

Rejected but raised

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- [0 : 00] The first reading today is in the book of Genesis, Genesis chapter 40, and that can be found on page 40 in the church Bibles. Sometime after this, the cupbearer of the king of Egypt and his baker committed an offence against their lord, the king of Egypt.
- And Pharaoh was angry with his two officers, the chief cupbearer and the chief baker. And he put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard in the prison where Joseph was confined.
- The captain of the guard appointed Joseph to be with them, and he attended them. They continued for some time in custody. And one night they both dreamed, the cupbearer and the baker of the king of Egypt who were confined in the prison, each his own dream, and each dream with its own interpretation.
- When Joseph came to them in the morning, he saw that they were troubled. So he asked Pharaoh's officers who were with him in custody in his master's house, Why are your faces downcast today?
- They said to him, We have had dreams, and there is no one to interpret them. And Joseph said to them, Do not interpretations belong to God?
- [1 : 18] Please tell them to me. So the chief cupbearer told his dream to Joseph and said to him, In my dream there was a vine before me, and on the vine there were three branches.
- As soon as it budded, its blossoms shot forth, and the clusters ripened into grapes. Pharaoh's cup was in my hand, and I took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand.
- Then Joseph said to him, This is its interpretation. The three branches are three days. In three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your office, and you shall place Pharaoh's cup in his hands as formerly, when you were his cupbearer.
- 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 have done nothing, that they should put me into the pit.
- When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was favourable, he said to Joseph, I also had a dream. There were three cake baskets on my head, and in the uppermost basket there were all sorts of baked food for Pharaoh, but the birds were eating it out of the basket on my head.
- [2 : 45] And Joseph answered and said, This is its interpretation. The three baskets are three days. In three days Pharaoh will lift up your head from you, and hang you on a tree, and the birds will eat the flesh from you.
- On the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, he made a feast for all his servants, and lifted up the head of the chief cupbearer, and the head of the chief baker among his servants.
- He restored the chief cupbearer to his position, and he placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand. But he hanged the chief baker, as Joseph had interpreted to them.

Yet the chief cupbearer did not remember Joseph, but forgot him. After two whole years, Pharaoh dreamed that he was standing by the Nile. And behold, there came up out of the Nile seven cows, attractive and plump, and they fed in the reed grass.

And behold, seven other cows, ugly and thin, came up out of the Nile after them, and stood by the other cows on the bank of the Nile. And the ugly, thin cows ate up the seven attractive plump cows.

[4 : 01] And Pharaoh awoke. And he fell asleep and dreamed a second time. And behold, seven ears of corn, plump and good, were growing on one stalk.

And behold, after them spouted seven ears, thin and blighted by the east wind. And the thin ears swallowed up the seven plump, four ears. And Pharaoh awoke.

And behold, it was a dream. So in the morning, his spirit was troubled. And he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt and all its wise men.

Pharaoh told them his dreams. But there was none who could interpret them to Pharaoh. Then the chief cupbearer said to Pharaoh, I remember my offenses today, when Pharaoh was angry with his servants and put me and the chief baker in custody in the house of the captain of the guard.

We dreamed on the same night, he and I, each having a dream with its own innings. interpretation. A young Hebrew was there with us, a servant of the captain of the guard.

[5 : 05] When we told him, he interpreted our dreams to us, given an interpretation to each man according to his dream. And as he interpreted to us, so it came about.

I was restored to my office and the baker was hanged. Okay, we continue in Genesis chapter 41, verses 14 to 57.

Age 41 of the church Bibles. Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they quickly brought him out of the pit. And when he had shaved himself and changed his clothes, he came in before Pharaoh.

And Pharaoh said to Joseph, Joseph, I have had a dream, and there is no one who can interpret it. I have heard it said of you, that when you hear a dream, you can interpret it.

Joseph answered Pharaoh, it is not in me. God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer. Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, behold, behold, in my dream, I was standing on the banks of the Nile.

[6 : 12] Seven cows, plump and attractive, came out of the Nile and fed in the reed grass. Seven other cows came up after them, poor and very ugly and thin, such as I had never seen in all the land of Egypt.

And the thin, ugly cows ate up the first seven plump cows. But when they had eaten them, no one would have known that they had eaten them, for they were still as ugly as at the beginning. Then I awoke.

I also saw in my dream seven ears growing on one stalk, full and good. Seven ears, withered, thin and blighted by the east wind, sprouted up after them.

And the thin ears swallowed up the seven good ears. And I told it to the magicians, but there was no one who could explain it to me. Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, The dreams of Pharaoh are one.

God has revealed to Pharaoh what he is about to do. The seven good cows are seven years, and the seven good ears are seven years.

[7 : 18] The dreams are one. The seven lean and ugly cows that came up after them are seven years, and the seven empty ears, blighted by the east wind, are also seven years of famine.

It is as I told Pharaoh. God has shown to Pharaoh what he is about to do. There will come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt, but after them, there will arise seven years of famine, and all the plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt.

The famine will consume the land, and the plenty will be unknown in the land by reason of the famine that will follow, for it will be very severe. And the doubling of Pharaoh's dream means that the thing is fixed by God, and God will shortly bring it about.

Now, therefore, let Pharaoh select a discerning and wise man and set him over the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh proceed to appoint overseers over the land and take one-fifth of the produce of the land of Egypt during the seven plentiful years, and let them gather all the food of these good years that are coming and store up grain under the authority of Pharaoh for food in the cities, and let them keep it.

That food shall be a reserve for the land against the seven years of famine that are to occur in the land of Egypt, so that the land may not perish through the famine. This proposal pleased Pharaoh and all his servants, and Pharaoh said to his servants, Can we find a man like this in whom is the Spirit of God?

[8 : 57] Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, Since God has shown you all this, there is none so discerning and wise as you are. You shall be over my house, and all my people shall order themselves as you command.

Only as regards the throne will I be greater than you. And Pharaoh said to Joseph, See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt.

Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his hand and put it on Joseph's hand and closed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain about his neck. And he made him ride in his second chariot.

And they called out before him, Bow the knee. Thus he set him over all the land of Egypt. Moreover, Pharaoh said to Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without your consent no one shall lift up hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.

And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphonath-Paniah, and he gave him a marriage to Asenath, the daughter of Potiphar, priest of On. So Joseph went out over the land of Egypt.

[10 : 12] Joseph was thirty years old when he entered the service of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh and went through all the land of Egypt. During the seven plentiful years the earth produced abundantly, and he gathered up all the food of these seven years which occurred in the land of Egypt and put the food in the cities.

He put in every city the food from the fields around it. And Joseph stored up grain in great abundance like the sand of the sea until he ceased to measure it for it could not be measured.

Before the years of famine came two sons were born to Joseph. Asenath, the daughter of Potiphar and priest of On bore them to him. Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh.

For, he said, God has made me forget all my hardship and all my father's house. The name of the second he called Ephraim for God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction.

The seven years of plenty that occurred in the land of Egypt came to an end and the seven years of famine began to come as Joseph had said. There was famine in all the lands but in all lands but in all the land of Egypt there was bread.

[11 : 32] When all the land of Egypt was famished the people cried to Pharaoh for bread. Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians go to Joseph what he says to you do.

So when the famine had spread over all the land Joseph opened all the storehouses and sold to the Egyptians for the famine was severe in the land of Egypt. Moreover all the earth came to Egypt to Joseph to buy grain because the famine was severe over all the earth.

Benjamin Jesty in 1774 decided enough was enough and he took his wife and two young boys and walked down to the local dairy farm and then he looked desperately trying to find the sickest looking cow he could find and then he found some horrible looking thing in the corner so he bent down and was confirmed that yes there was a huge amount of pus coming out of the udders so he took a darning needle he squatted down got it all night and into the pus in the ulcers and then proceeded to take his wife and two boys arms and ram it in there and he scratched and he scratched and he specifically scratched until there was a blood flow and thus modern day vaccination was born the context is helpful that at this time smallpox was ravaging England at this time and Jesty had a concept which was if cowpox can be injected into my family's bloodstream perhaps they'll be saved from the ravages of smallpox his wife almost died the two boys were okay but he was proved correct and they were exposed to smallpox many times over the years but showed no symptoms now this very silly although quite profound illustration illustrates an important point the means justify the end sorry justify the means we might think that is a rather strange and extreme thing to do to your loved ones until we realise what the goal was and we're used to this idea aren't we those of us who like running here

I'm not sure why but when you're halfway through running you know that the reason that you're doing this in theory is because it's good for you afterwards or when you scold your child for running out into the road it's not because you particularly like scolding them but because you don't want them to be hit by a bus as in we all understand that sometimes we have to do difficult things or difficult things happen for a positive outcome but what about the Christian life many of us might be familiar with this kind of idea that yes God we like the idea of eternal life but not the life that leads to it yes God I like the idea of eternal life but not the life that leads to it I've only been here a couple of years but already just doing life together as a church family we've seen members of the church family ill we've seen marital strife we've seen anger and we've seen lost loved ones and we've seen loved ones refuse to repent and come to Jesus and then the ordinary Christian experience of prayer being painful of reading the

Bible it seems boring if you speak to many of the members at JAM they really struggle and we've got to ask the question why God God I like the idea of eternal life but I don't like the life that leads to it why why are God's means so weak why does God work the way that he does why does he work this way well Joseph would have had every reason to ask this question by the time that we get to this place in chapter 40 Joseph had been in prison for 11 years can you imagine that 11 years and he went into prison at age 17 but let's not forget that the only reason he's in prison is because of a false trumped up rape charge and because he refused a woman's advances to honor his God and let's not forget that the only reason he was in front of that woman was because his brothers tried to kill him and let's not forget that the only reason his brothers tried to kill him is because he passed on two dreams that God has given him Joseph would well be asking the question

[15 : 42] God why I like the idea of eternal life I don't like the life that leads to it Joseph would have had every reason to question the means of God God why well we're going to see this morning why wonderfully and we only have one point this morning but it's a profound one and it's one that I think is deeply reassuring when we begin to grasp its implications this is how God works from weakness to glory from death to life in our case from the prison to the palace this is how God works from the prison to the palace diving into our verses then chapter 40 verses 1 to 4 we're given lots and lots of hints that God is still very much at work please do have it open in front of you we're going to be spending loads of time with our noses in this wonderful passage sometime after this the cupbearer of the king of Egypt and his baker committed an offense against the lord their king of Egypt and Pharaoh was angry with his two officers the chief cupbearer and the chief baker and he put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard in the prison where Joseph was confined the captain of the guard appointed Joseph to be with them and he attended them they continued for some time in custody oh those wonderful coincidences just so happened that the two people closest to

Pharaoh his servants were then placed in the prison with Joseph just so happens that Joseph is then placed in authority over them but our author doubles down just to make absolutely sure that we know that this is God working verse 5 and one night they both dreamed the cupbearer and the baker of the king of Egypt who were confined in the prison each his own dream and each dream with its own interpretation in the Joseph story God loves to work in two dreams Joseph had two dreams do we remember and that's what got him thrown into the pits we're going to see later in the story Pharaoh had two dreams and here in prison we see Pharaoh's two closest associates two dreams God is at work in the prison and when Joseph verse 6 came to them in the morning he saw that they were troubled so he asked Pharaoh's officers who were with him in custody in his master's house why your face is downcast today they said to him we have had dreams and there was no one to interpret them and Joseph said to them do not interpretations belong to God please tell them to me now I don't know how you feel when you see Joseph's response I know personally if I'd been in prison for 11 years on a trumped up charge that I was not guilty of for being faithful to God

I probably would have been bitter by this point I probably certainly wouldn't have continued to give God all the glory and all the praise but that is exactly what our man Joseph does even in the pit of the prison do not interpretations belong to God please tell them to me so verse 9 the chief cupbearer told his dream to Joseph and said to him in my dream there was a vine before me and on the vine there were three branches as soon as it budded its blossoms shot forth and the clusters ripened into grapes Pharaoh's cup was in my hand and I took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup and placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand then Joseph said to him this is the interpretation the three branches are three days in three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your office and you shall place Pharaoh's cup in his hand as formerly when you were his cupbearer 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 pits Joseph's utterly faithful to the end but it's wonderful actually that the author of

Genesis gives us this little insight into how Joseph is feeling lest we think that Joseph is some kind of ultimately perfect character that we could never possibly relate to he gives the interpretation that God gives him but then we see in verse 14 and 15 that he is desperate to leave this is not some kind of make-believe story about being in prison and it's all just nice and rosy and that Joseph is properly thrilled because he's where God wants him to be Joseph wants to leave he says God please once you leave please speak to Pharaoh and get me out but notice what Joseph is assuming when he asks this notice that he is assuming that the interpretation of the dream will come true and he is saying once you get out because God's told me that that's what's going to happen in three days time please remember me and so even in the midst of his agony after 11 years his whole adult life in prison Joseph is still trusting the interpretations of the dreams that God has given him our poor chief baker verse 16 maybe I don't know Joseph is gluten intolerant and therefore doesn't like bakers not in time we're not told why but the chief baker thinks oh good wonderful wonderful maybe I can get out this looks thoroughly good three days I guess I can manage prison for three days the chief baker gives his interpretation and Joseph gives his dream and Joseph responds verse 18 with some nice wordplay this is its interpretation the three baskets are three days in three days Pharaoh will lift up your heads from you and hang you on a tree and birds will eat the flesh from you now we might think

Joseph a little bit harsh but again it is underscoring Joseph's utter faithfulness God gives him the interpretation he can't say anything he won't say anything else and so even though he's standing before this baker he gives the interpretation that God has given him and how do we know that that's God's interpretation well 20 to 23 on the third day which was Pharaoh's birthday he made a feast for all his servants and lifted up the head of the cheap cup chief cup bearer and head of the chief baker among his servants he restored the chief cup bearer to his position and he placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand but he hanged the chief baker as Joseph had interpreted to them yet the chief cup bearer did not remember Joseph but forgot him so Joseph is vindicated in a way but his request to the cup bearer well it goes unanswered and can you imagine can you imagine being in Joseph's position you can imagine him can't you up at the bars and he's thinking okay it's been three hours since the cup bearer left I reckon he's probably had time to tell Pharaoh by now so I think maybe next 90 minutes I'm out and then days pass and he thinks oh maybe maybe the cup bearer you know he just wanted to he was busy maybe you know it was a birthday party after all maybe he's going to tell Pharaoh now so maybe in a week's time I'll be out and then a week passes and those weeks they roll on and they turn into months and then months turn into years and Joseph is still after two years in prison that is 13 years in total in prison and he went into prison age 17 in other words his entire adult life in jail why and it's great Genesis Moses the writer of Genesis that God is working in prison brilliant why why do you have to work in prison at all why do I have to be here you can well imagine Joseph saying for 13 years why did I have to tell that poor baker that he's going to be hanged yes God you're working in the prison yes you're working in such a terrible place in such a weak way but why why well that comes on to our second and final point

[23 : 34] God works from the prison to the palace God is at work again in the palace this time verse chapter 41 now verse 1 after two whole years Pharaoh dreamed that he was standing by the Nile and behold there came up out of the Nile seven cows attractive and plump and they fed in the reed grass and behold seven other cows ugly and thin came up out of the Nile after them and stood by the other cows on the bank of the Nile and the ugly thin cows aped up the seven attractive plump cows and Pharaoh awoke and he fell asleep and dreamed a second time and behold seven ears of grain plump and good were growing on one stalk and behold after them sprouted seven ears thin and blighted by the east wind and the thin ears swallowed up the seven plump full ears and Pharaoh awoke and behold it was a dream so in the morning his spirit was troubled and he sent and called all the magicians of Egypt and all its wise men Pharaoh told them his dreams and there was none who could interpret them to Pharaoh notice the very obvious cue that our author is giving us and it's totally superfluous otherwise in verse 4 to see and Pharaoh awoke and then fell asleep and had a second dream in other words it's making absolutely clear to us God is working in the dreams of Pharaoh we had two dreams at the beginning of Joseph's story two dreams in prison and now Pharaoh has two dreams as well and we see here what is I suppose can only be described as wonderful butterfly effects because the whole Bible story now rests on the question of whether or not Pharaoh likes a drink early in the morning and you notice that in the reading does Pharaoh like wine at 9am that's the question because if his cupbearer is not here then Pharaoh is stuck but lo and behold verse 9 the cupbearer is present don't know why you need a cupbearer at 9 in the morning clearly Pharaoh has a drinking problem but there you are the chief cupbearer is there and verse 9 he says I remember finally my offenses today when Pharaoh was angry and he and he and he speaks of

Joseph a man who interpreted their dreams and verse 13 and as he interpreted to us so it came about I was restored to my office and the baker was hanged finally two years too late the cupbearer has remembered and in a breathtaking speed and breadth of detail our man Joseph goes from a disheveled prisoner in a pit a convicted rapist to standing before Pharaoh Pharaoh himself verse 14 then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph and they quickly brought him out of the pit and when he had shaved himself and changed his clothes he came in before Pharaoh now can you imagine 13 years in prison the emaciation the lack of seeing other people the lack perhaps of even seeing sunlight you know the scraggly beard whatever the case may be and can you imagine the doors being burst open and saying the Pharaoh wants to see you and they shave him stick him in a shower and get him right up before Pharaoh the contrast from where he was to where he has gone is staggering but it doesn't stop there verse 15 and Pharaoh said to

Joseph I have had a dream and there is no one who can interpret it I've heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it and imagine that we are there we're the magicians and we're waiting with bated breath and we're thinking how is it that this convicted criminal is going to be able to answer the question that we fail to answer there is no way who is this fool who is this boy what is he going to say and you certainly would imagine that the one thing that Joseph wouldn't do is correct Pharaoh wouldn't expect that and so we wait with bated breath to see what Joseph's answer is and Joseph answered Pharaoh verse 16 and said it is not in me it is not in me God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer in one fell swoop Joseph has essentially undermined not only his own authority but Pharaoh's he spent 13 years in prison and his one opportunity it seems to get out he's brought before Pharaoh himself and you would think that the first thing he might say is thank you or I'm sorry or simpering praise something certainly he wouldn't say no and that phrase it is not in me is one word in the original it's an emphatic no you said it was me that can interpret James Pharaoh no it is God's we can imagine us cringing at the side it's like I meant if you remember in school when you know a teacher might tell a kid off and the kid answers back it's about to absolutely kick off you think like this is amazing it's like that kind of moment but you're like please don't look at me please don't look at me internal cringing he's standing before the man that everyone thinks is the God of fertility saying not me but there is a

God and he can give it to you and we might therefore expect at this time Pharaoh to throw him back in prison to respond with anger and hatred and but instead Pharaoh gives him his dream and then Joseph in verse 25 responds Joseph said to Pharaoh the dreams of Pharaoh one God has revealed to Pharaoh what he's about to do the seven good cows are seven years and the seven good ears are seven years the dreams are one the seven lean and ugly cows that come up after them are seven years and the seven empty ears blighted by the east wind are also seven years of famine it is as I told Pharaoh God has shown to Pharaoh what he's about to do there will come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt but after them there will arise seven years of famine and all the plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt the famine will consume the land verse 32 and the doubling of Pharaoh's dream means that the thing is fixed by God and God will shortly bring it about now therefore let Pharaoh select a discerning and wise man and set him over the land of Egypt and at this point we would be saying

Joseph shut up for you got away with correcting Pharaoh but now you're giving him foreign policy advice what are you talking about where's your MBA where's your LSE degree where's your PhD in economics this is a man who spent his entire adult life in prison he's taken out of prison he's put before the most powerful man in the world he corrects him in one breath and then tells him how to run his kingdom in the second do we see what arrogance many of us might be thinking but for Joseph it's as simple as the fact that God has told him so he'll tell so he'll tell Pharaoh and again we can imagine us waiting with bait of breath to see what Pharaoh is going to say and we just saw that he was very happy to hang his chief baker and at this point we could well be thinking Joseph is entirely blown it there is no way that Joseph can get away with this kind of arrogance to a man this powerful verse 37 this proposal pleased Pharaoh and all his servants and Pharaoh said to his servants can we find a man like this and whom is the spirit of God then

[30 : 56] Pharaoh said to Joseph since God has shown you all this there is none so discerning and wise as you are you shall be over my house and all my people shall order themselves as you command only as regards the throne will I be greater than you and Pharaoh said to Joseph see I've set you over all the land of Egypt then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his hand and put it on Joseph's hand and clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain about his neck and he made him ride in his second chariot and they called out before him bow the knee thus he set him over all the land of Egypt and the great conclusion is that it seems that all of Joseph's predictions from God have come true and we conclude with verse 56 and 57 so when the famine had spread over all the land Joseph opened all the storehouses and sold to the Egyptians for the famine was severe in the land of Egypt moreover all the earth came to Egypt to Joseph to buy grain because the famine was severe over all the earth so we see the staggering trajectory that

Joseph has taken from his whole adult life in prison to standing before Pharaoh telling Pharaoh what to do Pharaoh accepting Pharaoh clothing him once more in a beautiful robe the story started didn't it with Joseph clothed in his technicolor dream coat by his father favored favored by his father and the story seems to be ending with Joseph clothed once more this time in royal linen and the story of Joseph it began didn't it with Joseph's brothers being predicted that they would bow before him and now the story is ending with the whole of Egypt falling to their knees bowing before Joseph when they see him come and the story has started with Joseph being a favored son and now it ends with the whole world being blessed through Joseph's wisdom from his God verse 57 all the earth came to Egypt to Joseph to buy grain because the famine was severe over all the earth what an incredible trajectory that Joseph has taken from the prison to the palace but of course that hasn't fully yet answered our question that we started with has it which is why why does God work this way why does God work from weakness to power from death to glory from the prison to the palace well we too have a king don't we who has followed that exact same trajectory why don't we turn now as we think about application to Philippians chapter 2

Philippians chapter 2 verse 5 to 11 starting to read at verse 5 have this mind among yourselves which is yours in Christ Jesus who though he was in the form of God did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped but emptied himself by taking the form of a servant being born in the likeness of men and being found in human form he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death even death on a cross therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father I want us to notice that Paul is trying to get us to see the trajectory the trajectory that shows the glory of God notice where Jesus started equality with God's verse 5 notice that he emptied himself by becoming human that the person who has never had to struggle with hunger or tiredness or sickness took on human form and then from human form he was willing to die someone who has never died and never had to worry about death willingly took it on but not just any kind of death death on a cross and if we just stopped there if we just stopped there and looked at the cross we would have seen something utterly weak pathetic vile evil but because of the cross sin and death and Satan were defeated and verse 9 God has highly exalted Jesus and bestowed on him the name that is above every name so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father this in other words is how God works he works from weakness to glory from the prison to the palace so that when we see God working in this way we have nothing other to say than this is a God thing God is working it is only God that could have taken a convicted

Hebrew rape rapist from the prison to the whole world bowing to him and coming to him for food and it is only God that could take a crucified slave and defeat sin and death and Satan with it and bring the nations to worship the one true God it is a God thing God works from weakness to power from the prison to the palace and for us as we close thinking about application this should be immensely reassuring to us at the number of times I in my own ministry and I'm sure everyone else can attest to this have heard people say it just feels so weak at the number of times I've heard parents say the number of times my child just responds I know this mom I don't want to read it again it seems like things are going in one ear and coming out the other the number of times we've invited friends to guest events and we're at the point now where we're not sure our friendship can survive another invite and because they've said no so many times well that's glorious that's powerful because God works from weakness to glory or perhaps take the elms if you've never been to the elms it'd be a wonderful thing for you to go and look at it is the weakest looking ministry in the world that I've ever seen you have four of them are asleep two of them have dementia so they say nice to meet you for the first time every single time you come the staff they're on their phones flicking and yet when Jesus Christ is proclaimed in that place death is being defeated sin is being undone and Satan is being overthrown God works with weak people he works with weak means he takes slaves like Joseph and puts them to the highest place he takes slaves like Jesus and puts them to the highest place and he uses people like you and I in our weakness and for his ultimate glory so I suppose for us as we think about how it is that we're going to try and live in light of this truth this week when we feel weak when our evangelism or relationship with God feels weak remember that's how God works remember that that's how he worked in us thank goodness that God uses weak means to his glory why don't I lead us in a final prayer father I thank you so much and that because of the Lord Jesus Christ because he was weak because he went down to death on the cross you raised him to the highest place and I thank you that you work this way and so father when we feel weak please encourage us with this truth amen alright and anyone we