

# Joseph's Faith & Hope

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Preacher: Rev James MacIver

[ 0 : 00 ] Well, welcome everyone once again to our service this evening. There's only one thing to intimate, there's a number of things on the bulletin sheet, but just a reminder there is a collection at each of the services today, and that collection is in need of Bethesda Hospice.

We're going to begin our worship tonight singing in Psalm 65. Psalm number 65 and verses 1 to 5. Praise weights for thee in Zion, Lord, to thee vows paid shall be.

O thou that hearer art of prayer, all flesh shall come to thee. Iniquities, I must confess, prevail against me do. But as for our transgressions, them purge away shalt thou.

Sing to the end of the double verse 5. Down as far as therefore the ends of all the earth, and those afar that be upon the sea, their confidence, O Lord, will place in thee.

Psalm 65. Praise weights for thee in Zion, Lord. Praise weights for thee in Zion, Lord.

[ 1 : 12 ] To thee, O thou that hearer art of prayer, All flesh shall come to thee.

Iniquities, I must confess, reveal against me do.

But as for our transgressions, then purge away shalt thou.

Blessed is the man whom thou dost choose, And make thy approach to thee, That he will be thy court, O Lord.

May still adweather me. We surely shall be satisfied, With thy abundant grace, And with the goodness of thy house, In all thy holy place, O God of our salvation, Thou with thy righteousness,

[ 3 : 41 ] Thy fearful works unto the clear, Thy truth, Thine answer does express, Therefore the ends of all the earth, And those afar that be upon the sea, Upon the sea, There's confidence, O Lord, The place in thee.

Let's now join together in prayer. Let's call upon the Lord. O Lord, O Lord, How gracious God, How abundant are the promises that you give to your people.

And we thank you, That we have sung in respect to some of these already, Even in these words of the psalm. For blessed is the one whom you choose, And make approach to you, Those who dwell within your courts, Those who seek you, And those who live by faith in you.

O Lord, We give thanks that you assure us also, That even though iniquity may prevail against us, As for our transgressions, You will purge them away. And we thank you that this is our God, As the psalmist spoke of this evening, As we sang these words, Our God, And our confidence in this God.

And we give thanks, O Lord, For the ability you give us, To place our confidence in you. We know that this is not of ourselves. And we know, Lord, That for many people in the world tonight, Their confidence is not in the living God, But in the things of time and of sense, Things which can be seen and are visible, Not those things which are unseen and eternal.

[ 5 : 58 ] And we pray that you would draw minds, O Lord, Anew for this hour of worship, To those things that are unseen. For we know that these are the permanent things.

And we know that the things of this world will perish. And that the world itself will perish at the last. When you come on your great day of judgment, When you bring all before you, And when you will create a new heavens and a new earth, In which righteousness dwells.

We thank you tonight, Lord, That we can approach you as we do. That we are able to come into your presence, Claiming the merits of Christ Jesus. And we give thanks, O Lord, For the way in which you assure us of your acceptance of us, Through him and in him.

And we pray that your blessing will come to bless your word to us, And we open our hearts, O Lord, to receive it. And, O Lord, we know that we are by nature blind to those things of your Spirit.

And indeed that they are in our own natural state foolishness to us. But we give thanks that that same Spirit opens our eyes and our hearts. And creates in us a longing and a true desire after you.

[ 7 : 10 ] And gives us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. And so we pray that that may be our portion anew this evening.

That all who know you will have their knowledge extended. And we pray that you would increase us, Lord, In our attachment to you and our commitment to you. And our love for you and for your cause and for your people.

And we pray that our resolve to serve you in this world might also be intensified. And we pray, O Lord, that your blessing will be with all your people, Wherever they meet tonight and in whatever circumstances.

And we pray for those that we know in our own districts, And throughout our islands and in our Presbytery here. We ask your blessing, Lord, to be with all who meet as we do this evening.

And we pray for the preaching of the Gospel, That it will go forth with power. That your Spirit will apply it to the hearts of all who hear. And that you would endow us with your power from on high.

[ 8 : 10 ] And we pray, Lord, like this congregation, For other congregations at the moment without a minister. And we pray that you would give them the light of your Spirit.

Guide them, we pray. Bless your Gospel meantime in their midst. And we pray that you would encourage your people in all of these situations. We pray for this congregation itself and ask for your continued blessing for them.

And we give thanks for the many years of faithful witness, By which your name has been upheld in this place and in this district. And we pray that that will continue into many years to come.

We pray that you would guide the congregation at this time. And you would bless them with discernment as to who indeed would be sent for, To be their next minister.

And Lord, we pray for those at the moment who have added burdens of responsibility in the congregation. We pray for the elders and the deacons. We pray that you would bless them at this time. And make them a blessing, O Lord, to one another and to the congregation itself.

[ 9 : 16 ] Bless every home and family connected to the congregation in whatever way. And we pray that you would bless, O Lord, that association. And we pray your blessing especially on those who come regularly to hear the gospel And to worship you in this place.

We thank you for these ongoing years of gospel witness and testimony That this congregation has borne to your grace, to your goodness and to your mercy. We ask for any in the congregation, Lord, tonight, Who have adversity of various kinds to attend to, contend with.

Bless those who are troubled in whatever ways, O Lord, in their minds. We pray that you would be with them. We pray that you would give them, Lord, that assurance that all who come to trust in you Are truly blessed, whatever their circumstances in your providence may be.

We pray for those who are ill at this time. We think especially of those who face serious illness and receive treatment. Lord, we ask that you would be with each and all of these alike.

Grant to them that sense of your comfort and your grace. Minister to them in their time of need. We pray for those who mourn the passing of loved ones. Lord, we know how keenly that continues to be an open source for us, Even though many years may have passed.

[ 10 : 37 ] And we pray that you would continue to minister your grace and comfort to those who mourn. Those whose lives now feel so empty without their loved ones. And we do pray, O Lord, that you would provide for them day by day the strength and the vision to continue to trust in you.

Grant to them that faith, O Lord, that will draw their strength from you. Remember our nation at this time of people. Lord, we have indeed confessed and do confess that we have sinned against you and continue to do so.

And we give thanks that we are able individually to come and pray for the people we belong to. For the nation we belong to. You give your people that spirit of prayer, that sense of coming to you with the burdens, not only of their own lives, but of their circumstances in life, out with that.

We ask that as we are so conscious, Lord, of our needs at this time, as a people who have turned our back so largely upon you, Bless, nevertheless, those who fear you in our nation.

We pray that you would multiply their number greatly. We pray that many others will come yet to testify to you being their God and their Saviour. We pray for those in authority over us, that they too would come to that confession.

[ 11 : 58 ] That they may not be swayed, as so often is the case in these days, by the appeals and by the pressure that's laid upon them from other agencies, that so often have an antipathy and even hatred for the Gospel.

Lord, we ask for those who rule over us, for you have asked us to pray, and you require us to pray for those in authority, that we may live in peaceable days and that we may live in days when the Gospel will flourish.

Now, bless the Gospel, we pray, to all ends of the earth. Bless tonight those who have gone forth in your name from this land itself and from this island on missionary enterprises in different parts of the world.

Now, we commit them to you and ask that your blessing will be with them in their labours, wherever they are set, Lord, by your calling. You have promised to be with your people. You have promised to bless your word.

You have promised that it will not return to your void, but will accomplish that which is pleasing to you. And we ask for your protection for those of you people facing danger in carrying out your will, as you have called them to labour for you in different parts of the earth.

[ 13 : 09 ] We ask too, Lord, your blessing tonight for all whom we commit to you, have come to show themselves to be concerned over their own souls' welfare, those who are seeking after you, those who are seeking peace for their souls, who under the Gospel tonight are looking to the difficulties, O Lord, and all as they see it, and coming to trust in you and coming apart from the world, and placing their trust in the living God.

Lord, encourage all those tonight who seek after you and who know that they desire in their hearts to be among your people, and to be a confessing people of God. And we pray that you would encourage them to that end.

Remember, we pray, our young people, Lord, we commit them to you as the rising generation. And we thank you for the number of them that come to Gospel services, and come to Sunday school, and other activities associated with the Gospel.

We pray for those in this congregation itself, at this time who are growing up. Bless them and bless their families, and bless all the efforts made to teach them and familiarise them with the things of the Lord.

May it please you, Lord, to apply these things to their young hearts, lest there be in their lives, as so many of us, wilderness years when we didn't know the Lord, and times when we could have served Him and done so much for Him.

[ 14 : 33 ] May it not be so, Lord, for our people, for our young people. May they come in the days of their use to remember their Creator, and to have their hearts turned to the living God.

And so we pray that you would continue to bless us now, and as we do confess our sins, we seek your cleansing, we seek your pardon, your acceptance of us, and your assurance to your people, O Lord, that when you pardon, their sins are truly forgiven, their sins and iniquities you remember no more.

And so hear us now, we pray, for we ask it all in Jesus' name, and for His sake. Amen. Now we'll continue to praise the Lord.

We're praising this time from Psalm 25. Psalm 25, the first version of the Psalm. Verses 1 to 6. Or we can sing verses 1 to 7 just to complete that section.

Verses 1 to 7 of Psalm 25. Psalm 25. To Thee I lift my soul. O Lord, I trust in Thee. My God, let me not be ashamed, nor foes triumph for me.

[ 15 : 45 ] Let none that wait on Thee be put to shame at all. But those that without cause transgress, let shame upon them fall. Verses 1 to 7 in Psalm 25.

To Thee I lift my soul. To Thee I lift my soul. To Thee I lift my soul. O Lord, I have never seen.

My God, let me not be ashamed, nor foes triumph for me.

Let none that wait on Thee be put to shame at all.

But those that without thy cross transgress, Let shame upon them fall.

[ 17 : 01 ] Show me Thy wish, O Lord. Thy path, O teacher, be.

Until Thou lead me in Thy truth. Heaven might he share me.

For Thou art God that does, To Thee salvation send.

And I upon Thee, O Lord, be. Expecting to attend.

Thy tender mercies, Lord, I pray to remember.

[ 18 : 22 ] And love is thy kindnesses. For it have been a hope forever.

My sins and hopes of you. Could Thou, O Lord, forget.

After Thy mercy. After Thy mercy. Think on me. And for Thy goodness grace.

Let's now read the word of God from the Old Testament. Two short passages. Firstly, the book of Genesis. And the last chapter of the book of Genesis. Chapter 50. And reading from verse 15 to the end of the chapter.

And then afterwards we'll read a few verses from the book of Joshua. Again the last chapter of Joshua. Chapter 24. And the verses from verse 29.

[ 19 : 43 ] But first of all from Genesis. Chapter 50. We'll begin reading at verse 14. This is following from when Joseph and his brothers had gone to bury their father in the land of Canaan.

And this is now their return to the land of Egypt. So Genesis 50 verse 14. Joseph returned unto Egypt. He and his brethren and all that went up with him to bury his father.

After he had buried his father. And when Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead. They said, Joseph will peradventure hate us. And will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him.

And they sent a messenger to Joseph saying, Thy father did command before he died saying, So shall you say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, The trespass of thy brethren and their sin.

For they did unto thee evil. And now we pray thee, Forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father. And Joseph wept when they spoke to him. And his brethren also went and fell down before his face.

[ 20 : 54 ] And they said, Behold, we be thy servants. And Joseph said to them, Fear not, for am I in the place of God. But as for you, You thought evil against me, But God meant it unto good, To bring to pass as it is this day, To save much people alive.

Now therefore fear ye not, I will nourish you and your little ones. And he comforted them and spake kindly unto them. And Joseph dwelt in Egypt, He and his father's house.

And Joseph lived a hundred and ten years. And Joseph saw Ephraim's children of the third generation. The children also of Machir, the son of Manasseh, Were brought up upon Joseph's knees.

And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die, And God will surely visit you, And bring you out of this land, And to the land which he swore to Abraham, To Isaac, and to Jacob.

And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, Saying, God will surely visit you, And you shall carry up my bones from hence. So Joseph died, Being a hundred and ten years old.

[ 22 : 06 ] And they abandoned him, And he was put in a coffin in Egypt. And if we turn to Joshua chapter 24, We can read from verse 29.

These few verses to the end of the chapter. Joshua 24, Verse 29. And it came to pass after these things, That Joshua the son of Nun, The servant of the Lord, Died, Being a hundred and ten years old.

And they buried him in the border of his inheritance, In Timnasera, Which is in Mount Ephraim, On the north side of the hill of Gash. And Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, And all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, And which had known all the works of the Lord, That he had done for Israel.

And the bones of Joseph, Which the children of Israel brought up, Out of Egypt, He buried in Shechem, In a parcel of ground which Jacob bought, Of the sons of Hamor, The father of Shechem, For a hundred pieces of silver.

And it became the inheritance Of the children of Joseph. And Eliezer, The son of Aaron died, And they buried him in a hill that pertained to Phinehas' son, Which was given him in Mount Ephraim.

[ 23 : 33 ] And may God again follow with his blessing, Our readings of his word this evening. Now before we turn to the first of these passages, Let's sing again in Psalm 89, Psalm 89, And at verse 15, Let's sing four verses to the end of verse 18.

O greatly blessed the people are, The joyful sound that know, In brightness of thy face, O Lord, They ever on shall go. They in thy name shall all the day rejoice exceedingly, And in thy righteousness shall they exalted be on high.

Because the glory of their strength doth only stand in thee, And in thy favour shall our horn and power exalted be. For God is our defence, And he to us doth safety bring.

The Holy One of Israel is our almighty King. These verses to God's praise, O greatly blessed the people are. O greatly blessed the people are, The joyful sound that know, In brightness of thy face, O Lord, They ever on shall go.

They in thy name shall all the day rejoice exceedingly, And in thy righteousness shall they exalted be on high.

[ 25 : 35 ] Because the glory of their strength doth only stand in thee, And in thy favour shall the Lord, And in thy favour shall the Lord, Thou's power exalted be.

For God is our defence and peace, To us doth safety bring.

The Holy One of Israel is our almighty King.

Well, would you please turn with me now to the New Testament, To the letter to the Hebrews, Chapter 11, And verse 22.

Hebrews chapter 11, Verse 22. By faith, Joseph, when he died, Made mention of the departing of the children of Israel, And gave commandment concerning his bones.

[ 27 : 11 ] Well, as we read in Genesis, The book of Genesis, If you didn't know anything other than what you read there at the end of Genesis, If you didn't know anything of what follows on from there, In Exodus and the other passages that relate to Israel leaving Egypt, If you didn't know any of that, Or any of the promises God had given to Abraham, Or the information God had given to Abraham, The ending of Genesis is very bleak.

It would seem really that all the lights have gone out, Because here is this man, this Hebrew, Who came from being a boy, brought to Egypt, Brought up in Pharaoh's house by Pharaoh's daughter, And exalted to the most important position in Egypt, Apart from Pharaoh himself.

And yet, here is the end of Joseph's life in this world. And the words are very solid, aren't they? As we read these final words of the last chapter of Genesis.

So, Joseph died, being 110 years old, And they abandoned him, and he was placed in a coffin in Egypt. They abandoned him, and he was placed in a coffin in Egypt.

What a way to end a book with such a reference. It seems almost hopeless, doesn't it? It seems very dark and very gloomy. Why would you end a book with that emphasis?

[ 28 : 47 ] And it's only when you come to other passages in the New Testament, As well as in the Old, such as this verse before us tonight in Hebrews, It's only then that you realise that the ending of Genesis is actually very bright.

Yes, it speaks of death. It speaks of Joseph's body being embalmed and placed in a coffin in Egypt. It speaks of the way in which it seems that the promises of God had disappeared with him.

And yet the opposite is the case. That coffin in Egypt, for all of these years, hundreds of years, Before the people of Israel left Egypt, Many of these years being times of severe persecution, Many of them, I'm sure, wondering what was happening to them.

Had God left them? Where was Joseph's leadership? Why had all these things changed? But this coffin was a perpetual reminder to them, As they remembered Joseph's words, That God's promises would come to pass.

They would look at that coffin and say, We remember what Joseph said. We remember how he reminded us of the promises God gave to our ancestor Jacob, And also to Abraham.

[ 30 : 10 ] That these people that descended from them would be 400 years afflicted in Egypt. But afterwards God, as Joseph himself put it, God will surely visit you.

And he will visit you and bring you out of this land. Strange, isn't it, that a coffin with a dead body in it could be a symbol of hope.

It could be a way of reminding people of the brilliance of the promises of God. But of course that's how it is in the New Testament too, isn't it?

The darkness of Calvary seems like it's put an end to God's promises. The Messiah who came into the world is now no more.

He is dead. His body has been laid in the tomb. Yet that itself is a preparation for what follows.

[ 31 : 10 ] The resurrection. The coming of the Holy Spirit. The bringing of people to life through Jesus Christ and his power. And so this verse contains for us a combination really of Joseph's faith and hope.

And it especially reminds us that Joseph had a very particular view of the people he belonged to. And when he died he made mention of the departing of the children of Israel.

These were his people. And secondly, he actually very much emphasized what he believed. When he gave commandment concerning his bones.

His faith was coming through in that commandment. And saying to those that he was leaving behind. God is not going to be short of his promises. So I'm giving you a command.

Because I believe what God said. You will take my bones with you. When you leave this place. Which is exactly what happened.

[ 32 : 12 ] So first of all, Joseph made known that he belonged to God's people. And that's the case despite the fact of his status in Egypt.

As somebody who was brought up in Pharaoh's household. Known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. But yet he had of course moved on from that. And made himself known as one of these Hebrew people.

He made known he belonged to God's people. Despite his status in Egypt. Despite the fact that he was a ruler of Egypt. He wasn't ashamed to say, I belong to these slaves. I belong to these people.

I belong to those people who are going to be persecuted in this land. So he made known that he belonged to them. Despite his status. And despite what he knew would be their affliction.

Their slavery in days ahead. Now remember Egypt was the superpower of the day. Egypt was the most powerful nation on earth.

[ 33 : 14 ] And held sway over so many other people. Around that part of the world. And it's significant that that was the case.

Because it's in that context. As Joseph came to head up. You might say to be almost as important as Pharaoh himself.

Second in command to the Pharaoh. The king of Egypt. And in that context. He actually declared who his family were. They weren't the Egyptians.

They weren't those that were actually brought up with him in Pharaoh's house. They were these people of Israel. They were the children of Israel. They were the people who would be after Joseph's day.

So badly treated by the Egyptians. His future lay with them. And do you not long for such an allegiance to be made known.

[ 34 : 09 ] By our own leaders at this present day in our country. When we are living in days when so much of the political scene is swayed and influenced by worldly considerations.

Even by sinful practices. By sinful ways of life. That put pressure on governments to actually include them in any policies that they have.

We live in times when you don't actually hear. Certainly not in our own nation at least. Our leaders coming out will say. Well I actually belong to these Christians. I belong to these people who follow the Lord Jesus Christ.

And I'm not ashamed of it. It's almost as if they say. We're not allowed to say that. And indeed that's what many people think. You shouldn't say that. That's just putting Christianity on a pedestal.

That's just treating others of lesser importance. Which of course is not the case. But we long for times. When there will be more people in influence.

[ 35 : 16 ] In authority. In government in our nation. Whether it's in Westminster or in Edinburgh. Who would actually be like Joseph and say. Whatever my upbringing has been.

Whatever my background is. Whatever position I have in the land. I belong to Christians. I belong to the people of Jesus. And it's his power.

That I rely upon. And it's his will. And his word. That my life is governed by. So we find in Genesis. That that's how Genesis ends.

He was placed in a coffin. In Egypt. But the coffin. Placed in Egypt. Was there. To await a particular event. That's why Joseph said.

God will surely visit you. And bring you out of this land. And you shall carry my bones with you. In other words. That coffin.

[ 36 : 16 ] As they looked upon it. Every time they would see that coffin. They would have been buried. In the ground. They would have been kept by them. Where people could see it. I'm sure. The people of Israel themselves.

Where. Having embalmed him. And placed him in the sarcophagus. As it would be. That coffin itself. Would be. A reminder to them. Every time they saw it. Remember what Joseph said.

And as the years went by. And especially as the bad days. Came upon them. As they came to the times of persecution. Long after Joseph. They could still look at that coffin. They could say.

Remember Joseph's words. Remember what he told us. Remember what his faith. Made known to us. It spoke to them. Of a better day ahead.

Now tonight. There are many pressures. On ourselves. To look at the darkest things in life. And think that.

[ 37 : 13 ] This is just how it's always going to be. But there are better days ahead. For God's people. In fact. The best days of their life.

Is still to come. But the devil. And the pressures of the world. Will try and make you conclude. That this is as good as it gets. Why has God.

Not done more for me. As I would desire. Why is there such. Suffering in my life. Why is there such disappointment. Why are things in the world.

As they are. Why is it not easier. To be a Christian. Why is it not. Easier to have an influence. In the world. Why is the gospel. So much opposed. Why is the gospel.

Not so much blessed. As it used to be. All that can weigh upon your mind. All that can. Actually be used. By the devil. Especially to say. What's the point of being a Christian. Things.

[ 38 : 10 ] Are really not any better for you. Than they are for the world. And look at the world. They don't have these problems. Like Psalm 73 again. When the psalmist said. Looking at all those people. Who lived without faith in God.

There are no pains. In their death. They don't actually think. The way I do. They don't have the troubles. That I have. Has there been any point. In following God. These were the reasonings. By which he reasoned.

His way into trouble. Then he went into the sanctuary. Into the temple of God. And then he remembered. What a fool they had been. And so he said.

You will guide me. With your counsel. And afterwards. You will receive me. To your glory. You have taken hold of me. By the right hand.

By the right hand. A member of God. As your God. Nothing is going to stand. In the way. Of the future. That God has. Appointed for you. And for all of God's people.

[ 39 : 08 ] Together. And tonight. If we don't have. That faith in Christ. Then we are outside. Of that hope. And that coffin. Is also a symbol.

Of our destiny. In the sense that it contains. Death. And there is nothing but death. In a lost eternity.

There is no life. And there is no hope of life. Just an ongoing. Eternal darkness. And torment.

And he had as Joseph. He made known he belonged to God's people. Despite the fact. That his status was such. He was ruler. In Egypt. And.

It was also despite. What he knew would come. After him. Despite the slavery. That they would be. Actually. He knew what. What God had told Abraham. Abraham would have passed that on.

[ 40 : 06 ] To Jacob. And then Jacob. To Joseph. At least the days that they were. Before Joseph went to Egypt. And because in those days. Orally. Things were passed on. The promises of God. Passed on.

From one generation. To the next. So it didn't matter whether. Prosperity. Or persecution. Faced Joseph. He was steadfast. In his faith. That didn't divert him.

From believing in God. And believing God's promises. And that so should be. For ourselves. Whether it's prosperity. Or persecution. We have to remain.

Steadfast. In our belief. In God's word. And he looked forward. To what God had promised. Despite all the things. That he would know of. In his life.

He had been in prison. He had been badly treated himself. Before he was elevated. To Pharaoh's. To Pharaoh's. To Pharaoh's. Whether you might say. Prime Minister. Under Pharaoh.

[ 41 : 02 ] He was badly treated. He was thrown into prison. He experienced all the rigors. Of that sort of. Of situation. He knew what it was. To be a believer.

In adversity. To be a believer. In adversity. To be a believer. During adversity. The conditions. Of adversity. So he knew. What he was saying. To these people. To his brothers.

When he said to them. That he was. That God was going to visit them. And they would take his bones. With them. And so it is. For ourselves as well. God's.

Presence. Is guaranteed. To his people. Even in their sufferings. God has promised. To be with them. Even if we don't have that sense. At times. Of God's nearness.

Even if in fact. God's nearness. And the lack of it. Is something. That we find. Troubling to us. Like it was for Job. The promise of God. Is not change. And if you're trusting.

[ 41 : 59 ] In God tonight. The greatest evidence. That God. Is with his people. Is Jesus himself. Because he came. We said this morning. Into this world.

To identify. With us. In our predicament. As sinners. And he experienced. The rigour of this life. He didn't come. As the son of God. As the prince of heaven.

You might say. As God. Indeed. As he was. From all eternity. He didn't come. Into this world. Just to appear. In this world. But be safely shielded. From the troubles of life.

He was tempted. In all points. Like as we are. And yet. Without sin. And just think. Think of these words.

What are your troubles. Tonight. What are your temptations. What are the things. Causing you most concern. In the knowledge.

[ 42 : 54 ] In the knowledge. And experience. Of Christ. To his life. In this world. And therefore. He is able. To carry out. To his people. To his people.

About him. Not only. From his perspective. From his perspective. As the servant. Of God. Who was tempted. In all points. Like as we are. There isn't. A single trouble.

In your life. Small or great. But hasn't already. Registered. In the knowledge. And experience. Of Christ. To his life. In this world. And therefore. He is able.

To carry us. In our afflictions. There is a church. In there. There used to be a church. At least. A building. In Peshwar. Just on the border. Between Pakistan.

And Afghanistan. And. As the. Church. Was being built. Years ago. But they built it. Near enough. In the shape. Of the appearance.

[ 43 : 49 ] Of a mosque. Strongly Muslim. Of course. And. So. It was shaped. Like a mosque. Probably. To. Make it less. Obvious.

That this was going to be. A place of Christian worship. And therefore. Maybe lessen the danger. I don't know. But that's. That's how it was built. Anyway. And. After it was just about. Completed.

A wooden cross. Was then placed. On the top. Of the building. That people around. Then realized. This is actually. A place of Christian worship. This is a place. For Christians. Where.

We don't believe in. This is where he's going to be worshipped. And. One individual. Took a rifle. And. Shot. At the cross. And a bullet.

Went right through it. And left a hole. In the cross. On top of the church. On top of the building. But the local Christians. Decided. They wouldn't repair it. They said. We'll leave it there.

[ 44 : 44 ] As a symbol. That the cross. Is able to bear. All our troubles. So when they looked up. At that cross. With a hole. In the middle of it.

They would be reminded. That Christ. Who died on the cross. Had taken their sins. And taken their troubles. To himself. And that's how it is.

For us tonight. If we were in Christ. If that's our faith. Then. As it is with Joseph. He made mention. When he died. Of the departing. Of the children of Israel. In other words.

He made known. That he belonged. To God's people. Despite his status. And despite. What would be their slavery. In days to come. He still said. This is where I stand. This is who I belong to.

And so tonight. You and I. Have that privilege. We have that privilege. That is. Much easier. In many ways. Than for. The people who came. After Joseph.

[ 45 : 41 ] And his family descendants. To live as believers. In Egypt. But is that. So with yourself. You may be.

A believer. Here tonight. And you haven't yet. Made it known. That you belong. To God's people. Some people may think. It's true about you. And maybe not wrong in that. You know.

God gives us the privilege. Of coming to make known. Publicly. Where we stand. Who we belong to. And why it is. We're not ashamed.

To be followers of Christ. So if you are. Tonight. Hiding your faith. Hiding your light. Under a bush. Your light. Under a bush. God is saying.

To you. Through this text itself. Where Joseph. Made mention. Of the departing. Of the people of Israel. Where he made it known. That he belonged to them. Here's your privilege.

[ 46 : 37 ] And. What privilege it is. Indeed. Whatever difficulties. There may be with it. It's one of our greatest privileges. To make known. That dark world out there. We belong to the people of light.

To the people of God. And you know. Every district. In this island today. Needs. People who will come forward. And place themselves openly.

As followers of Christ. And serve him. And come to testify. That they belong. To these people. He made known. That he belonged.

To God's people. He made known. That he believed. In God's promises. This is what he said. He. When he died. He made mention.

Of the departing. Of the children of Israel. He gave commandment. Concerning his bones. In other words. He believed. What God had said. To Abraham. About this inheritance. Of the land of Canaan.

[ 47 : 32 ] Which was itself. Not the final. Abode. Of God's people. It was a representation. Of that kingdom. Of Christ. That kingdom. In heaven. That inheritance.

That is laid up. For the people. Spiritually. But Joseph. Accepted. The words of God. To Abraham. It wasn't a new revelation. That he received. Just before he died.

He was building. Upon the word. Of God. That had come to him. Through. Having passed it on. Having had it passed on. These generations. Before him. Before him. And so.

That is important. That we pass on. These. Details. These promises. Of God. To our. Following generations. As well. That is why. The children.

Here today. Were at Sunday school. That is why. They come to church. That is why. We teach them. The things of God. Our own generation. As Joseph did. The things of God. The things that God promised.

[ 48 : 28 ] Many years ago. The things that he taught. Our forefathers. The things. That he taught. All down through the years. Of his church. And the Lord's word. Is sufficient.

The Lord's word. Is sufficient. The Bible. Is sufficient. You don't need to add anything. To it. You can't. To get anything from it.

Unless you are being disobedient. To God. But we always have to remember. That. The gospel. The Bible. The word of God. Is sufficient. For all our needs. Whatever you do.

Don't lose your confidence. In this Bible. Don't lose your confidence. In this being. The word of God. To you. And to our generation. As it was for many. Before us.

Don't lose your confidence. In this word. As still the word of God. However much. It is mistreated. However much. It is despised. However much. It is rejected. However.

[ 49 : 23 ] Even maybe. Increasingly. Our society. Throws aside. This word of God. And says. It is just simply. Not fit. For the modern day. That we live in. Don't be drawn aside.

By that. Don't be deflected. From your confidence. In this word of God. And this Bible. Be in God's provision. For you. Sufficient. For every generation.

For all. Youth personal needs. As well. You know. There are many. Christians. Caught up in the. Problems. In Ukraine. At the moment. As indeed.

Many other places. In the world. But one of the things. That you find them. Very much concerned. To bring forward. Churches in Ukraine. Christian churches.

They are. Very much concerned. To make it known. To make it known. That this is where. They stand. The war has not actually. To these people. Defecting. To these people. Don't want anymore.

[ 50 : 18 ] To be Christians. Otherwise. We're targets. Of Putin. And his henchmen. In fact. There are many places. In the world. Like Ukraine. Where more people. Are going to church.

Than ever before. Why is that? Because God. Has given them. The conviction. Increasingly. That it's important. To make it known. That they belong.

To God's people. That they believe. God's promises. That they're convinced. That the things. Of this world. Are not. Finally. And ultimately. The last thing. For them.

That is. Something. For eternity. For God's own. Kingdom. In heaven. And so. The future. For Joseph's. Descendants. Was actually.

Very bright. Despite the way. That. Genesis. Ended. As you know. The history. Following through. The successive. Generations. It came to pass.

[ 51 : 13 ] That God. Came. And visited. His people. That he came. Into Egypt. And he came. And brought them. Into the desert. Led them. Forty years.

Till they came. To the land. Of Canaan. Tonight. As a Christian. A bright one. Nobody else. Has a future. Like yours. Whatever.

Things. May find. Making us. Despondent. We might. Even say. Tonight. Well. Why. And. Why.

And. The church. Was. Was. Was. Was. The. The. The. The. The.

Think. Think. Think. Think. Think. Think. Think. Think. The church has always gone through times of struggle and difficulty and decline.

[ 52 : 14 ] And yet the future remains the same for God's people, as Paul referred to it in his writing to the Colossians, as the inheritance of the saints in light.

The inheritance of the saints in light. This building tonight, look at the darkness outside, look at the contrast in this building. You might say that's itself a symbol of what belongs to God's people.

Despite the present difficulties you might be struggling with. The inheritance of the saints is the inheritance of the saints in light, in glory, in life in heaven with Christ.

So he made known that he believed God's promises. And for that reason he actually arranged his own funeral. He gave commandment concerning his bones.

He made it clear that his living hope was in the promise of God and the God of the promises. His mind was set on heaven. And so what you learn from this is that Joseph saw that his dying, remember when we read in Genesis there that twice it mentions Joseph saying, I am dying.

[ 53 : 29 ] I die in the context, but I am dying is really what he was saying. And which is the end stage of life. Therefore, this is what you will do. He's making it clear that dying for the Christian, for himself as a believer in God, dying was not something that lay outside of his believing experience.

Dying was not something outwith the spiritual journey, but inside it. It's part of the process that leads to that inheritance that God had promised.

And so it is for every believer as well. The dying part is not necessarily easy. Sometimes, understanding that we don't go near that.

We're just too afraid of what it might contain. But death itself is not something to be afraid of for the Christian.

Because the dying itself, the leaving of this world, is the immediate entrance into the next. The immediate entrance into the inheritance of the saints in light.

[ 54 : 39 ] The immediate residence of heaven. What a wonderful salvation we have.

That is something the saints all down through these years, these centuries, these millennia, as they came to trust in God and trust in his word, as they came to receive the promises of God despite their circumstances, through prosperity, through persecution, through trial, through difficulty, through times of doubting.

The truth never changed. And it hasn't changed for us either. It remains God's own truth. That's why when you go through this wonderful chapter in Hebrews, which is really about the the catalogue, if you like, of names of people who lived by faith, you see there in Hebrews, in verses 8, for example, by faith Abraham, when he was called to go out to a place which he should after receive for inheritance, he obeyed.

And he went out, not knowing whether he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise.

For he looked for a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Now it's a strange combination there, isn't it? Where he says he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country.

[ 56 : 11 ] In a sense he's saying, this is the land that belongs to us as God's people. He promised us this land of Canaan, and yet it's not home. It's not the final home, the final resting place.

So he went living with Isaac and Jacob in tents. Not permanent dwellings, moving from place to place.

Why was that? Because they looked for a city that has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. They looked for permanency.

They looked for a lasting inheritance. And that's what Christians have the privilege of looking forward to. Go on in the chapter, you can see this summary passage.

In verse 13, These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

[ 57 : 12 ] For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. That word country literally means a fatherland. A land belonging to a parent.

They're seeking that country. And truly, if they'd been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have an opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, in heavenly, but for God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city, not a tent, not a temporary place of living, but a city that has foundations, of which he's the builder and the maker.

And you see what it's saying, that if truly, if they'd been mindful of that country from whence they came, they might have an opportunity to return. Well, what it's saying is that they would have an opportunity, they did have an opportunity to return.

But if somebody had said to them, Do you want to go back to where you came from? They would have said, No, we've got a better place ahead of us. And isn't that how it is for yourself tonight?

As you've come to know the Lord. If somebody says, Do you want to go back to the world? What's the point of being a Christian? Is life any better than it was then?

[ 58 : 29 ] You don't have as much freedom as you had then. You're not able to do the things you please yourself with, as you used to. Do you want to go back? Can you not just give up on this Christian walk?

And just go back to the way things were? And you say, No, I don't. Because I'm seeking a better country. A place of foundations.

A place that will last for eternity. A place of which God is the builder and the maker. And that's where the chapter begins.

And indeed, it's a good exercise just to go through the examples that you have of faith through faith. So and so did this. So and so did that. By faith. It always mentions, By faith.

By faith. By faith. So you come back then, having read these, to the definition at the beginning. Faith is the substance of things hoped for.

[ 59 : 32 ] The evidence of things not seen. The world will tell you it's foolishness to believe things you've never seen. To trust in God and in Jesus, Him you've never seen with your eyes.

But here is the Bible telling us. Faith is the substance of things hoped for. The evidence of things not seen.

So you can actually say to the world, when the world challenges you, What evidence do you have that God exists? What evidence do you have that there's such a thing as heaven for you? When this world is done for you.

Whatever. Where is your evidence? Show me the evidence. And you have to say to them, I wish I could show you, but I can't. But I haven't. It's in a thing called faith.

And faith is the evidence. That my God is true. He exists. He's the God of promises. He's the God who will fulfill all his promises.

[ 60 : 37 ] He's the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And Joseph too. And he's the God of all who have come, following them, to put their trust in him.

Let's pray. Lord our God, we give thanks for the gift of faith that you give to your people. We bless you as you give them that gift of faith, so that faith enables them to face the various challenges and difficulties in this life.

Lord, help us not only to believe, but help us to believe that our faith needs to be tested. Help us to believe that as our faith is tested, that as we seek to confront and overcome the testings, so that faith shows itself to be genuine.

And help us, Lord, we pray day by day to live by that faith that we find described in this chapter in your people of long ago. We thank you that their faith is in essence the same as our own.

A trust in the living God. A looking forward to those things in hope that God has promised to all who believe. So bless us now, we pray. Bless to us this day and all that is contained for us by way of gospel privileges.

[ 61 : 57 ] Be with us now and continue with us for Jesus' sake. Amen. The final psalm this evening is Psalm 61. Psalm 61 and verses 4 to 8.

Within thy tabernacle I forever will abide, and under cupboard of thy wings with confidence me hide. For thou the vows that I did make, O Lord my God, is here.

Thou hast given me the heritage, of those thy name that fear. So to the end of the psalm, so will I perpetually sing praise unto thy name. And having made my vows, I may each day perform the same.

61 verses 4 to 8. Within thy tabernacle lie, For ever will abide, And under the earth With confidence me hide.

Of the fountains that I did made, O Lord, my God is here.

[ 63 : 41 ] How much give me the heritage of those I did not hear.

Alive, O Lord, for many days, how true the King shall give.

Why many generations be, my dear, which he shall live.

He in God's presence is the Lord, or evermore shall have.

O do thou good and merciful, prepare that make him save.

[ 65 : 11 ] And so will I perpetually sing praise unto thy name.

But having made my blood, I may be shaped her for all the same.

Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you now and evermore. Amen. Amen.