



Sunday 2nd August 2020

Notes from our Sunday Morning
Pre-recorded Worship

Welcome & Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father we thank you that you're here. We thank you that you are good. We thank you that you are with us, that you love us and you've got such good things in store for us. We ask that you would meet with us today as we seek to meet with you. Open up our hearts and minds and speak to us and reveal yourself to us afresh. In Jesus name. Amen.

Song

One Small Step

Verse 1

How small is this world compared to You God
How big are the plans that You've dreamed up for us
As You hear our hearts beat let us hear Your voice
We're chasing after You in all we do 5 4 3 2

Chorus

One small step
In this great big adventure with You
We're taking one small step
In this great big adventure with You
You light up the way and walk with us every day
We're taking one small step
In this great big adventure with You

Verse 2

Before all the earth and the skies had been made
You'd planned out our lives and You knew us by name
As You hear our hearts beat let us hear Your voice
We're chasing after You in all we do 5 4 3 2

Bridge

Brighter than the stars we'll shine
We'll shine for You
Brighter than the stars we'll shine
We'll shine for You

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Reading:

Genesis 50:15-21

Joseph Reassures His Brothers

15 When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "What if Joseph holds a grudge against us and pays us back for all the wrongs we did to him?" 16 So they sent word to Joseph, saying, "Your father left these instructions before he died: 17 'This is what you are to say to Joseph: I ask you to forgive your brothers the sins and the wrongs they committed in treating you so badly.' Now please forgive the sins of the servants of the God of your father." When their message came to him, Joseph wept.

18 His brothers then came and threw themselves down before him. "We are your slaves," they said.

19 But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? 20 You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. 21 So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children." And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them.

Talk by Ali Butcher – "Process the Past"

I don't know what your experience of lockdown or even the easing of lockdown has been - for some it's been challenging, isolating, filled with anxiety, and others have enjoyed it so much!

As we come out of lockdown, it feels a little odd to me. It feels as though we've almost lost the last 4 months! That 2020 is really only just beginning. I wonder how it feels for you. Whether you're struggling with the lifting of the rules, your safety net, whether you're overjoyed to have a little more freedom.

So, as you will have heard from Mike when he kicked off this series, the series is aimed at encouraging and enabling us to live courageously - following a book by Peter Scazzero called Emotionally Healthy Spirituality. We're particularly going to look at processing the past, looking at the life of Joseph.

So what about Joseph's life?

So looking at the life of Joseph, we see trial and tribulations. He lives in a family that can probably be described as dysfunctional.

At that time, ancestry was key - what had happened in your generational line became an important part of a person's identity - it was assumed everyone would literally follow in their father's footsteps in every way. Joseph was the favoured brother within the family of 12 siblings. He then started sharing dreams with his brothers about being elevated over them so he was thrown out of home by his brothers in an act of revenge and they pretended to Jacob that he had been mauled by an animal when in reality they sold him into slavery.

From being sold into slavery until the point we are looking at in Genesis 50 is around 13 years.

During that time his life turned around - he was taken from prison to power.

Joseph held firm to the vision, the hope of the future.

Joseph predicts the picture of the resurrected Jesus - from persecution to glory. The transformation in Joseph's life from the moment he was sold into slavery is full of promise. He left the wilderness, a word that in Hebrew means 'the place where God speaks' after God had spoken to him a number of times. His faith was based on the character of God, and the vision he had been given of the future transformation that he would see.

Joseph is a foreshadow of Jesus, pointing us to new beginnings. Jesus shows us our future and our transformation - both giving us hope now and pointing to a better future.

Through Jesus we emerge freer, more whole, fully alive in who we are.

Joseph models how to go back to go forward.

1. How does he do that?

Joseph had a profound sense of the bigness of God

He always had his eyes on the vision, he kept the bigger picture in his mind. He stuck fast to the hope of what was ahead, and he didn't lose faith in the most challenging times.

Nothing is wasted in God - our pasts, our mistakes, the detours in our lives. They're all used to make us who we are. However painful, however shameful.

We can't always see the full picture, the full end-game. We see some of the good come through Joseph's life, but a lot of it remains unseen by us.

Joseph rested in God's goodness and love, even when circumstances went from bad to worse.

2. How else does he model going back to go forward?

Joseph admitted honestly the sadness's and losses of his family. Most of us are resistant to going back and feeling the hurt and pain of our past. It can feel like a black hole or an abyss that might swallow us up. We wonder if we are only going to get worse.

Let's not be afraid to feel the pain, to sit with it, to mourn, to allow it to shape us. Joseph did not minimise or rationalise the pain. Through him grieving the pain, he truly forgave and was able to bless the brothers who betrayed him.

3. How else does he model how to go back to go forward?

Joseph rewrote his life script according to scripture.

This season has the potential to hand us negative messages or scripts that unconsciously direct our lives.

Don't let it define you. Joseph was very aware of his past. Most of us never examine the scripts handed to us by our past.

4. Joseph partnered with God to be a blessing

Joseph could have destroyed his brothers with anger. Instead he joined with God to bless them. For those of us who have been deeply wounded like Joseph, that can feel like a difficult, almost impossible path.

In the same way Joseph developed a relationship with God over a long period of time, we can do the same. When the moment comes when the rubber hits the road, we'll be ready.

You might be processing bereavement, loss of income, loss of a job role, a change in identity. This may feel too acute to examine now - and if it is, then leave it. Just allow it to sit and keep putting one step in front of the other. Access support.

One of the most profound things I heard when I was struggling with processing a trauma was to draw a picture of where I was - and I drew an image of me on my own at the bottom of a deep hole. I was encouraged to invite Jesus into that hole with me. He wasn't sitting at the top of the hole, looking in at me, unwilling to get into the mud, the mess, the pain, the difficult emotions. He was sitting with me right there, in amongst all of the tears and the pain. He mourns with us.

Joseph went through an awfully long preparation season - painful, 13 years, in prison, betrayed, exploited. We often want everything to be quick, immediate. We live in a consumer culture. We might need support in this - talking therapy, friends, family. Don't be afraid of accessing that support.

Every journey and process is worth it's salt in the end, takes it's time.

This work of going back in order to go forward for sure leads us to a point in our journey with Christ where we may find ourselves disoriented, confused, shaken by the unknown territory. We can journey through that, examining our pain and trauma takes us through that wall. It leads to emotional breakthrough.

What does that mean for us now? The Present as a window to the past

This season has been challenging for so many of us. Even those of us who have had a fantastic season may have experienced hardships and losses. Many of us have experienced bereavement.

How in touch with your challenging emotions have you been? Have you found it difficult to own your emotions?

Now I don't know about you, but when I'm struggling with my emotions, I tend to throw myself into other things. I clean the house, watch boxsets, find jobs to do... to avoid actually thinking about the difficult emotions I'm facing.

Let's not allow the pain of the past or present to impact our future.

What has gone before doesn't determine your identity - as we saw earlier, historically and even in recent history, the background you came from, the actions of generations gone before, were considered predictive of what was to come. Of your identity, who you are.

Reflect honestly on the past, to prevent it impacting your future.

Unprocessed trauma, loss, rejection can be like the inside of our old boiler - rusty, corroding despite looking fine on the outside. An unexamined past chains us to difficult, unloving ways of relating in the present. Whether we examine experiences or not, they still form part of our identity. Processing the challenges we face, living in the present, owning our feelings are essential to face life head on.

As a church family let's reflect honestly on the impact of this season on us all. The loss, the bereavement, the heartache. But we can take hope - God used Joseph in spite of his challenging past, background, sometimes questionable attitudes - He can turn anything around. So don't disqualify yourself with your challenging past - don't allow it to stop you stepping in to the fullness of God's promises for you.

Joseph was given a sliver of the fullness of the vision / future. Sometimes we get a reminder of God's dream for us. His dream, his vision for our life. We are given that in Jesus Christ - the hope of a life in the kingdom of God.

So let's aim to be hope bringers to those around us in the weeks ahead. Let's be examining who we are, the pain we've faced as we need to, pointing to the hope that comes in the end. Let's be rooted in God so we are constantly able to access the hope we have in Jesus.

Grant me courage; grant me wisdom to learn from the past but not be crippled by it. And may I, like Joseph, be a blessing to my earthly family, my spiritual family, and the world at large. In Jesus name, Amen.

Intercessions

We come to our Heavenly Father with the needs of our world, our country and our church.

Lord, there is distrust and hostility between the nations. We pray for world leaders to seek peace, not provocation. We pray for the upcoming elections in the US, a country with so much world influence. Lord, we pray for honesty and humility as the campaign proceeds. Covid 19 is still rising in many parts of the world. We pray for wisdom and cooperation to limit the impact, especially in some of the poorest parts of the world. Lord, we pray for wisdom with how to deal with this virus in the long term. Many people are suffering with isolation, from fear and serious financial worries. Lord, hear our prayers for them and show us as individuals and as a church how to help those around us. Lord, we pray for the situation with locusts still ravaging east Africa, bringing devastation as 10's of millions are suffering from hunger. Give wisdom and generosity from world organisations able to help and influence this situation.

For the UK, we pray for our leaders and people of influence, to work for good. Give wisdom and humility. We pray that as a nation, we will be welcoming the displaced peoples. Give us understanding and empathy. We pray for our countries part in the development of a Coronavirus vaccine. We pray for effective research, leading to excellent products. We pray for areas of the UK in local lockdown. Help those responsible for decision making, to make the best decisions for everyone. As we're faced with our failures as a nation in the past, help us to value and not exploit people, to desire good, to value honesty and to live as you would have us live.

Lord, we pray for Guildford and Surrey. Thank you for the Foodbanks and Stoke Community Support Hub which have been able to help those in need. Continue to bless these projects. Thank you for the kid's clubs and Holiday clubs provided by St Saviours and other churches in the area. We pray for the Trekkers activities and all those with additional needs. During lockdown, they and their families have suffered particularly in the absence of the usual provision for their needs. We pray that all these support activities will be able to resume quickly.

We pray for our own mental health and that of those around us. The last few months have demonstrated how much we need one another in so many ways. May your Holy Spirit fill our minds with good things and crowd out unhelpful and harmful thoughts. May we take the extra time that many of us unexpectedly have, to read and meditate on your word in prayer and let your Holy Spirit fill the gaps in our lives.

We thank you Lord for our key workers who have kept us safe. For those in food production and processing, and every aspect of our lives. We remember those in the entertainment, media and music industry whose livelihoods have been decimated. You have created us to enjoy life to the full and this industry reflects the creative genius of our God to enhance our lives. Bring us to the reality that we depend on each other for our daily lives and welfare. When one part suffers, all suffers. So, may we live our lives recognising the contribution of others in our society and not thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought.

We pray for our church family. For those who are anxious, we pray that you will be our comfort. Reassure us that you love us and care for us. For those who are desperate to resume worship together, give us the patience to wait until the time is right for these activities to resume. Give us all the grace to seek to understand the concerns of other members of our church and community and to love one another. For those in our congregation who have lost loved ones, be close to them and console them. For those who have had to move away from the area during lockdown, we pray that you will go with them and prosper them wherever they may be. We pray for those in our congregation who have lost their jobs and businesses which have suffered during the pandemic. Provide for those in need.

May we mirror the graciousness of our Lord Jesus Christ, in all that we do and say. In His name, Amen.

Songs

All Who Are Thirsty

Verse

All who are thirsty
All who are weak
Come to the fountain
Dip your heart in the stream of life
Let the pain and the sorrow
Be washed away
In the waves of His mercy
As deep cries out to deep
(We sing)

Chorus 1

Come Lord Jesus come
Come Lord Jesus come
(REPEAT)

Chorus 2

Holy Spirit come
Holy Spirit come
(REPEAT)

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Build My Life

Verse 1

Worthy of ev'ry song we could ever sing
Worthy of all the praise we could ever bring
Worthy of ev'ry breath we could ever breathe
We live for You

Verse 2

Jesus the name above ev'ry other name
Jesus the only one who could ever save
Worthy of ev'ry breath we could ever breathe
We live for You
We live for You

Chorus

Holy there is no one like You
There is none beside You
Open up my eyes in wonder and show me who You are
And fill me with Your heart
And lead me in Your love to those around me

Bridge

I will build my life upon Your love
It is a firm foundation
I will put my trust in You alone
And I will not be shaken

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Family News

Our Wednesday Morning Liturgical Services continues this week at 9am. Do see Happening or the Sunday email with full details or contact the Church Office for more information. (01483 [455333/office@st-saviours.org.uk](mailto:455333@st-saviours.org.uk)).

The Church will be open for private prayer from Monday to Wednesday this week, 10am to 1pm.

We currently have vacancies for a Kids Pastor and Youth Pastor. Do see the website for more details (st-saviours.org.uk) and please do be praying as we recruit for these 2 roles.

Closing Blessing

Heavenly Father, we thank you so much for all you do for us and all you are in our lives. We are inviting you once again to come and be part of this church, this family. Come and be a part of each of us and our lives, our homes and neighbourhoods. Would you be ministering to us, speaking to us, showing us how we can serve you and bring glory to your name in our families, neighbourhoods and workplaces. Help us to seek you and to seek your vision for our lives, that we would see our circumstances through your eyes and bring glory to your name. Amen.