

PM Genesis 39

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Date: 13 September 2020

Preacher: Mr Norman Cumming

[0 : 00] Welcome to everyone this evening. We're glad to see Douglas Cranston with us this morning, but as he explained, because of the restrictions imposed in South Lanarkshire, he was no longer able to stay in somebody's home for lunch today, so he hasn't been able to return this evening.

But we look forward to having Douglas Cranston with us on quite a few more occasions later in the year. The Wednesday prayer meeting is at 7 o'clock and will be led by the Reverend Robert Dale. And next Lord's Day, God willing, we hope to welcome again Thompson McKenzie, studying at the seminary and a member at Dowenvale Free Church.

So these are the notices. So let us open in prayer together. Let us pray. Our gracious Father, we thank you.

We are here together this evening. O Lord, it is a time of worship, and we do not wish to meet in vain.

[1 : 20] O Lord, our desire is that in your mercy you'll be present with us in the power of the Holy Spirit. O Lord, he is the one who ministers Christ to us.

He is the one who opens our hearts to receive the word, to nourish us, to acquaint us with the way of salvation.

He is the one who stirs us up and gives us no peace until we find our rest in the living God. So, O Lord, bless us each one.

May the reading of the scriptures be a blessing to our souls. O Lord, as we listen to praise being sung, help us, O Lord, to join in in our hearts in that note of praise.

O Lord, we thank you for your mercies to us. We confess our sins. O Lord, we acknowledge there is no good in us.

[2 : 24] O Lord, we fall short on every count, on every aspect of the law. O Lord, we fall short of your glory. But we thank you, O Lord, for the gift of grace and salvation in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to whom be all the glory.

And, O Lord, may his glory be evident amongst us tonight. O Lord, we have promised to be with your people as they meet in your name.

And, O Lord, you have commanded us to meet. And we desire your presence. And we have a heart's longing for your gracious speaking to our souls tonight.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. We'll open our time of worship then by listening to Psalm 100 from the Scottish Psalter.

Psalm 100 in the Scottish Psalter, which begins, All people that on earth do dwell, sing to the Lord with cheerful voice, him serve with mercy, his praise force tell, come ye before him, and rejoice.

[3 : 46] An invitation, a call to worship and praise. Let us hear the praise of God. Amen. So thank you.

Amen. Give me for Him and rejoice.

Know that the Lord is God in me. With our grace He did us stay.

We are His love, He God has made. And for His sheep He God has made.

O enter then His gates with grace. Approach with joy His courts unto.

[5 : 25] Praise God and bless His name always. For His mercy is forever true.

For by the Lord of God it is true.

His mercy is forever true. His truth that all times burn me soon.

The Lord shall from age to age endure. And let us turn to a prose reading from the scriptures.

We have two readings tonight. A short reading in 2 Corinthians chapter 1. And a longer reading in Genesis. So turning to Paul's second letter to the church in Corinth.

[6 : 51] And just reading from verses 3 to 11 of the first chapter. 2 Corinthians chapter 1 and verse 3.

Let us hear the word of God. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Father of mercies. And God of all comfort. Who comforts us in all our affliction. So that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction.

With the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings.

So through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too. If we are afflicted it is for your comfort and salvation. And if we are comforted it is for your comfort.

[7 : 54] Which we experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we suffer. Our hope for you is unshaken. For we know that as you share in our sufferings.

You will also share in our comfort. For we do not want you to be unaware brothers. Of the affliction we experienced in Asia.

For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength. That we despaired of life itself. Indeed we felt that we received a sentence of death.

But that was to make us rely not on ourselves. But on God who raises the dead. He delivered us from such a deadly peril.

And he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope. That he will deliver us again. You also must help us by prayer.

[8 : 58] So many will give thanks on our behalf. For the blessing granted us through the prayers of many. And turning back to the book of Genesis.

And chapter 39. And chapter 39. Delving into the midst of the life of Joseph.

Which is recorded at great length in Genesis. And just reading this chapter. That we shall be referring. Not only to this chapter. But to other surrounding chapters.

Later on. So reading in the 39th chapter. Of Genesis. Now Joseph had been brought down to Egypt.

And Potiphar. An officer of Pharaoh. The captain of the guard. An Egyptian. Had bought him. From the Ishmaelites. Who had brought him down there.

[10 : 05] The Lord was with Joseph. And he became a successful man. And he was in the house of his Egyptian master.

His master saw. That the Lord was with him. And that the Lord caused all that he did. To succeed in his hands. So Joseph found favor in his sight.

And attended him. And he made him overseer of his house. And put him in charge of all that he had. From the time that he made him overseer in his house. And over all that he had.

The Lord blessed the Egyptian's house. For Joseph's sake. The blessing of the Lord was on all that he had. In house and field. So he left all that he had in Joseph's charge.

And because of him. He had no concern about anything. But the food he ate. Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance.

[11 : 08] And after a time. And after a time. His master's wife. Cast her eyes on Joseph. And said. Lie with me. But he refused. And said to his master's wife. Behold.

Because of me. My master has no concern about anything in the house. And he has put everything that he has in my charge. He is not greater in this house than I am. Nor has he kept back anything from me.

Except you. Because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness. And sin against God. And as she spoke to Joseph.

Day after day. He would not listen to her. To lie beside her. Or to be with her. But. One day. When he went into the house.

To do his work. And none of the men of the house. Was there in the house. She caught him by his garment. Saying. Lie with me. But he left his garment in her hand.

[12 : 07] And fled. And got out of the house. And as soon as. She saw. That he had left his garment in her hand. And had fled out of the house. She called. To the men of her household.

And said to them. See. He has brought among us. A Hebrew. To laugh at us. He came in. To me. To lie with me. And I cried out. With a loud voice.

And as soon as he heard. That I lifted up my voice. And cried out. He left his garment beside me. And fled. And got out of the house. And she laid up his garment.

By her. Until his master came home. And she told him. The same story. Saying. The Hebrew servant. Whom you have brought among us.

Came in. To me. To laugh at me. But as soon as I lifted up my voice. And cried. He left his garment beside me. And fled out of the house. As soon as his master heard the words.

[13:04] That his wife spoke to him. This is the way. Your servant treated me. His anger. Was kindled. And Joseph's master. Took him.

And put him into the prison. The place where the king's prisoners. Were confined. And he was there. In prison. But the Lord.

Was with Joseph. And showed him. Steadfast love. And gave him favor. In the sight of the keeper. Of the prison. And the keeper of the prisoner. Of the prison. Put Joseph in charge. Of all the prisoners. Who were in the prison. Whatever was done there.

He was the one who did it. The keeper of the prison. Payed no attention to anything. That was in Joseph's charge. Because the Lord. Was with him.

[14:05] And whatever he did. The Lord. Made it. Succeed. And may God bless. These scriptures. To our souls.

As we. Again. Turn to prayer. Let us pray. Gracious heavenly father.

We have. In this immediate passage. Read of the suffering. Of. A servant. We have read of the sufferings. Of the Corinthians. And the.

The grievous sufferings. Of. Paul. Your apostle. And. The church. As a whole. And.

Oh Lord. We. Reflect. That. The church. Of Jesus Christ. Are. Free. Free.

[15:02] From suffering. Yes. Oh Lord. There are times. Of. Blessing. And encouragement. And even revival. But. Oh Lord. So much suffering.

So much suffering. We take. A. A global view. Oh Lord. We see. The church. In so much. Of the. That.

Area. North. And south. Of the equator. And to the far east. Oh Lord. Suffering. Grievously. For your name's sake.

We read of. Murders. Recently. In the. Land of Ethiopia. So frequently. In. Nigeria.

And. In. In. Other nations. To. The north. And. To the east. Oh Lord. We.

[15:59] Read of these sufferings. And. There's so much suffering. Unknown to us. Whether in China. Or. Particularly. Perhaps. In. North Korea. Oh Lord.

Where. In the early 20th century. There was a great revival. And many people. Trusting you. And we do not hear. Oh Lord. How your people. Are faring. In that.

Nation. Of North Korea. Hidden. From us. Oh Lord. Whose cries. Are ascending to you. Night. And day. As they plead with you.

How long. Oh Lord. We uphold. Your suffering church. Oh Lord. Parents. And children. Who. Suffer. With. Services denied. To them. With separation. Education denied. Employment. Of a limited kind.

[16:58] Only available. And that of the most. Menial sort. Oh Lord. We uphold. A suffering church. Before you.

Tonight. As we seek. A grace. And more grace. And times. Of refreshing. From heaven. Amongst them. Oh Lord. Have mercy.

We pray. Oh Lord. We pray too. For. For. Suffering. In our own. Congregation. Ill health. As we. Remember. Jack. Tonight. In his need. Only too. Oh Lord. In his need. And more. With a

continuing. Chronic illness.

Oh Lord. We uphold. And before you. Robert McKee too. Oh Lord. Too unwell. To. Come out. This evening. Bless.

[17:52] Our loved ones. Here. We pray. Remember. Ian Watson. And his wife. Kim. Struck down. By. The. Coronavirus.

Oh Lord. Sustain them. Oh Lord. Give them courage. In this time. As a. Isolated home. Oh Lord. Quiet in their hearts. And bless them.

And be gracious. To that congregation. Of Blackwood. And Kirkmull Hill. We pray. We thank you. For Douglas. Cranston. Reverend Douglas. Cranston.

Who's a. A member. Of that congregation. With his wife. Christine. And. We thank you. For his ministry. Of the word. This morning. Remember.

Kenny. Kenny. MacLeod. Our interim moderator. Thankful. For his. Support. Of us. And his concern. For us. Remember him.

[18 : 48] As he ministers. The word. Public worship. In a week's time. We uphold. Thompson. Mackenzie. As he hopes. To be with us. Again.

Next Lord's Day. Uphold him. In his. Studies. At the seminary. Bless him. Oh Lord. In his life. With his. His wife. We pray.

And we thank you. For him. And pray. That you'll bless him. In the ministry. This coming. Lord's Day. Remember us. Lord. Here. In the.

In the. Maintenance work. Which has to be undertaken. In mid October. Or so. Significant. Maintenance work. Oh Lord. We pray. For your mercies. In that.

That it may go well. And that. Oh Lord. It may be done. Effectively. We pray. Look upon us. In our personal needs. Oh Lord. We pray. Here tonight.

[19 : 43] With personal concerns. Personal burdens. Personal fears. Oh Lord. We. Bring them before you. Oh Lord. Each one of us.

Oh Lord. With. Different issues. In our lives. Oh Lord. Help us to. Cast any cares. We have. Upon you. Any fears.

For the future. To bring them to you. Oh Lord. To know. Your. Your. Presence. With us. As we. As we. Lean upon you.

For your presence. And blessing. And seeking. Rest. In Christ Jesus. We pray. So bless us. And bless us.

Oh Lord. And. Worship this evening. Come close to us. Each one. And we pray again. For. The ministry of the Holy Spirit. In each of our hearts. Oh Lord.

[20 : 38] We are dependent. Upon his ministry. Oh Lord. Which alone. Brings life. Whether his death. Who alone. Quickens. Oh Lord.

Help us to. To. Hearken to his voice. And not to resist. His. His word. To us. This evening. And cleanse us afresh.

From every sin. And every unrighteousness. As we look to Jesus. Our Lord and Savior. Lord and Savior. Amen. We will listen to a further.

Item of praise. In Psalm. 103. And sing psalms. Psalm 103. And first. Eleven verses. The choice of worship.

The praise items. Is Douglas Cranston's. And I have. I have remained with that. Praise God. My soul. With all my heart. Let me exalt his holy name.

[21 : 39] Forget not. All his benefits. His praise. My soul. In song proclaim. The Lord forgives you. All your sins.

And heals your sickness. And distress. Your life. He rescues from the grave. And crowns you. In his tenderness. The first.

Three. Stanzas to God's praise. In Psalm 103. Praise God. My soul. With all my heart. And he exalt his holy name. Forget not all his benefits.

It's praise my soul. And song proclaim. God and faith. Exalt His holy name, forget not all His benefits, this raise my soul and song proclaims.

The Lord forgives you all your sins, and deals your sickness and distress.

[22 : 48] Your life He rescues from the grave, and grants you in His tenderness.

And grants you in His tenderness. He satisfies your deep desires, from His unending source of birth, so that just like the Ego's pen, your youth of a year is renewed.

The Lord is known for righteousness, and justice to the children's homes.

The Lord is merciful and kind, His mighty deeds to Israel's sons.

The Lord is merciful and kind, through anger, slow and full of grace.

[24 : 15] He will not constantly be proved, for in His anger I did stay.

He does not love, nature will cease, For in His sins their just reward.

How great His love must die as men, towards all those who fear the Lord.

towards all those who fear the Lord. I guess each one of us have known in our lives, those times we have felt under great pressure, under great stress.

even perhaps to the extent you feel you cannot take anything more. You're at your wit's end.

[25 : 37] You've come to the point of despair. Even perhaps as Paul could write, that he felt the sentence of death in his heart.

That was his experience, as I recalls it in the first chapter, in his second letter to Corinthians.

He had felt, particularly in Asia, that sentence of death. He was, of course, left for dead once, having been stoned, having preached the gospel in a city in Asia.

Now, this evening we're not going to look at the experience of Paul, but as you've probably guessed, we're going to look at the experience of God's servant, Joseph, over a 13-year period in his life.

I think Joseph could have made the same autobiographical comment as the Apostle Paul made many years later. So, to begin with, I want to look under five headings, briefly, some of Joseph's trials.

[26 : 58] To recount things, which most of us will know very well, you remember, if you turn back to chapter 2 to chapter 37, he had been thrown into a pit.

He was only 17 at the time. His brothers were older, but there was great bitterness and jealousy in the family, and it led to thoughts of murder.

You read it in chapter 37. He's thrown into a pit. But those actions leave their scars and their marks upon the perpetrators.

And it's very interesting, and I think we can know that from our own experiences, we can reflect on things which we admitted to do, or did do, or said, or didn't say, many years later.

But over 20 years later, those scars were still evident in the lives of Joseph's brothers. We read in chapter 42, and verses 21 and 22, when they are before the chief executive of Egypt, who, unknown to them, is their brother Joseph, and they said to one another, in truth, it's over 20 years later, in truth, we are guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the distress of his soul when he begged us, and we did not listen.

[28 : 36] That is why this distress has come upon us. The scars of that awful treatment of their young brother was embedded in their souls, and there it came out over 20 years later, in Egypt, when they were seeking food to survive.

A 17-year-old young brother there before them, crying, pleading, spare my life. You can see him there, perhaps crouching, naked at the bottom of the pit, the hole in the ground, weeping, groaning, and in great despair.

And his brothers hardened their hearts, hardened their hearts to the extent that we read in the scripture that they then just sat down for their meal.

Their hearts were so hardened. Thrown into a pit, then sold into slavery. This is indeed the account of the descent of Joseph.

Unbelievable pressure upon pressure in his life. Sold for 20 shekels of silver. A pittance. Many years earlier, Abraham had bought a field in the same area for 400 shekels.

[30 : 03] And Joseph was sold for 20 shekels. and his feet, as we read in Psalm 105, his feet were shackled and a collar of iron was put around his neck.

And he had to begin that long torturous journey from Dothan in the north of what became Israel all the way to Egypt, 600 miles or so, passing perhaps within 20 or 30 miles of his home, Hebron, on the way.

You can imagine his thoughts as he went past familiar sites on the way to Egypt. Longing and despair.

A pitt sold into slavery, bought as a slave, as opening verses of our chapter in chapter 39 we read. 17 years old, far from home, far from his father, Jacob, from his grandfather who is still alive, Isaac, the two men who would have taught him to love and follow the Lord.

And here he is, a slave in Egypt. He wouldn't see alive his grandfather Isaac again. If you do the sums, you can see that Isaac died when Joseph was in Egypt.

[31 : 33] He had descended from being a favoured son to a nobody, living in an environment where no one cared for him, where no one would ask him how he was or how he was doing.

Perhaps no kind word at all. And there he is in Egypt. And then we read of that temptation he was subjected to by Potiphar's wife.

She desired Joseph. We read that he was handsome and good looking. It's interesting that the phrase which was used in this chapter about Joseph's appearance is exactly the same phrase which is described Rachel his mother.

He must have looked like his mother Rachel. And that could be another factor in his father's love for him when he looked at Joseph he could see Rachel.

He was handsome and good looking just as his mother had been. And there we read his grievous temptation from Potiphar's wife.

[32 : 54] A woman who would have been accustomed to have whatever she wanted. And we read that he was tempted by her day after day.

It was unrelenting day after day. And one day she just took hold of him. He was in a most dangerous situation. Few young men would have resisted as Joseph did.

But he resisted and ran out leaving the cloak in her hands. What a stark contrast with Judah his older brother.

It's very significant that the history of Joseph is interrupted by chapter 38. When you read of the account of Judah's misdeeds is put there as a contrast with Joseph.

Paul Gardner some of us heard Paul Gardner preach at Free Church Conference many years ago. And he makes this comment about these two chapters in Genesis.

[34 : 04] While Judah left family and homeland by choice Joseph was forcibly deported. While Judah willingly associated with a non-Israelite woman, Joseph resisted such temptation.

Judah engaged in sexual immorality, victimized a powerless woman, and hence incurred the judgment of God. Joseph resisted sexual immorality and was victimized by a woman of influence, with the result that God preserved his interests in the end.

Judah was accused justly by a woman, while Joseph was falsely accused by a woman. In both cases a personal article, a staff, one case and a garment in another, was presented as a testimony against them.

These extensive parallels, contrasts, served to contrast the character of Judah with that of Joseph. Thus Joseph was even more dramatically presented to the men of virtue, who looked to God to rule sovereignly over his fate.

The placement of Genesis 38 is critical for establishing this contrast. There's also another interesting parallel in Joseph's life.

[35 : 24] It was his blood-stained robe which was presented to his father as evidence of his death. And the cloak retained by Potiphar's wife meant one would have thought that Joseph was as good as dead.

But he ended up in prison, the descent of Joseph from favoured son all the way to prison, pressure upon pressure.

You may wonder why he wasn't summarily executed. And we do not know. Perhaps Potiphar suspected his wife, perhaps there had been other occurrences.

And in his anger, Joseph's life was spared and he was put into prison.

Was that the end of Joseph? His trials were of no short duration. Scripture is careful to tell us that Joseph was 17 when the trials began and he was 30 when he was elevated to that extraordinary position of power in Egypt by Pharaoh.

[36 : 49] Thirteen years. Thirteen good years as a young man, as you say, his best years, in which he was subject to slavery and imprisonment.

Joseph's good years, looking on, were snatched from him. Joseph's experiences are dramatic. They are not unique. In prayer already we refer to our persecuted brethren worldwide, suffering even worse things and regular occurrence, living in uncertainty day by day and knowing all these experiences.

And we too, in our own way, can experience times of pressure upon pressure. It could be lack of work, financial pressure, sickness, uncertainty, death itself.

And we can go through times of sorrow upon sorrow. You can imagine Joseph's possible emotions.

[38 : 12] Remember his dreams, their meaning. Was it all meaningless? Just random? Away from the land of promise, incarcerated in prison.

Has God deserted me? Is God still there for me? And the temptation would be to mope, despair, and turn your face to the wall.

But what does the word say? It's quite remarkable. in Genesis chapter 39 verse 2, in spite of all this, in spite of all these circumstances, it is also true, we read in verse 2 of chapter 39, that the Lord was with Joseph.

That, if you like, is our text tonight. The Lord was with Joseph. How can this be? His life is descended in free fall, incarcerated in prison.

And yet, we read the Lord was with Joseph. And it's not just said once for our benefit, we're told that even Potiphar could see that in a succeeding verse.

[39 : 42] And later on, when he's in prison, we read again in verse 21, this second emphasis, the Lord was with Joseph. And again, the keeper of prison could see that the Lord was with him.

How can this be? These dreadful experiences. I'll return to that in more detail in a little bit. How did Joseph view the situation?

We can just remember in passing what his mature reflections were many, many, many years later as a much older man. But in Genesis chapter 45 verses 4 to 8, when he reveals himself to his brothers and says to them, come near to me, please.

and they came near. And he said, I am your brother Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here. For God sent me before you to preserve life.

And he says the same thing some years later, again, in Genesis chapter 50 and verse 20, where we read, as for you, he says to his brothers, you meant evil for me, but God meant it for good to bring it about that many people should be kept alive as they are today.

[41 : 26] We can't go into the detail of that account. God did it. He sent me. God intended it for good. There's a saying I once heard in London, a saying from Kentucky which I like, God can draw a straight line with a crooked stick.

And what crookedness there was in the experiences of the life of Joseph. And God drew a straight line in his life. Yes, the ugly crooked sin of those involved in Joseph's life was their responsibility. But we know, and there is evidence in the life of Joseph, that for those who love God, all things work together for good.

All things, even the all things of Joseph's experience. The all things which were dangerous and challenging.

But these are Joseph's mature reflections many years later. How did he react? How did he see it at the time? We only get a glimpse into that in these 13 years.

[42 : 45] But I begin by noting, first of all, that Joseph did what he could. His activities were limited, but he did what he could.

Genesis 39 verse 3 reads that the Lord caused all that he did as a slave in his limited situation to succeed.

He did what he could. And when he's now in prison, verse 23, whatever he did, no idle hands, whatever he did, the Lord made it succeed.

He busied himself. A curtailment of what he could do, but he was busy, though curtailed. He did what he could. It reminds us of Mary, the sister of Lazarus and Martha, when she anointed Jesus just before his betrayal and crucifixion.

She anointed him for his death. And she was much criticized, not only by Judas Iscariot, but in fact, it seems, all the disciples, for they saw this waste.

[44 : 13] And Jesus said, in comfort to her, she did what she could. That was what she could do, and she did it. And she spared not in her exuberant love of her Saviour.

And that's all that the Lord Jesus wants from us, to do what we can. He doesn't expect from us what we cannot do.

He knows our circumstances, he knows where we are curtailed, where we are limited, what restrictions there are in our life and circumstances. But the challenge is, are we doing what we can, in prayer and whatever else?

Mary did what she could, and Joseph did what he could. Secondly, how did Joseph look? What was his appearance like?

And I think we get one or two clues. I think it would be fair to say, if he'd been a morose, grumbling, Hebrew slave, Potter's wife, would never have noticed him.

[45 : 25] But I don't think he was like that at all. I think he was so active, there was a spring and a step all day long.

It's what Joseph says to the cupbearer and baker and prisoners, surely significant. He says in chapter 40, verse 7, he says, why are your faces downcast today?

I don't think Joseph's face could have been downcast. Perhaps they were serving them in prison, doing work for them, menial work for them. He says, why are your faces downcast?

I think Joseph's face was different. It was a good cheer. It was beaming. I think he was reflecting something of his knowledge and his dependence upon God and there was peace in his face. And we do see that he has a deep knowledge of God. We can see from the scriptures that he walked in the fear of God. We read in chapter 39 and the second part of verse 9, how then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?

[46 : 44] That was the note he was marching to. He was walking in the presence of God in the land of Egypt as a slave.

Far from home and loved ones but still walking in the presence of the almighty God who sees and knows all things. How can I do this?

He says against God. he was walking in the fear of God. Remember Isaac spoke of God as the fear of Isaac as Jacob put it about his father the fear of Isaac and Joseph walked in the fear of God and he knew God in this remarkable way and he says in his knowledge of God he gives all credit and authority and power to God and not to himself both to the baker and the cupbearer and later to Pharaoh two years later and he says I cannot interpret the dreams but the interpretations belong to God and he says exactly the same boldly to Pharaoh king of Egypt fearlessly he was walking in the presence of God in the land of Egypt he knew his God trusting him all these 13 years but we also get something of a glimpse into his longings and we see that in chapter 40 and verses 14 and 15 when he says to the cupbearer when you are restored according to my interpretation of your dream when you are restored he said it's so poignant his words he says only remember me only remember me when it is well with you and please do me the kindness to mention me to

Pharaoh and so get me out of this house for I was indeed stolen out of the land of the Hebrews and here also I've done nothing that they should put me into the pit and we see the longings there bubbling up in his life in the midst of it all we see a real man there in all this the extent of his experiences and Psalm 105 verse 18 gives this other glimpse really quoted from it Psalm 105 verse 18 gives this further glimpse into the testing of Joseph during these years we read there about Joseph being sold as a slave and his feet were hurt with fetters his neck was put in a collar of iron until what he had said came to pass the word of the

Lord tested him he would remember the dreams back in his homeland and their interpretations and he was tested by the word of God until they came to pass and asking would this happen can I lean can I rely upon God that his word is true and he was tested all these years I came to this text the Lord was with Joseph through a remarkable little book which I'll commend to you published in 2003 Fraser not a private matter as I remember was the title of the book

[51 : 01] Fraser not a private matter it's a bit dense what that means Fraser not a private matter it's about Fraser Tulloch who died in 1998 based on a diary he kept primarily for four years during a period of intense suffering between 1966 and 1970 when he had dreadful kidney disease and there wasn't much treatment available in those days and the book is written by his brother John who writes in it and this explains the title the grace of God though given in a way which is intimately personal the grace of God which is given in a way which is intimately personal is not a private matter it is to be testified about the grace of God in your personal life she and I have heard his another brother

Cameron preach in Kyle of Lechausch and it was Cameron who was involved in a very early kidney transplant donating one of his kidneys Cameron is a GP in Broadford and Sky he's retired now and he donated one of his kidneys to his brother Fraser and Fraser was thus unable to live for another 28 years and able to become a minister ordained in the Free Presbyterian Church and when he died he was the longest surviving kidney transplant patient in the UK and an FP minister Free Presbyterian minister Mr.

McFarlane when Fraser was being inducted in 1970 said to John his brother it's very remarkable about Joseph it's very remarkable about Joseph and John didn't understand so McFarlane must be a man a few words so he slightly elaborated and said in spite of everything the Lord is with Joseph in spite of everything the Lord is with Joseph I think you'll find it says that three times and then John Tulloch understood that McFarlane was speaking about Fraser and all his sufferings for four years the Lord was with him Fraser wrote in his diary in those four years of suffering that as the suffering intensified the insistent question would come to him now do you believe and the suffering would deepen again and the question would come again to his heart now do you still believe in your God and he wrote in his diary at the time at the deepest level when the dust had cleared away

I could say Lord you know all things you know I love you so that's where the text came from for me the Lord was with Joseph I commend that book to you I think one or two you may have read it Fraser not a private matter well we read earlier in 2 Corinthians chapter 1 about sharing abundantly in Christ's sufferings now this does not of course refer to the sufferings of Christ upon the cross which were unique he died there on the tree bearing our sins dying for us and his sufferings the abandonment of himself by God his father so he had to cry out my God my God why have you forsaken me those were unique sufferings unrepeatable yet Paul can write about sharing abundantly in Christ's sufferings

Hendrickson the commentator writes about this that the enemies of Christ are never satisfied they hated Jesus with insatiable hatred and wanted to add to his affliction but since he is no longer physically present on earth their arrows which are meant specially for him strike his followers and so Christ's afflictions as one translation put it Christ's afflictions overflow towards others towards us in the ESV we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings remember how Jesus said to Paul Saul why do you persecute me and the sufferings of

[56 : 24] Christ were overflowing to the church of Jesus Christ and Jesus could say you are persecuting me you shall be hated of all men for my name's sake in the same passage Paul writes of the God of all comfort who comforts us in all our afflictions now we have considered how Joseph would have been comforted over those 13 years briefly it's a strong word comfort it's not just sympathy the original meaning of the English word comfort means with strength and God comes alongside us and gives us strength to sustain us he's the God of comfort who comes alongside to sustain us with strength and reminds us of the gracious work of the Holy

Spirit who brings to our mind in times of trial the scripture verses which are of inestimable help to us laid up in our memories and there are also of course some Barnabases who are sons and women of encouragement so very briefly in conclusion it is a challenge to be patient under the trials of faith death but remember we are suffering sharing in the sufferings of Christ to Joseph it must have seemed never ending he gave those appealing words to the cup bearer he had still to wait a further two years in prison all those day after day another two days forgotten in prison and then we remember how Joseph did what he could whether he was a slave or whether he was a prisoner serving others he did what he could and then we remember how he walked in the fear of God even the face of awesome temptation we think too how Joseph gave glory to God these interpretations are not mine they are given by God even boldly said to the highest in the land in spite of everything the Lord was with Joseph working at his purposes through him though we have to say and remind ourselves again that all those years the word of God tested him all those 13 years he was tested do you still believe this do you still believe this he was tested until the word of God came true it's very enlightening that verse in Psalm 105 so in spite of everything the Lord was with Joseph and the Lord may the Lord enable us so to live and trusting him all our days or the days God gives us short or long until our travelling days are done walking by faith in the midst of trials till we shall see Jesus in glory face to face our closing item of praise is the sands of time are sinking these are words taken from the writings of Samuel

Rutherford a minister in Anworth just near gatehouse of fleet in the 17th century and Samuel Rutherford was a great comforter of other people using the power of letter to many a person and you can read his letters today so let us hear this final item of praise the sands of time are sinking the sands of time are sinking the dawn of embrace the star born at time for the fierce sweet born awakes dark dark in the midnight the day spring is at hand and glory glory dwell in

[62 : 17] Emmanuel's land O Christ he is the fountain the deep sweet well of love the streams on earth I taste and pour deep a drink above there too an ocean's wholeness his mercy does expand and glory glory dwell in Emmanuel's land O I am mighty love is and my beloved is mine he brings a poor singer into his house the wine

I stand upon his merits I know no other stand not even glory dwell in Emmanuel's land in Emmanuel's land the bright eyes not to harvest but heard in right room space I will not kiss that glory but on my king of grace not at the ground he here is but on his pierced hand the lamb is all the glory of

Emmanuel's land Gracious Heavenly Father, we come to a close of our time of worship this evening.

O Lord, we thank you for Emmanuel's land. We thank you for our home in heaven. And O Lord, grant that each one of us tonight may have our eyes upon home in heaven where glory dwells and

Jesus is.

And we cannot begin to imagine or speak of the wonders of heaven. So bless us, O Lord, each one. [65 : 39] May this be the note by which we live by, looking forward to the coming again of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Bless us each one as we go into this week. Go before us, we pray. In Jesus' name. Amen.