lowest slave as “thou” and the lowest slave could reply, not improperly, with the same.

But what we have maintained raises the question, ought we to pray to God as “thou” because He is singular? Is it irreverent to address him as “you” because that pronoun is plural? That is a possible argument, but only if we concede that this is what the pronouns currently mean, rather than what they meant in the past. Modern English does not maintain this difference between the second person singular and plural. As one who appreciates grammar, I wish that English had a distinction. If I said, “I am glad that you are here,” how would you know whether I am addressing you and a crowd of people or a you as an individual? Only the context could tell you. But there can be ambiguity. Think of occasions when you are in a room of people and you ask, “Will you do that?” Who is meant? Everyone or a group within the group or an individual member of the group? We can only distinguish by naming the person(s) we are addressing or by body language. This “problem” has led to various creative solutions, some of which defy grammar: “How are you?” “How are y’all?” etc. The simple fact is that modern English does not have a difference between singular and plural you. We can even go further and say that English has not had this distinction for quite some time. The King James Bible was first printed in 1611 but even at this time “thou” was beginning to be replaced with “you”. To prove this point you only need to consult the works of William Shakespeare and see that he uses both forms for individuals. By 2021, “thou” is clearly archaic. It is only used in some very specific settings and not universally.

Where is the consistency? For those who criticise the Reformed Presbyterian Church for using “you” in prayer, why do they not use “thou” in every day life? How is it remotely consistent for someone to address me as an individual, “Your church is irreverent in its choice of pronoun!” Ought that person not to strive for consistency in all things and maintain the distinction between singular and plural - “Thy church is irreverent in its choice of pronoun.” The charge is foolish. Some of these same people will pray in Gaelic using “thu” and not “sibh” and the inconsistency will not dawn on them.

What is the purpose of me writing this article? I am not trying to change anyone's practice. If people read from the KJV and sing from the 1650 Psalter it is natural that their prayer language will be drawn from these sources and they might employ "thou". On the other hand, if people read from a modern version then it is equally natural that they will employ "you" in prayer. I don't accuse any side of being wrong. But I simply say that the difference in pronoun does not indicate whether there is reverence or not. Some who use "you" might be flippant in prayer, but equally they might be godly people who approach their Father in Heaven with a heart of love. Some who use "thou" might be honouring the Almighty, but equally they might be hypocrites who cover over their dead heart with traditional language. Let us not judge by external appearances!

What is my purpose? Let it not be argued that we are accommodating God to our current trends and fashions. Do not believe this slander. The argument may sound convincing, but a when you take a moment to consider its logic then it falls apart.

Every blessing,
Stephen

NEWS & EVENTS

LOUGHBRICKLAND CALL OF REV. KENNETH STEWART

Rev. Kenneth Stewart has received a call from Loughbrickland Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland. Please remember Mr Stewart as he prayerfully considers this call.

Loughbrickland RPCI is the congregation of the late Rev. David Silversides, who served there for many years. Mr Silversides preached at our own Communion in February 2016 .



Rev. Kenneth Stewart

ABORTION THE BIGGEST CAUSE OF DEATH IN 2020

Abortion was the biggest cause of death worldwide in 2020 – responsible for more fatalities than cancer, heart disease and coronavirus put together. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), around 73.3 million abortions take place every year, with almost 30 per cent of pregnancies ending in abortion.

The data group Worldometer estimates all other causes of death totalled nearly 59 million last year – meaning abortion is responsible for around 55 per cent of all deaths. By comparison, communicable diseases were estimated to be responsible for 13 million deaths, and cancer for around 8 million worldwide. Coronavirus was reported to be behind more than 1.8 million deaths.

WHO estimates approximately 200,000 abortions take place every day – or more than two every second – meaning more than 3 million abortions have already taken place this year.

Last year, obtaining an abortion in the UK became easier than ever before, with Westminster politicians imposing a liberal abortion regime on Northern Ireland in March to allow abortion up to twelve weeks for any reason, up to 24 for most reasons, and up to birth if the unborn child is deemed to have a disability.

In England, Wales and Scotland, emergency coronavirus measures were used to introduce DIY home abortions, whereby women can now obtain abortion pills following only a telephone or video consultation, and without having been seen in person. Despite concerns that the practice is unsafe, politicians are consulting on making the temporary changes permanent.

GLEANINGS BY BILL LUCAS

NO MORE SEA

"And there was no more sea" (Rev. 21.1)

The sea is a symbol of separation, of distance, and of isolation. Even in Scripture's imagery, the "islands of the sea" are far away -- removed from society by the sea. In these last chapters of John's Revelation, some expositors have found described the glory of the church on earth in its final state of spiritual progress and adornment. However the passage may be correctly interpreted, we do have an illustration of the glory of heaven here.

Heaven is the absence of all separation from Christ and from the fellowship of the church, His bride. For the traveller heavenward, it is the home and haven of rest which they desired to see. For believers, heaven is a place where there is "no more sea."

For those who live on islands, travelling home by sea can be a very emotional experience. The drawing power of home with all its isolation makes whatever perils and dangers the sea has to offer during the voyage worth enduring. The believer has this experience, more or less, as he views heaven as his home. As he nears that happy land beyond the horizon of this earthly life, he feels the drawing which help him face trouble.

Many times the waves roar, deep calling to deep in his experience. Loss and sickness, cold and weary nights of fear, contrary winds in providence, the heavy seas of trouble -- these he encounters in his voyage. But he presses forward to the other side in hope. He has launched out into the deep at Christ's command and call, and he must ever check his course by the compass of Christ's Word. Holding the rudder firmly, he directs his little boat into the winds.

As he makes for the further shore, he looks up for consolation. Samuel Rutherford, amidst the tossing and struggle of his life, had that comfort and assurance which believers who long for the haven have:

"I have wrestled on toward Heaven 'gainst storm, and wind and tide;
Now, like a weary traveller, that leaneth on his guide,
Amid the shades of evening, while sinks life's ling'ring sand,
I hail the glory dawning from Immanuel's land."

How blessed to live with this hope! How it shortens the times of loneliness, how it brightens the days of storm clouds; how it even makes contrary winds and raging billows profitable to our voyage!

Rev David Campbell (F P Church)

THE INFIRM AND WEAK

Blessed Lord, may I be strong not for myself alone, but for others. Teach me to bear the infirmities of the weak, to support those that are overborne in the fight of life, and to lighten the load of care beneath which many of my fellow-believers are pressed to the earth ...

4

May I be kept, gracious Master, from the corruption that is in the world through lust. May my speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt. May my behaviour be becoming to the gospel of Christ. May there be nothing in my loneliest moments to cause you shame.

F B Meyer

GRACE AND GLORY

"Thy kingdom come ... (Matt 6:10)

What kingdom then is meant when we say, "Thy kingdom come?" Positively a twofold kingdom is meant.

1. The kingdom of grace, which God exercises in the consciences of his people. This is ... God's lesser kingdom. We pray that the kingdom of grace may be set up in our hearts and increased.

2. We pray also that the kingdom of glory may hasten, and that we may, in God's good time, be translated into it.

These two kingdoms of grace and glory differ not specifically, but gradually; they differ not in nature, but in degree only. The kingdom of grace is glory in the seed, and the kingdom of glory is grace in the flower.

The kingdom of grace is glory in the daybreak, and the kingdom of glory is grace in the full meridian. The kingdom of grace is glory militant, and the kingdom of glory is grace triumphant. There is such an inseparable connection between these two kingdoms, grace and glory, that there is no way of passing into the one but by the other.

At Athens there were two temples, a temple of virtue and a temple of honour, and there was no going into the temple of honour, but through the temple of virtue. So the kingdoms of grace and glory are so closely joined together, that we cannot go into the kingdom of glory but through the kingdom of grace. Many people aspire after the kingdom of glory, but never look after the grace; but these two, which God has joined together, may not be put asunder.

Thomas Watson (The Lord's Prayer)

COME AND DINE

But when morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore. (John 21:4)

Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. (John 21:12)

As the sun rose over the Sea of Galilee, Jesus stood on the shore calling to His disciples. Morning by morning He stands on the shore of our lives. Morning by morning He invites us to dine with Him. His offer is simple yet sublime. He encourages us to leave the troubled sea of the world and feast in His presence. He provides all that is needed -- the fish, the fire, and the friendship. The invitation is open this morning, the Lord entreats you to come and dine.

GB

GLORIOUS PRIVILEGES

There are no works to be done, no conditions to be fulfilled, no price to be paid, no wearying years of probations to be passed before a sinner can be accepted with God. Let him only believe on Christ and he is at once forgiven. Salvation is close to the chief of sinners. Let him only repent and believe and this day it is own. By Christ all that believe are at once justified from all things.

J C Ryle

THE WIGTOWN MARTYRS

Margaret MacLachlan, a widow aged 63, and Margaret Wilson, a girl of 18, were drowned in the tide at Wigtown, Scotland, in the year 1685, because of their loyalty to Christ, His Crown and Covenant.



On Solway sands the tide flows fast,
The waters swiftly rise;
Alas for him whom lingering there
The rushing waves surprise!
Full quickly must he hurry thence,
Full swiftly must he ride,
Who tempts his fate on Solway shore
And races with the tide.
Past Wigtown Borough to the sea
The Blednoch River goes,
With many a pool and shifting shoal
Across the sand it flows.
Ah! Blednoch's stream and Wigtown bay
Have sights of sorrow seen,
When ships were stranded on the shore,
And boats have shipwrecked been.

There many a time has woman wept,
And wrung in grief her hands,
When loved ones she longed for have been
Found dead on Solway's sands.
But sight so strange was never seen
As when those martyrs died,
And gave their life on Wigtown shore,
And perished in the tide.
For many years ago 'tis now,
'Twas in the month of May;
The level sands were smooth and dry,
The tide out in the bay:
Twas then the brother of fierce Graham
Of Claverhouse rode down,
With Winram, Strachan, and with Coultron
The Provost of the town.

And cruel Grierson of Lagg
The persecutor came,
To do that day by Blednoch's bank
A deed of sin and shame.
At ebb of tide two stakes of wood
Were driven in the sand,
And fastened there two prisoners were,
At Grierson's command.
An aged widow one of them,
And one a maiden young;
And thus amid the rising waves
The virgin martyr sung:
"To Thee I lift my soul, O Lord,
My God, I trust in Thee;
Let me not be ashamed; let not
My foes triumph o'er me."

The aged widow was the first
Drowned by the rising tide.
"What think you of her now?" in scorn
The persecutors cried.
"What think I of her? In that saint
Whose soul is on the wing
I see but this," the maid replied:
"My Saviour suffering."
Still ever deeper flowed the tide;
The billows higher rose,
As there that young defenceless girl
Was tempted by her foes
To buy her life by breach of faith
To Him who was her Lord;
Ah, she was young, and life is sweet,
And it was but a word.

Yet was temptation vain. She chose
For Christ to suffer wrong;
And still amid the rush of waves
The men could hear the song:
“Let not the errors of my youth,
Nor sins remembered be.
In mercy, for Thy goodness, Lord,
Do Thou remember me.”
By this the waves rose to her lips;
The voice that sung was still.
They raised her head: “Pray for the King!”
“God save him if He will” ,
She answered. Then they dragged her forth
Half drowned amid the tide.
“Will you renounce the Covenant?
Abjure your faith!” they cried.

She raised her eyes nigh dimmed in death:
“Renounce my Saviour? No!
I’m one of Jesus’ little ones.
I pray you, let me go!”
They let her go. The waters closed
Above her youthful head.
One of the glorious martyr throng,
One of the deathless dead.
Her name shall never be forgot,
While Blednoch’s waters run,
And Solway kindles into gold
Beneath the setting sun.
They speak it oft in Scotland’s homes;
’Tis told in far-off lands,
How in the bloom of youth she died
Upon the Solway sands.

And souls are thrilled, and hearts beat high
To hear the story told,
How nobly she maintained her faith
In days that now are old;
And how she kept her trust in God,
And how she scorned the foe,
And how she lived, and how she died,
So many years ago.

Author Unknown



THE FIVE POINTS OF SIN



Poorly instructed Christians often over-simplify the idea of sin, as indeed they regard nearly everything as simpler than it really is. In Scripture, sin has several distinct aspects. When any one of these is stressed as if it were the whole matter, a wrong idea of sin results. The main aspects of sin in Scriptural teaching are:

1—SIN IS GUILT

This means not merely subjective guilt (or the feeling of guilt), but objective guilt. That is, the sinner is regarded and treated as guilty by God. The term guilty means that the sinner has broken the law and therefore he deserves God's righteous wrath and punishment. Guilt is the basic aspect of sin in the Bible.

Modern "liberal" theology denies that sin involves objective guilt and that the sinner deserves to be punished. Liberalism holds that the idea of objective guilt and punishment is contrary to the truth that God is love. In the Bible we learn that God's remedy for guilt is Justification.

2—SIN IS UNCLEANNES

Besides making the sinner guilty, sin makes him defiled or unclean, morally unclean. This is illustrated in Scripture by the loathsome disease of leprosy. This moral uncleanness affects the very core of the human personality, which the Bible calls "the heart," out of which come the issues of life — the drives, motives and impulses which determine our conduct. God's remedy for the dirtiness of sin is Sanctification.

3—SIN IS SLAVERY

Whoever commits sin is the servant or slave of sin. Sin destroys a person's freedom so that he becomes an addict or slave of sin. This is not contrary to human free agency, for man is always free to act according to his own nature. But in the case of the sinner, his nature is sinful, and he cannot act contrary to his own (sinful) nature, so his actions and life are bound to be sinful too. The more truly the sinner's acts express his own inner personality, the more sure they are to be sinful. The unsaved sinner may flatter himself by saying that he can reform any time he chooses to do so. The trouble is, his nature will keep him from choosing to do so. He is like the man who said, "I know I can give up cigarettes, because I have given them up nineteen times already!" It is because of this sinful nature that we must be born again (John 3:3; Ephesians 2:1,8) if we are to be saved. This slavery to sin means that the sinner is unable to repent, believe or turn to God unless God changes his nature. God's nature-changing remedy for the slavery of sin is Regeneration, or the new birth of the Holy Spirit.

4—SIN IS ALIENATION FROM GOD

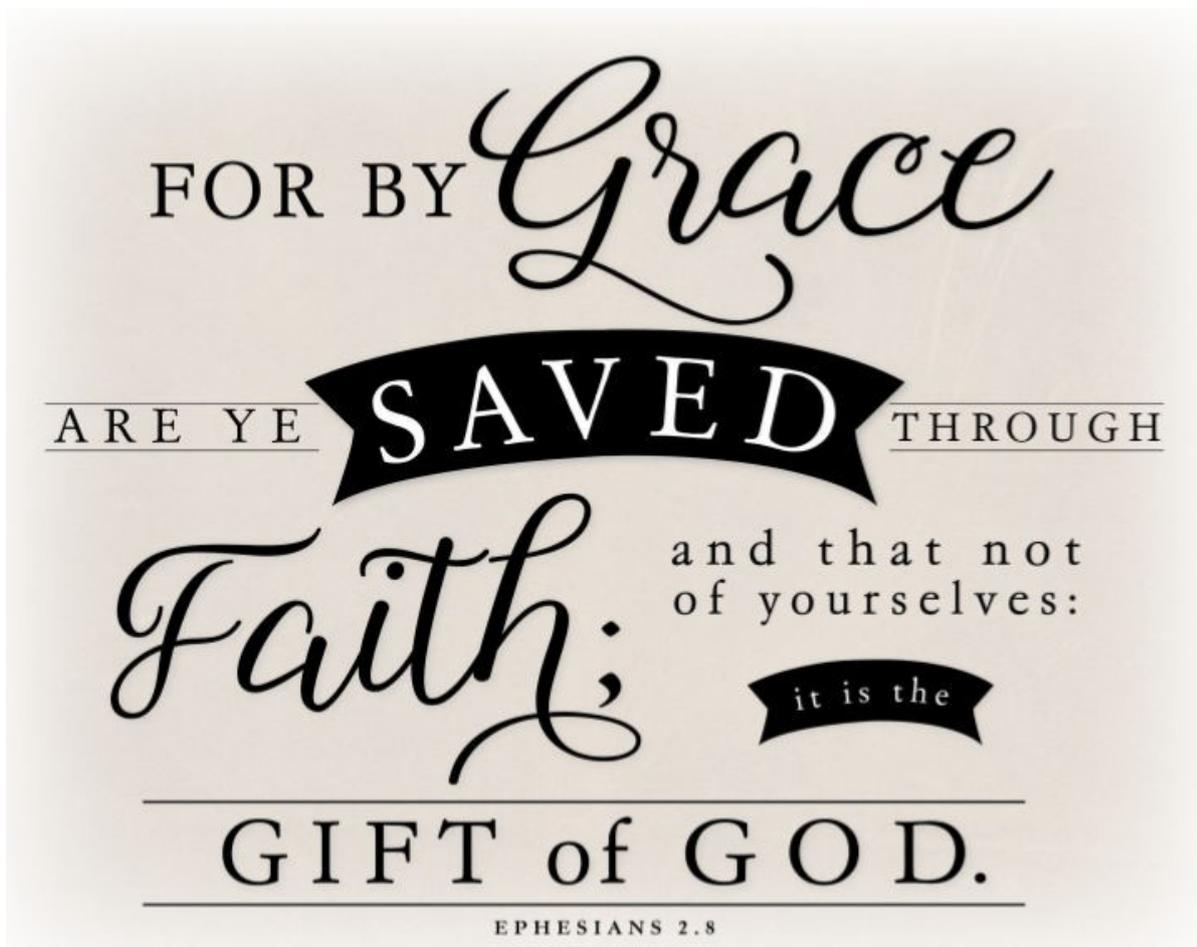
God is holy and he cannot hold communion with those who are sinful. Therefore sin places a barrier between sinful man and the holy God. The sinner is far away from God; he cannot be called a child of God in the religious or ethical sense. One of the first results of the sin of Adam and Eve was that they realized that there was now a barrier between them and God. God's remedy for this condition of alienation or estrangement is Adoption, by which the person becomes a member of the family or household of God.

Misery means suffering, unhappiness. The sinner is always a deeply unhappy person. This is because the only real source of happiness for a human being is to be in a right relationship with God, the source of all good. When this relationship is broken, unhappiness is bound to be the result. The evil called “pain” is the result of the evil called “sin.” In a sinless world there would be no unhappiness, no pain of body or mind. The greatest religion of Asia is Buddhism, which is a quest for a remedy for unhappiness or suffering. Christianity goes deeper — it deals with cause of unhappiness, namely, sin against God. Many people today, in America as well as Asia, want a cure for unhappiness, but few recognize that the real cause of unhappiness is sin, or moral revolt against God, and fewer still are willing to cast themselves absolutely on the mercy of God for Him to cure their sin. Many are like Augustine, who at one stage of his life (before he became a Christian) prayed: “Lord, save me from my sins, but not yet!” It is easy to see that many people in America, in spite of the world’s highest standard of living, are deeply unhappy. Some seek relief in a whirl of “pleasures,” others in alcohol which releases them temporarily from their inward unhappiness. Many cannot endure to be quietly alone with their own thoughts for any length of time. All this witnesses to the truth that sin makes the sinner unhappy. God’s remedy for the misery of sin comes in two stages: (a) in this life, the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit, who is the Giver of joy; (b) in the life to come, Glorification, or our final release from the presence and all the consequences of sin, both physical and spiritual.

The “Five Points of Sin” can be remembered by a simple mnemonic: GUSAM, which stands for Guilt, Uncleaness, Slavery, Alienation, Misery.

Our Saviour was called Jesus, because He should save His people from their sins (Matthew 1:21). When you think of a text like this, remember it includes all five aspects or elements of sin, the whole series from Guilt to Misery. He saves us from them all. Do you see now how an inadequate or incomplete concept of sin leads to failure to grasp and appreciate how much we owe to our Lord Jesus Christ for saving us?

J.G. Vos, *The Blue Banner* (1972)

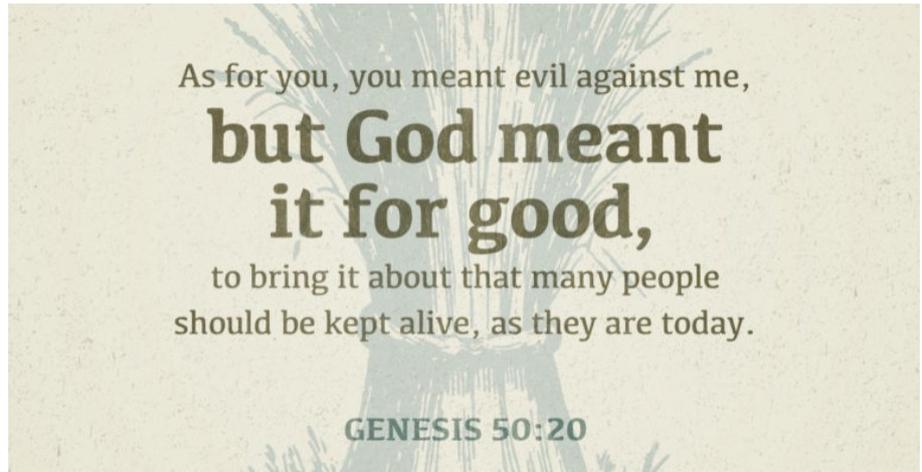


GOD MEANS IT FOR GOOD

The Bible tells us that God controls everything in our lives and in our world. The problem is, however, that our lives and our world often seem so *out of control*. We all have a year full of examples of that, don't we?

One of the most helpful places in Scripture to give us perspective on this is the life of Joseph. Here is a righteous man who experiences prolonged and intense suffering for no apparent reason. His life seems like a tangled mess of bad

luck and unfair affliction. And yet as Joseph reviewed his life with hindsight he was able to say to his brothers who were the instigating cause of it all, *As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.* (Gen 50.20)



We may not always see God's purpose as clearly as Joseph did, with or without hindsight, but his example helps us believe that whether we can see it or not, God *is* in control and is working out his perfect plan.

APPARENT CHAOS

Joseph's life looked like total chaos as lurched from one disaster to the next. To add insult to injury, all his hardships took place after God had promised that things would be very different for him. In two different dreams (which Joseph told Pharaoh later meant a 'thing is fixed by God, and God will shortly bring it about', Gen 41.32) God promised Joseph incredible prestige, glory and success. But nothing could be further from the reality that unfolded for Joseph. The next thirteen years of his life were a nightmare of disappointment and suffering from which he couldn't wake up.

The brothers who were meant to revere Joseph so much that they would bow down to him throw him down a disused well to starve to death. Then they decide to make some money from him and sell him as a slave.

He is sold in Egypt, where Joseph attracts the adulterous attentions of his master's wife. As a reward for standing firm against temptation, he is slandered and thrown in prison, where he remains for perhaps ten years.

There is a glimmer of hope when he interprets the dream of the cupbearer, who is released and restored to service in Pharaoh's court, but any hope of his own release is extinguished when the cupbearer forgets him and Joseph languishes in prison for two more years.

Perhaps your own life bears a striking resemblance to Joseph's. Have you suffered what seems like more than your fair share of disasters and disappointments? Nothing ever seems to turn out the way you thought or hoped it would? Just when you thought things couldn't get any worse, the phone rings and it's more bad news. Maybe you have suffered for years from chronic pain, debilitating weakness, persecution in your workplace, school or even your own home. Have you been slandered and unfairly blamed? What about the apparent chaos of 2020, with its lockdowns, restrictions, isolation, quarrels in society and even in the church?

What's the answer? Trust in God. The essence of faith is trusting when we don't see the whole picture, when we don't have all the information and answers we'd like to have. If we knew all the answers we wouldn't need faith. Faith is only needed when we don't have all the facts in. Heb 11.1: *Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.* Although there was so much Joseph didn't know, he held on to what he did know—that God was in control and would keep all his promises at the right time.

ACTUAL CONTROL

There was a craze back in the 1990s for ‘magic eye’ pictures. They looked like a totally random collection of swirls, colours and dots—no discernible pattern at all. But when you focused your gaze on a point ‘through’ the picture rather than on the picture, suddenly—as if by magic—a 3D image would emerge from the chaos: a shark jumping off the wall towards you (as there is supposedly in the picture I posted with this article!), or something similarly impressive.

I never had much success seeing these hidden images (and my failure to see the shark shows not much has changed!), but Joseph is doing something very like that here. He focuses his gaze on the Lord rather than on the tangled chaos of his life and he sees order and beauty. *As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good...* God takes evil actions prompted by evil motives and uses them to bring blessing. As John Calvin memorably puts it, God turned poison into medicine.

Joseph’s brothers sold Joseph as a slave because ‘with malice aforethought’ they wanted to harm him; but God ordained that those exact actions would lead to good and blessing for the world. Potiphar’s wife slandered Joseph out of spite, to punish him for denying her what she wanted; God ordained it so that Joseph would meet Pharaoh’s cupbearer in prison, interpret his dream and so eventually come into Pharaoh’s court, interpret his dreams and save the nation.

Surely there must have been an easier way to get Joseph to Egypt and Pharaoh’s court? Of course there was—and God could have done it all in way that was much more comfortable for Joseph. But perhaps that wouldn’t have been good for Joseph. Perhaps this favoured and pampered son needed to be humbled before he could be safely entrusted with the second greatest position of power in the world of that time.

God’s wisdom means that he does the best possible thing in the best possible way. It means he takes the countless trillions of threads of circumstance and weaves them together into the most beautiful tapestry imaginable. In Joseph’s case, ‘the saving of many lives.’ The lives of the Egyptians, yes, in God’s common grace; but above all, in his special grace, the lives of Joseph’s family—the family from which one day the Messiah, the Saviour of the world, will come.

How often we see this principle in Scripture! God overrules for good the very things the Devil and our enemies try to use to harm us. He did it in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve’s sin (Rom 5.15); he did it with the exile to Babylon (Jer 29.11); he did it with Job (Job 23.10) and with Paul’s thorn in the flesh (2Cor 12.7-9).

Haven’t you seen the Lord do this in your own life too? The Devil afflicts your body with pain or fills your mind with horrible doubts. He means it for evil—to harm you, to discourage you, to hamstring your effectiveness as a Christian. But your wise and loving Father takes these exact things and uses them to teach you lessons you couldn’t learn in any other way. And you say like the psalmist, *It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn your statutes.* (Ps 119.71)

And he did it above all in the violent murder of Jesus on the cross—the ultimate beloved Son who suffers hardship and humiliation to save the lives of a great multitude, humbled but then exalted to the place of honour, before whom his former enemies bow down. Jesus’ enemies put him to death out of hatred, spite and jealousy. But God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.

If God able to take the murder of his own Son and use it for good, there is no situation in your life or mine too bleak for him to turn to good. In any and every situation we can always say, by faith if not by sight, ‘God is using *even this* for good.’ It doesn’t make the thing itself any less evil or painful, but it gives us a perspective that we desperately need to hold onto so that we are not overwhelmed by the apparent chaos all around us.

Children's Corner



Dear Children,

Isn't it amazing how day and night follow one another all the year round? Also, what about the seasons of the year? One season moves to the next in the same order without getting mixed up. I can't explain to you how all this happens. All I know is that the moon goes round the earth once every month which determines the seasons and the earth goes round the sun once every year which determines day and night. Perhaps some of you are clever enough to explain what is happening but it is wonderful to think how all this takes place so orderly from one day to the next and from one year to the next.

Do you think this is all by chance? Of course it isn't. The Bible tells us that God, who is the Creator of all things, is behind it all and keeps everything going, we may say 'like clockwork'. But that is not how God controls the world. He doesn't wind up the universe like we would a clock and then let it go on it's own. The Bible tells us that God 'upholds all things by the word of His power' (Hebrews 1, verse 3). He is involved every moment of the day in keeping our world and everything in it moving. When David wrote Psalm 145 it was obvious that he was so amazed at the kind of God he had that he breaks into praise saying how great God is and how little we are able to understand about Him. Read that Psalm for yourselves. It is a wonderful Psalm praising the greatness, the glory, the majesty, the goodness and grace of the Lord our God. How blessed are all those who can say that this God is their God!

I love watching programmes and DVDs about the wonders of God's creation. Many of them, sadly, do not acknowledge God as the Creator but you can find excellent ones done by Creation Ministries International and Answers in Genesis. They are very worthwhile and you will learn a lot from them.

The Solar System is wonderful but so too is the life of the tiniest of creatures, some we can only see under a microscope. Imagine that! I remember on one occasion listening to a lecturer who took a cup of water from a pond. To me it looked clear but when he put it under the microscope it was alive with activity – the tiniest of creatures lived there and were really busy moving around. The wonders of God's creation! And the greatest wonder of all is that God is interested in and cares for these microscopical creatures. Microscopical just means that they are so small you can only see them under a microscope. If it is true that God is interested in these creatures, and it is, then know for certain that God is interested in you and cares for you. Imagine that! The God who created the world is interested in you and knows everything about you. In Luke chapter 12 and verses 6 & 7 the Lord Jesus tells the people who had gathered to hear him that not one sparrow is forgotten by God. Then He tells them: "Fear not; You are of more value than many sparrows." Isn't it wonderful to hear these words from the lips of the Lord Jesus! How we should love Him and thank Him for His care of us each day!

Have you ever thought about the wonders of the human body? The brain itself is like a computer. Think how it controls movements of limbs and all the bodily functions. Think of your memory how you can recall things you learnt and heard years ago and maybe had forgotten. Think of how you started life as a tiny tiny baby in your mother's womb. God formed you there, so tiny and yet so perfect. What an amazing Creator! Think too of how you grow from day to day and from year to year in your ability to think, reason and do things. Who gives you that ability? It is God.

As you learn more and more about God and His creation I pray that what you learn and discover will make you praise Him and give Him thanks. I pray that you will see God working in your life as you progress through your years in primary school and grow into your teenage years. He has given you life and the ability to use the many talents he has given you. Use them for His glory and serve Him for He is the best master.

12 With my love and prayers.

Granny M