

Don't Be Afraid of the Future; It's All in God's Hands

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Preacher: Rev James Maciver

[0 : 00] begin our worship and we're singing firstly tonight from Psalm 105. Psalm 105 on page 138, June of Saint Daniel, and we're singing verses 1 to 11.

Give thanks to the Lord God and call on his name. His wonderful deeds to the nations proclaim. Sing praises to him and his exploits at record. Let all those who seek him rejoice in the Lord.

You chosen ones look to the Lord and his might. Seek ever his face and his wondrous recite. His miracles too and his judgments divine. You children of Abraham, Jacob's own line.

Reminding us how important it is to sing praise to God, to praise him for all his acts, and especially for those that we experience ourselves from day to day. Give thanks to the Lord God.

Amen. Amen. Let our God and call on his name. His wonderful deeds to the nations proclaim.

[1 : 20] Sing praises to him and his ex-wife's regard. Let all those who seek him rejoice in the Lord.

Amen. Mormon God and call on his side.

This pardon me. Make us do, and each judgment's divine, You children of Israel and Jacob's own life.

The Lord is our God, and He rules all the earth. Remember in His covenant, the word He set forth.

He worked for the ages to come to make good, His promise to Abraham, to rise and renew.

[3 : 01] To take up this sovereign decree was made sure, With His service coming would always endure.

To you I will give past your portion to stand, The country of kingdom, the beautiful land.

Let's now call upon the Lord in prayer. We're going to join together in prayer. Our gracious and eternal God, we thank you that we too have come to receive your covenant blessings, That covenant which has been enforced throughout all the ages of your church.

And we thank you that tonight we enter into further experience of your covenant promises, And your covenant blessings. Where we gather together as a people who worship the God who is mentioned in these words we have sung, The God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob, the God of the living and not of the dead, The God who continues to bless His people, And the God whose promises we continue to enjoy and to anticipate those that have yet to be fulfilled.

Oh Lord, we thank you for your commitment and steadfastness to all that you have promised to do for your people. We know that many of these have already been fulfilled, And fulfilled abundantly and wonderfully in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- [4 : 52] For that great promise that He would come and be the Savior of His people, That He would come into this world and give Himself a ransom for many. How wonderfully, Lord, that has been accomplished already.
- And we give thanks for the opportunity to remember His death that we engaged in last Lord's Day. And we thank you, O Lord, for all that accompanies your promises in the teaching of your word.
- We thank you that they are especially accompanied by your faithfulness and your power, Your ability to bring these promises to pass, And your faithfulness to ensure that they will do so.
- We thank you, O Lord, tonight that we come as a congregation of promises. For we are in some way or other the product of those who have come to reveal, To be recipients of your promises in generations before us.
- We thank you that we are the product of their prayers. As we have come into the possession of the blessings of your covenant. We pray tonight, Lord, for further blessing.
- [6 : 02] The blessing of your Holy Spirit taking the things of Christ and showing them to us. And the blessing of instilling in our hearts an enlargement of that hope that belongs to your people.
- That hope that looks towards the fulfillment of the Canaan of the Old Testament in the heaven that you hold before us. As the final terminus of blessedness for your people.
- We pray tonight, O Lord, that your blessing will encompass us and come to involve each one of us. Lord, each one of us, as we gather before you, come to acknowledge our need.
- And come to acknowledge that we stand before you as those who once again come to open our hearts to receive that supply of your own holy blessing that will meet us in our need.
- And so bless us, we pray each one. Bless us together as a congregation. Bless us, Lord, in all our activities. Those that we anticipate in this week to come.
- [7 : 05] We pray that your blessing will be with us in all our times of worship. And in all our other activities as well. And we thank you for all that we are able to engage in. And to participate in as a people.
- Your goodness, Lord, is opened up for us each day. And provides for us each day. And we give thanks, O Lord, that in your goodness you continue so to bless us.
- Lord, we remember tonight those who have different needs to our own in different parts of the world. And we think especially of those who are not able to be with us in our own community.
- Those who are confined to hospitals, to care homes, to their own homes as well. Through illness, through recovery, through various types of ailments that affect us from day to day, from time to time.
- And we ask your blessing, O Lord, especially on those whose faculties have begun to fail. Whether it be in terms of mental ability or physical. O Lord, we pray for them.
- [8 : 08] We pray for those who care for them. Those who are anxious over them. Those who look to their needs. And pray that you would bless them, O Lord, as all of them together share in these difficult issues of life.
- We pray for those who mourn the passing of loved ones. We pray that you would grant them your comfort, your consolation. And we pray for your guidance for them, for your strengthening of them.
- Help them, we pray, to face the issues of living without loved ones. Especially, Lord, when we find that so often in life we have unexpected developments, even in the passing of loved ones.

And we pray that you would bless all those who are tonight in such situations. We pray your blessing, too, for all that we, Lord, know of in our own midst, as difficulties in our community.

Those who wrestle with addictions of various kinds. And those who seek to help them. Those who have loneliness to contend with day by day. Remember them, we pray.

[9 : 14] And grant to them that they may know your own company and your own fellowship. For that is above all what we prize in this life, O Lord, by way of companionship. To have the Lord with us.

And to know that the Lord is indeed in our hearts and in our homes. In all aspects of our life. We pray your blessing on all who go out with the gospel to various parts of the world.

We pray that you would remember her own Muriel. As she continues in Cambodia to serve you. Be with her there and grant her continued safety and continued blessing on her work.

Remember the work of SGA, especially in these difficult times. In Central Europe, Ukraine especially. Grant them your continued blessing and provision for them. Oh Lord, we thank you for the account recently given to us by them.

That they see further blessing despite the difficulties. And even increased blessing in places despite the challenges they face. Continue, Lord, we pray to provide for them.

[10 : 18] And all who witness to the Jewish people. All who witness to Muslim people in different parts of the world. Oh gracious one, we're so conscious of tensions.

And of violence and conflict. Even between such people. And we pray for days of peace. We pray that you would come and show us your power once again.

In the advancement of your kingdom. And in the love of Christ being shown amongst so many people throughout the world. Remember us then now we pray as we continue here before you.

Grant us your blessing as we seek your word, Lord, to be once again placed in our hearts. By the power of your spirit. And help us in all of these aspects of our worship.

To give glory and honor and praise to your glorious majestic name. We pray in Jesus name. Amen. We'll sing once again to God's praise.

[11 : 16] This time is Psalm 3. Psalm number 3 in the Sing Psalms version. That's on page 3. We're singing verses 1 to 6.

The tune is Finart. Oh Lord, how many are my foes. How many up against me rise. They all are saying now to me, in vain, he on his God relies.

But you are my protector, Lord. You are a shield around me spread. My glory comes from you alone. The one who raises up my head. When to the Lord I lift my voice in face of those who hate me still.

The Lord will hear my cry to him and answer from his holy hill. I settle down and sleep in peace. I wake in God's upholding hand.

I will not fear ten thousand foes whose circling round against me stand. Difficult to sleep on a battlefield, isn't it?

[12 : 20] Yet in the Christian battle, in the various conflicts of the Christian life, we find the psalmist so often pointing us to the place of peace in the Lord, where here he calls upon the Lord as his shield, his protector, the one who gives him the raising up of his head in victory.

And we sing these verses knowing that the Lord has already given us that in Jesus Christ, that we come to share in that when we come to place our life in his hands.

Oh Lord, how many are my foes. How many up against me rise. May Allah say in the hour of me rise.

And may Allah say in the hour of me. And may he on his love. May Allah say in the hour of me. And may he on his love. May Allah say in the hour of me. But you are my, How many up against me rise.

How many up against me rise. May Allah say in the hour of me. And may he on his love.

[13 : 30] May Allah say in the hour of me. But you are my protector, Lord.

You have a shield around me, say. My glory comes from you alone, The one who raises up my head.

When to the Lord I lift my voice, In face of those who hate me still, The Lord will hear my guide to him, And answer from his glory.

I settle down and sleep in peace. I wake in God's upholding hand.

I will not fear ten thousand holes, Who serve the man against his hand.

[15 : 19] Now let's turn to read God's word. Our reading tonight is from the book of Genesis. The book of Genesis and chapter 45.

At verse 16. And we'll read into the first part of chapter 46. Down as far as verse 7. So that's Genesis chapter 45.

From verse 16. This is when Joseph's brothers had arrived in Egypt. The report was given in Pharaoh's house that they had arrived. And so we read from that point as Pharaoh speaks.

And then on into the next chapter. So from verse 16. When the report was heard in Pharaoh's house, Joseph's brothers have come. It pleased Pharaoh and his servants.

And Pharaoh said to Joseph, Say to your brothers, Do this. Load your beasts and go back to the land of Canaan. And take your father and your households and come to me.

[16 : 22] And I will give you the best of the land of Egypt. And you shall eat the fat of the land. And you, Joseph, are commanded to say, Do this. Take wagons from the land of Egypt for your little ones and for your wives.

And bring your father and come. Have no concern for your goods. For the best of all the land of Egypt is yours. The sons of Israel did so.

And Joseph gave them wagons according to the command of Pharaoh. And gave them provisions for the journey. To each and all of them he gave a change of clothes. But to Benjamin he gave three hundred shekels of silver.

And five changes of clothes. To his father he sent as follows. Ten donkeys loaded with the good things of Egypt. And ten female donkeys loaded with grain, bread and provision for his father on the journey.

Then he sent his brothers away. And as they departed he said to them. Do not quarrel on the way. So they went up out of Egypt and came to the land of Canaan to their father Jacob.

[17 : 28] And they told him, Joseph is still alive. And he is ruler over all the land of Egypt. And his heart became numb. For he did not believe them. But when they told him all the words of Joseph.

Which he had said to them. And when he saw the wagons that Joseph had sent to carry him. The spirit of their father Jacob revived. And Israel said, It is enough.

Joseph my son is still alive. I will go and see him before I die. So Israel took his journey. With all that he had. And came to Beersheba.

And offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. And God spoke to Israel in visions of the night. And he said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here am I.

Then he said, I am God. The God of your father. Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt. For there I will make you into a great nation.

[18 : 26] I myself will go down with you to Egypt. And I will also bring you up again. And Joseph's hand shall close your eyes. Then Jacob set out from Beersheba.

The sons of Israel carried Jacob their father. Their little ones and their wives in the wagons. That Pharaoh had sent to carry him. They also took their livestock and their goods.

Which they had gained in the land of Canaan. And came into Egypt Jacob and all his offspring with him. His sons and his sons' sons with him. His daughters and his sons' daughters.

All his offspring he brought with him into Egypt. Amen. May God again bless us as we read his precious word.

We'll sing once again in Psalm 37. This time Psalm 37 on page 254. And the tune this time is Weatherby. Psalm 37 from verse 23.

[19 : 26] Down as far as verse 28. A good man's footsteps by the Lord are ordered aright. And in the way wherein he walks he greatly doth delight.

Although he fall, yet shall he not be cast down utterly. Because the Lord with his own hand upholds him mightily. I have been young and now am old. Yet have I never seen the just man left.

Nor that his seed for bread have beggars been. And so on down as far as verse 28. A good man's footsteps by the Lord. I have been young and now, but I am young and now. And so on down as far as verse 28.

And the Lord is in the way. I have been young and now. And so on down as far as verse 28. And so on down as far as verse 28. And the words or whilst white are ordered aright.

And in the way where he walks, he greatly glad he lies.

[20 : 42] O glory, O yet shall he not be cast of lottery, Because the Lord with his own hand upholds him mightily.

I have been young and never old, yet have I never seen The just one left, nor the ungecee, Forbred a beggar dream.

He's never merciful and blessed, His seed is blessed before.

Depart from evil and new good And dwell forevermore.

For God loves judgment and his saints, Bleeds not in any case.

[22 : 43] They are death, ever but the Lord Shall lead the sinners with him.

Well, if you turn with me now, please, to Genesis chapter 46. In Genesis 46, we're going to look at the first four verses of Genesis 46.

Let's just read these verses again. So Israel, that's of course Jacob, He took his journey with all that he had and came to Beersheba And offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac.

And God spoke to Israel in visions of the night and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here am I. Then he said, I am God, the God of your father. Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, For there I will make you into a great nation.

I myself will go down with you to Egypt, And I will also bring you up again. And Joseph's hand shall close your eyes. The fear of the future, to some extent at least, Is very common, I'm sure, to every human being, To some extent or other.

[24 : 04] It's a very natural part of our experience, To have some element of fear, As we look into the future. Especially when we consider certain possibilities.

They may never happen, But they come to our minds as possibilities. But there are also things which you know are going to be inevitable, Which also may instill a sense of fear in our hearts about the future.

For all of us as individuals. For all of us as individuals. Serious illness. The issue of death itself. Unemployment. For younger ones, the development of our career.

Various other items like that, And many other items like that. As they form part of our daily experience in life, Can be a source of fear for us. As we look into a future, Which we ourselves actually cannot control.

Which we ourselves cannot see clearly, At least most of the time. So the fear of the future is a natural element in our thinking.

[25 : 08] And that also applies to groups of people. It applies to congregations like yourselves. There are many things in the experiences of congregations, As congregations, That they may have some sense of foreboding, Or fear, or anxiety over.

For example, A vacancy such as you yourselves are going to experience, Very shortly. And for me, Fear may actually be part of What looks, As I look ahead to retirement, Which I don't know anything about just now.

Even though I've taken some soundings From some people who are already retired. But there are certain aspects of that, When it's something you're not being used to. There are aspects of that, That may instill some anxiety, Or doubts, Or even fear in one's mind.

And it really means that Congregations, As well as individuals, Need from God, From time to time, From God, A reassurance, That everything is well in His hands.

And that's what we're going to look at tonight. And we're going to try and apply this To the future, Whatever it may hold for us, Not to be afraid. We're giving it the title, Don't be afraid of the future.

[26 : 31] It's all in God's hands. And we're looking at it From the perspective of Jacob, And his meeting with God here, And what God said to him, As Jacob prepared to go, Down into the land of Egypt.

Believers need reassurance, From time to time. We all need reassurance, And our great reassurance, Comes from God Himself, Primarily. That is the kind of reassurance, We require.

Now that's not contrary, To faith. Just because somebody needs reassurance, Or comes to God with certain questions, About an unknown future, That doesn't mean, Even if there's fear accompanying it, And some doubt accompanying it, Doesn't mean it's not real faith.

Faith needs to be assured. The believer needs to be assured, I should say. And that happens all the way through the Bible. You find people coming to Jesus Himself, With questions relating to the future, The disciples especially were anxious, About Jesus no longer being physically with them.

He had told them that he had to go away, That it was expedient for them. They couldn't, Of course, Then understand that at the time. And so they came to him, With perplexed minds, And you'll find in John's gospel, Especially these great chapters, Verse 15, 16, 14, 15, 16, 17, The way in which Jesus addressed that fear, And especially, Let not your hearts be troubled.

[28 : 03] You believe in God. You believe also in me. And here is Jacob, Leaving Egypt, Leaving, To go to Egypt, Leaving Canaan, And taking his journey with all that he had, On his way to Egypt, To go back to sea, To go down there to see Joseph, Who he thought for many years was dead.

And here his heart revived again. It's hard to imagine just how he must have felt, When this news came to him, That Joseph was still alive. And not only was Joseph still alive, He was under Pharaoh, The most important man in Egypt.

He was in charge of Egypt. He was a ruler in Egypt. And when it came to him, That this was indeed the case, When he saw the evidence for himself, The goods that Joseph had sent to him, The spirit of Jacob revived.

And he said, It's enough. Joseph, my son, is still alive. I will go and see him before I die. And as he came to take his journey, God came to meet with him.

And God spoke to him in visions of the night, And said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here am I. And then he said, I am God, The God of your father. God came to address a very real fear In Jacob's mind, In Jacob's heart.

[29 : 24] What would be the point of trying to reassure him If there was no fear there to begin with? And it may well be that What had been passed on, Because we believe that, Of course, His father Isaac, And grandfather Abraham, Would have passed on much of what they themselves Had come to learn from God During the course of these long years.

And one of the things that God revealed to Abraham Was that His descendants would be In Egypt, Would be in Egypt At a very difficult time.

In chapter 15, You find God revealing this to Abraham. Know for certain That your offspring Will be sojourners In a land that is not theirs And will be servants By which he meant slaves there And they will be afflicted For four hundred years.

But I will bring judgment On that nation. It will appear that I'm sure that That was passed on to His son Isaac And then on to his son That he would pass on Orally these great teachings From God That had come to them.

And you can really understand Why there might be In Jacob's mind A certain anxiety. He had reasons to be anxious. Was this going to be something That enveloped him If he went down to Egypt?

[30 : 42] Was this going to be The beginning of troubles? Were the things that were revealed there To Abraham Going to start with him? Going down to Egypt? At that stage He wouldn't know.

But here God comes To address his mind And address his anxiety. And notice how he calls him Jacob Jacob Personally He comes To this individual Jacob He's got all of these Other people with him But he's coming now Especially to him To address his Sense of anxiety As he's going down to Egypt With all of those people With him And all his goods.

And he says Jacob Jacob You see Jacob Like ourselves Had a specific need At that time And God came to him Not in a general fashion But he came to him To address that specific need And to speak into that specific need To assure and to reassure Jacob That he need not be afraid And that very personal call Jacob Jacob Showed Jacob That God already knew everything about him And when you come to have Your own heart And it's anxiety Brought before God When you come before God And you receive From the Bible That reassurance That you're seeking At least you're praying That that assurance Or reassurance Would be your God doesn't go to somebody else with it God doesn't say Well I'll tell so and so I'll tell your minister And then he'll come and tell you Or I'll tell your elders It comes to yourself That's why you've got a Bible In your possession So that you'll hear God

Speaking to you through it That's why it's such a wonderful privilege To have that particular word of God here And of course you find similarly When Jesus came to Peter And he said to him Simon, Simon Luke 22 Simon, Simon Satan has desired to have you That he might sift you as wheat He meant his desire to have all of you disciples So that he might sift you like wheat Just scatter you Like you scatter wheat into the air To get rid of the dross He's desired to have you That's Jesus coming to Peter And saying Simon, Simon Individually You, personally I want to tell you this Satan has desired to have you But I have prayed for you I've prayed for you And today And tonight And always If we are Christ Then we are inside His intercession

We are inside What he is setting before God the Father What he himself Is committed to To protect us And to keep us And to guide us Well here he says Jacob Jacob And Jacob Responds here Am I That brings us really to the crux of our study this evening Where Jacob Hears the voice of God And said I am God I am God Now you can pause there Because these words themselves Are really special And very important And very powerful Because what God is saying is This is the fundamental point That you have to remember This is what you must have Underlying all your thoughts Jacob Whatever lies in the future for you Never depart in your mind From this great fact I am God And the word God there in Hebrew Is the word El Which you find attached to many Hebrew names Elijah

[34 : 24] Elusha All of these names beginning with El El is the name for God And it particularly in Hebrew That shortened form Means God Almighty It has an emphasis on God's Almightiness On God's power On God's ability That limitless Eternal Ever unchanging Ability and power Of God And there is this Jacob hearing God Saying to him I am God I am God The mighty God The omnipotent God The omnipotent God That's who I am He's saying Why is he saying this To Jacob Why is that his introduction Because he's going on to say What that means And it's working out In the future of Of Of Jacob As he will go down to Egypt

Spend some time there And experience things there I am God I am El A psalm we sang together Psalm 3 Brings similar matters Before us The psalmist As we sang there Really saying In his His prayer to God He is saying Lord how many Are my foes Many are rising up Against me Many are saying Of my soul There is no salvation For him In God But You You oh Lord Are a shield About me My glory And the oblifter Of my head You know it doesn't really Matter in a sense To any Great extent What somebody says to you What somebody's Opposition to you Might be What anxieties May come into your mind And whatever source They may be from What you really want to hear Addressing That is God Saying to you And God assuring you I am God I am ill

I am the almighty one What he's effectively Saying To To Jacob here is I am God You're going to go down To Egypt But I'm the master Of Egypt Egypt is in my hand Just as Canaan is I'm the boss When it comes to Egypt Not Pharaoh So don't be afraid To go down to Egypt I am God Not Pharaoh Not the Egyptians I am God You know in 1 Kings In chapter 17 Remember that incident With Elijah Where Elijah was At the brook Kerith He was being fed There Ravens brought him Food And then God Came to him And he said to him Get up from here And go to Zarephath A city in Sidon For I have commanded A widow woman there To feed you To look after you Just think about that Here is Elijah By the brook

Kerith Being cared for By God Through aspects Of the creation itself Of the natural world And here is God Saying to him Get up from here You need to move From here You need to go To Zarephath And what are you Going to find In Zarephath Elijah You're going to find A woman Already prepared By God To look after you You know In other words Wherever you go In life If God is your guide If God is your God Wherever you go In life If this mighty Ale is on your side If this God Who introduces himself And says I am God You can be sure Not only is he Looking after you Where you are But he's going To be ahead of you Wherever you go And he's going To make preparation For you As he sees your need As he sees fit And so he's saying Don't be afraid Because I Am God What is making you

Anxious tonight Where is the anxiety In your heart Coming from Is it something In your own life Personally Is it something Happening in the world Or in our community Or in your family Or in your neighborhood That brings you That anxiety Is it a loved one That's a source Of anxiety To you Well here is God Saying to you I Am God It's all within Who I am As God And what I am And the fact That I am God Means that In your Particular Personal Circumstances All that I am Can be directed To look after you To guide you To comfort you To assure you To bless you You know God being with

[39 : 28] His people Is a great truth For us to actually Have comfort from But not only Is it the fact That God Is with us We'll see more Of that in a minute But there is also The fact that God actually Is always ahead of us Always Ahead of you You never have to Have God Catch up with you But sometimes We have to catch up With God And come to realize Well yes That preparation Has been made for me It's just like God said I Am God But then he went on To say I am God The God of your father He didn't just Introduce himself As God The mighty one He added to that I am the God Of your father I'm your covenant God I'm the God Who has entered Into covenant With your father Your grandfather And others before them And that covenant Is a covenant To which God

Is committed A covenant Which would involve Which involves So much blessing So many assurances And as we said earlier All that would have been Passed on to Jacob From his father Isaac And grandfather Abraham That this God Was a God Of covenant And covenant blessings And covenant mercies And covenant Privileges Abraham You remember Himself went down To Egypt And he was afraid He was afraid That the Egyptians Would see that Because his wife Was very beautiful Sarai They would take her And something would Happen to him Perhaps even be killed And so he Made a pact With Sarai And said Don't say that You're my wife Tell them You're my sister That came out Of fear An unneeded fear On the part Of Abraham And it didn't work Well for him

Never does When we pass Something off As untruth Or even as a Half truth As it was then He didn't tell The whole truth And so that fear That was in Abraham Some of that Might have been Here in Jacob's heart As well As we said The prospect Of going down To Egypt Especially the prospect As we said earlier That maybe that Would involve him In what had been Revealed to Abraham Would happen To his descendants But God Is committed To his covenant People And his covenant Promises And wherever God has promised Something You must never Doubt that promise You must never Think that God Is different To what he has Promised That God is going To change His promises That God is going To suddenly not Look after you When all of The way through To this moment He said I am here To look after you I will guide you I will keep you I will bless you And because

Something's happened In your life Or my life That was unexpected That doesn't mean God has changed Doesn't mean His promises Are no longer valid Doesn't mean He's no longer Trustworthy That's what the devil Will try and persuade you of That's what the world Will try and persuade you of That's what the psalmist Had in Psalm 23 In Psalm 3 As we sang How many say There is no help For him in God The world's influence Pouring into his mind And saying What's the point Of actually trusting In God And of course Then he realized Well God's actually My protector He's my shield He's the one Who looks after me And always will I am the God Of your father I am your covenant God I am God I am the God Of your father And then he goes Into reasons More in more detail As to why Jacob Need not

And must not Be afraid I am the God Of your father Do not be afraid To go down To Egypt He didn't just Leave it at saying I am God So don't be afraid He added In his kindness Other things to that That would actually be Experienced by Jacob Do not be afraid For there I will make you Into a great nation Now there's something Here is a man Who's been told Through what's been Passed by his father And grandfather That is descend That his people The people he belongs to Are going to be In great distress In Egypt They're going to be Slaves in Egypt They're going to be Mistreated They're going to be There for a long Long time And here is God Saying to him There I will make You a great nation Now somebody reading That or hearing That might say But God Didn't you say That there were Going to be All of these years When these people Of Abraham And Isaac And Jacob

[44 : 32] And their descendants Would be intensely Persecuted And in distress And afflicted How can it be That they're going To be multiplied That they're going To actually increase That they're going To be made Into a great nation There Yes they're going To be made Into a great nation But surely It's when they Come out And end up In Canaan At last Whenever that will be Surely that's where They're going to Become a great nation No that's not What God is saying There I will make you A great nation God knew very well How they would be Treated Or mistreated And yet here He is assuring Jacob That's where I'm going to Make you a great nation That's where You'll know My blessing In your descendants That's where You will know That I am God That I am the God of your father That's where You will know That the difficulties

The afflictions Of Egypt The persecution Your people Will experience In Egypt Is no barrier To my making My promise Fulfilled To make you A great nation Now there's So much of that That we can Pass into Our own Situation as well For example We had a recent Vision from SGA Who told us About the situation In Ukraine And how challenging That situation is In Ukraine For them With all that Still going on In Ukraine From the oppressive Regime in Russia That are trying To still press on And overtake People of Ukraine The church in Ukraine Is active In all of these Difficult circumstances But we heard We heard With tremendous Encouragement For ourselves And a sense Of gratitude To God And a sense Indeed Of feeling Absolutely humbled By hearing

Of these things That there are Churches there And they are Queuing to get Into the churches Even under Such situations And perhaps Because of Such situations God as he is Blessing that Situation to them Is not saying To them Don't go to Churches now It's too dangerous God's spirit At work In them Is bringing People to see As we heard From the SGA Representative Derek Maxwell Is bringing People to see The things Of this world Can disappear Just like that And we need Something More than this World can offer Us As a foundation For life And a foundation For eternity Where is it It's in this I am God I am the God Of your father There I will Make you into A great nation The God of blessing The God of power The God whose power Ensures that Even in the depths Of oppression

In Egypt Jacob's descendants Will multiply They will become A great nation Because God Had said so And because God will do so Now you take That with you Into Your own life As well Into the history And experiences Of the church Of God Of ourselves As a congregation Or denomination Of your own life As an individual Think of the challenges The difficulties The trials The pains You've already Experienced As a Christian The things That were not Expected That caused you Some bewilderment And that you Found difficult To adjust To Loss of loved Ones Other providences That Were surprising Unexpected And caused Affliction

To some extent In your life But here is something You can go back to And I can go back to I know it's not Always easy We have to We have to readjust Sometimes our Vision and come back To God And to what God Is saying Rather than just Let our own thoughts Dictate as to how The way ahead Should be Here is God Saying to you And to me In all the Difficulties of life I am God I am the God Of your Father I am your covenant God And there There in your Afflictions I can do things That you just Could not Possibly measure Or possibly expect Isn't that why Paul wrote to the Corinthians In the way he did Our light Affliction Which is but Temporary Is working for us A far more Exceeding And eternal Weight Of glory You see what he's doing He's saying Afflictions These Corinthians Knew affliction

[49 : 35] Paul knew affliction He knew the difficulties Of and the challenges Of living as a Christian And an apostle In this world But he calls them Light afflictions How can he possibly Call them light afflictions When you read later on Of the list of things That he went through In the providence of God That hurt him deeply That caused him To find such suffering In his life As he cried out To God from How can he call these Light afflictions Well because he's putting it In the balance If you like And on the other side There is The glory that's in Christ The glory that's in salvation That exceeding Weight Of glory And he says These afflictions Are working for us By God's blessing An eternal weight Of glory While we look not At the things Which are seen But at the things Which are unseen For the things Which are seen Are temporal

Short lived But the things Which are unseen Are eternal And in a sense That's what he's saying To Jacob Don't be afraid To go down to Egypt For there I will make you Into a great nation There is where Jacob's people Are going to multiply What God has purposed What God brings about Can't be reversed You could say There's more power In a gram Of grace Than in a ton Of affliction And that follows Through Into The Christian life Today But it's not just that I will go with you And I will make of you There a great nation I myself Will go down With you To Egypt It wasn't enough For Jacob And it wasn't as far As God was concerned It wasn't enough That he would say To Jacob Don't be afraid To go to Egypt For there I will make you

Into a great nation Full stop No he added to that again I myself Will go with you What a remarkable statement God Going down To Egypt To be with this man Jacob And that's what he's saying I myself Will go down With you To Egypt He's not just going To send an angel He's not going to send A representative From heaven To accompany Jacob To go with him And to be with him In Egypt I myself Will go with you Are there any words More precious In human experience Than that And God Saying to his Believing people I will go with you Into your afflictions Into your challenges Into your difficulties Into your trials I'll not just take you To the borders Of Egypt If you need to go Right into Egypt Jacob As you need to I will go down With you You'll find me

In Egypt There are no barriers To my entrance To Egypt And so it is true Still You can depend On God To have his company As he has promised There are so many Instances in the Bible Of that Daniel The fiery furnace You remember Nebuchadnezzar's Astonish When he was astonished That he had thrown Three of these Hebrew lads Into the fire Not only were they not burnt But there was a fourth figure And he was just astonished When he saw this And he said Did we not cast Three men Into the fire But I see a fourth And his appearance Is like A son of the gods I think we should Translate it that way Rather than The son of God His appearance Is like A son of the gods In other words Nebuchadnezzar Was astonished At what he saw And what astonished him

As much as anyone else Not as anything else Not just that these three men Were untouched by the fire There was another person And that person Was divine There was something about him Different to the other three The presence Of the Lord Was with them Even there I will make you A great nation All the way through To Matthew's Jesus in Matthew 28 Lo I am with you To the end of the age Go into the world And Make disciples And I am with you But if you remember Moses In Exodus Chapter 33 It's a wonderful passage That personally I've many often found As Something to enter Into my own prayers As well Moses In his Speaking with God There As they were going to Move on As a people Here is Moses saying Chapter 33

[54 : 39] Of Exodus And verse 12 Moses said See now you say to me Bring up this people But you have not Let me know Whom you will send With me Yet you have said I know you by name And you have also Found favour In my sight Now therefore If I have found Favour in your sight Please show me Now your ways That I may know you In order to find Favour in your sight Consider too That this nation Is your people And God said My presence Will go with you And I will give you rest And then what did Moses say Well he took Encouragement from that And he immediately said If your presence Will not go with me Do not bring us Up from here For how shall it be known That I have found Favour in your sight I and your people Is it not In your going with us So that we are distinct I and your people From every other people

On the face of the earth And the Lord said to Moses This very thing That you have spoken I will do You see God had said to them Previously Shortly before that Because of the grievous sin Of this golden calf That they had made This image That he would not Go with them That he would send His angel And Moses knew Well we need more Than an angel Lord we need yourself And if you do not Go with us Don't take us up Just leave us here What will be the point And so for you And for me tonight too Surely That's what you find Included in these words To Jacob I myself Will go with you Aren't you thankful Tonight To have all kinds Of assistance From God Aren't you thankful

Tonight To read in the Bible That the angels Of God Surround his people That they accompany His people That they have Manifested themselves At times To his people But here's the most Wonderful truth of all That God is with you That God will always Be with you That he will go with you Into every Egypt He has for you In his providence And that you will Know him there As the God Whose presence Is invaluable To you And always Will be I am God I am the God Of your Father I myself Will go with you Into Egypt And then And I will bring you Up again I will bring you Up again Not only am I God And am I your Covenant God

And not only Is there with that That I will go with you Into Egypt But I won't leave you there I will bring you Up again You see There is God Assuring Jacob As he's about to Go on his journey To Egypt Egypt's not going To be your resting place Jacob of course Was buried in Canaan And the people That descended from him Having spent all of these years Oppressed in Egypt Yet they were brought out By God And led onwards To the land of Canaan The land of promise I will not leave you there It's interesting And it's significant That a number of times In this passage The word Israel Is used along with The word Jacob As well as the word Jacob Israel of course Being the name That God gave To Jacob At a certain juncture Before this And here is the word again Israel Just putting us in mind

And anticipating really What you find in the book Of Exodus onwards That Israel means Not just Jacob in person But his descendants The people That came from him Israel took his journey Then Jacob sent out Set out from Beersheba Here is Jacob Being assured That Egypt's not going To be the final Dwelling place For himself Or for his people And so it is too With whatever afflictions Come your way God's not going To leave you there As Jeremiah found out And as he tells us In his Lamentations In that great chapter 3 Of Lamentations Though the Lord Cause grief Yet will he have Compassion According to his Steadfast love For he does not Willingly afflict Or grieve The children of men God doesn't bring us

[59 : 46] Into afflictions To leave us there They have their own use And as they've made As they are made By God A means by which We get to know him Better So the assurance Is that's not Your final resting place That's not where I'm going to leave you I will take you up again And that ultimately Of course Applies to death itself Because you have The language here really Which in other parts Of the Bible Is used as the language Of resurrection I will bring you up again I will raise you again I will bring you up Out of Egypt So if you think of Egypt as a temporary Place for Jacob To dwell in A place of oppression A place of difficulty For his descendants I'm not going to leave you There God is saying I will bring you up again And so you find Jesus in John chapter 6 You remember his teaching There saying In verse 40 especially

Where he spoke of himself In that chapter As the bread of life And where he came In verse 40 For this is the will Of my father That everyone Who looks on the son And believes in him Should have eternal life And I will raise him up On the last day I will bring His body back up again On the last day I will raise him up I will not leave him In the grave They will come to be with me God says in heaven And you see he's saying In a marvelous way Of finishing this Just allow me to To say this point In verse 4 I myself will bring I will go down with you To Egypt And I will also Bring you up again And Joseph's hand Shall close your eyes That's so beautiful Because this man Jacob had said Of his son Joseph He is undoubtedly dead When you go to chapter 37

And in 37 verse 35 Just read the words there Of Jacob In chapter 37 35 Well in 33 He identified the garment As the son's robe Joseph's robe He said A fierce animal has devoured him Joseph is without doubt Torn to pieces Then Jacob tore his garments And put sackcloth on his loins And mourned for his son For many days All his sons And all his daughters Rose up to comfort him But he refused To be comforted And said No I shall go down to Sheol I shall go down to the grave To my son Mourning And here he is In chapter 46 What a difference To what he had envisaged And feared I shall go down To the grave Mourning With my son And here's God Saying to him Joseph Shall close your eyes

In other words He's saying to Jacob When you die Joseph will be there And the closing of your eyes In death Most people die Or some people anyway With their eyes open They pass away Their eyes need to be closed Then by somebody there Just to take their eyelids And close them down Joseph Shall close your eyes He'll be there To take care of your need When you die Don't be afraid To go down to Egypt And don't you be afraid Of the future Don't be afraid Of the future For yourself Personally If you're in Christ Tonight You have no need To be afraid All of this Your property as well Don't be afraid As a congregation

Of looking into the future Unknown as though it is To a great extent Don't be afraid I am God He says I am the God Of your fathers I will go with you I will take you Back up again I will not leave you I will be there for you All the way through And of course The Bible itself Closes with the wonderful words Of Or more or less Closes the wonderful words Of Revelation Chapter 21 They're not exactly the same As what you find here In Genesis 46 But There's a very close relationship I'm sure you'll be able To work that out For yourself Where the final order Of things In heaven Is revealed To John I heard a loud voice From the throne Saying Behold The dwelling place Of God Is with man God's presence

[64 : 51] Is now with man This is heaven He will dwell with them And they will be His people And God himself Will be with them As their God He will wipe away Every tear From their eyes And death Shall be no more Neither shall there be Mourning Nor crying Nor pain Anymore For the former things Have passed away So for you As a Christian Whoever closes Your eyes In death Physically In a higher sense Jesus will do That spiritually And when you arise From the grave There'll be no mourning No crying No tears God himself Will wipe away Every tear Every tear What a hope What a prospect What a God You see

Your God Your God Your ale Your covenant God Your protector God The God The God of your future As well as the now And the past Let's pray Almighty God We thank you For every assurance You give us Of the sovereign care That you have For your people Bless us then Tonight Lord we pray Make us to know That we are indeed Under the care Of this great God The God of covenant Promise And blessing The God of power And might The God who is faithful To his every promise Lord we pray That you would speak To us out of your word And especially At times of anxiety Times when we may Question things Times when we may doubt Times when we may be afraid O Lord Calm our hearts We pray By giving us A renewed vision

Of yourself Of your greatness Of your grace Of your love Of your steadfast love And of your own Presence with your people On into eternity Bless any tonight Who have not As yet come To give themselves Into your hand Who have not come To trust in you Who have not yet come To leave the world And come into Christ Lord bless them We pray as well Not only here But elsewhere And guide us Continually through The path of life And receive us Finally at last Into your own Everlasting mansions For Jesus' sake Amen Our final psalm This evening Is Psalm 118 Psalm 118 That's in the Scottish Psalter Page 397 The tune is Colesill Verses 1-6

O praise the Lord For he is good His mercy lasteth ever Let those of Israel Now say His mercy faileth never Now let the house Of Aaron say His mercy lasteth ever Let those that fear The Lord now say His mercy faileth never And then in verses 5 and 6 Again talking of distress And how the Lord Answered his cry He in a large place Did me set From trouble Made me free The mighty Lord Is on my side I will not be afraid For anything that man can do I shall not be dismayed These words O praise the Lord O praise the Lord For he is good His mercy lasteth ever

Let those of Israel Let those of Israel Say His mercy faileth never Let the hearts of Aaron Say His mercy lasteth ever Let those of Israel What the Lord him say His mercy faileth never His mercy faileth never In distress Doshint James hall The Lord may answer me.

[70 : 00] The evil earth's place did me stay. From trouble made me free.

The mighty Lord is on my side. I will not be afraid.

For anything that man can do, I shall not be afraid.

After the benediction, I'll go to the door to my right this evening. 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. Amen.

[71 : 34] Amen. Amen. Amen.