

*Christ Church New Southgate  
& Friern Barnet*

*25 July 2021*

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Song:

The Spirit of the Lord  
has anointed us  
to speak good news;  
the example of the Lord  
has inspired us  
to be good news.

The favour of the Lord  
flows through us his church  
to the world he loves;  
the compassion of the Lord,  
seen in Jesus' life,  
will be known through us.

*We are sent to love the broken hearted,  
sent to pray that the sick are healed,  
bring your freedom to the captives,  
walk in Jesus' power and authority.  
We'll be good news, we'll speak good news.*

*Reading: Psalm 95*

Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord;  
**let us shout aloud  
to the Rock of our salvation.**  
For the Lord is the great God,  
**the great King  
above all gods.**

In his hand are the depths of the earth,  
**and the mountain peaks  
belong to him.**

The sea is his, for he made it,  
**and his hands  
formed the dry land.**

Come, let us bow down in worship,  
**let us kneel before**

**the Lord our Maker;**  
for he is our God  
**and we are the people  
of his pasture,  
the flock under his care.**

*Reading: Genesis 37. 1-11 Susan Rogers*

**37** Jacob lived in the land where his father had stayed, the land of Canaan.

<sup>2</sup>This is the account of Jacob's family line. Joseph, a young man of seventeen, was tending the flocks with his brothers, the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives, and he brought their father a bad report about them.

<sup>3</sup>Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made an ornate<sup>[a]</sup> robe for him. <sup>4</sup>When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him.

<sup>5</sup>Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more. <sup>6</sup>He said to them, "Listen to this dream I had: <sup>7</sup>We were binding sheaves of grain out in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it."

<sup>8</sup>His brothers said to him, "Do you intend to reign over us? Will you actually rule us?" And they hated him all the more because of his dream and what he had said.

<sup>9</sup>Then he had another dream, and he told it to his brothers. "Listen," he said, "I had another dream, and this time the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me."

<sup>10</sup>When he told his father as well as his brothers, his father rebuked him and said, "What is this dream you had? Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before

you?"<sup>11</sup> His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind.

*Reflection: Poem*

*For Those Who Have Far to Travel*

If you could see the journey whole,  
you might never undertake it,  
might never dare the first step  
that propels you from the place  
you have known toward the place  
you know not.

Call it one of the mercies  
of the road: that we see it  
only by stages as it opens  
before us, as it comes into  
our keeping, step by  
single step.

There is nothing for it but to go,  
and by our going  
take the vows the pilgrim takes:

to be faithful to  
the next step;  
to rely on more  
than the map;  
to heed the signposts  
of intuition and dream;  
to follow the star  
that only you  
will recognize;

to keep an open eye  
for the wonders that  
attend the path; to press on  
beyond distractions,  
beyond fatigue,  
beyond what would  
tempt you from the way.

There are vows  
that only you will know:  
the secret promises  
for your particular path  
and the new ones

you will need to make  
when the road is revealed  
by turns you could not  
have foreseen.

Keep them, break them,  
make them again;  
each promise becomes  
part of the path,  
each choice creates  
the road that will take you  
to the place where at last  
you will kneel

to offer the gift  
most needed -  
the gift that only you  
can give -  
before turning to go  
home by  
another way.

*And there ahead of them, went the star that they  
had seen in its rising. Matthew 2.9*

Jan Richardson, 2016

<http://paintedprayerbook.com/2011/12/31/epiphany-blessing-for-those-who-have-far-to-travel/>

*Dream booklet activity*

Make a paper booklet and write down your dreams for God's purpose in and through our lives.

*Song: Amazing grace*

- 1 Amazing grace! how sweet the sound,  
That saved a wretch; like me!  
I once was lost, but now am found,  
Was blind, but now I see.
- 2 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,  
And grace my fears relieved;  
How precious did that grace appear  
The hour I first believed!

3 The Lord hath promised good to me,  
His word my hope secures;  
He will my shield and portion be  
As long as life endures.

4 When we've been there ten thousand  
years,  
Bright shining as the sun,  
We've no less days to sing God's praise  
Than when we first begun.

*Genesis 37.1-11 God only has favourites*

Narrative sermon by Rev. Ruth Moriarty

I want you to know that as a child, I was perfect. My behaviour was impeccable. I never ever did anything bad. Well, almost nothing bad. One day I got so annoyed with my sister, that I dug up some big juicy wriggly worms from the garden, and while she wasn't looking put them on top of her head. She squealed and screamed as they wiggled and wriggled all the way down her beautiful long hair. She had mud in her hair and worms in her curls. I got into a lot of trouble.

How do your mum and dad, or whoever looks after you, tell you off? Do they shout, scream, do they make you sit on the naughty step? Have you been grounded? Have you been ignored? Always called last? Have the others had more than you? Have you been cut out of a will? Have you ever thought – my brother is the favourite?

Maybe Dad preferred Joe because he was good looking, or maybe he just got on with him better. My brother Joe and I are the only two kids from our mum – Rachel and our Dad – Jacob. Mum died having me - Benjamin.

My dad waited seven years to marry my mum, and they never had us till they were well old. My mum said 'God had been merciful to her by having Joe. And as the story ends, you'll realise it was God being merciful not just to

my mum, but her family, and in fact all of my people – because through Joe we all survived a famine.

The story of my brother is world-famous, I've heard someone has even put it to music. Looking back, I can see that God meant it all for good, but when it all started it was horrid.

Dad had made Joe this absolutely amazing jacket, it had every colour in the world on it, he looked like a beautiful bird, it was rich, embroidered and had incredibly long sleeves. Long sleeves, what a joke. You know what that means? It meant he couldn't do anything, in case his sleeves got wet, or dirty or in the way. Dad gave it to Joe because he was his favourite, from his favourite wife, in his old age.

The rest of us brothers hated him for it. The older ones slaved out in the fields trying to scratch a living from the ground and came back to find him prancing around in this silly jacket.

What dad did was stupid. My brothers didn't like Joe because he was spoilt, they really didn't like the swanky jacket and they hated his dream – that one day we would all bow down to him.

If there is a simple lesson here, it's this: Parents - don't have favourites. My brother was very nearly murdered by his brothers because of it. If you want a happy family treat all your children fairly.

I've heard that people can't always spot where God is in Joe's story. Sometimes life is like that isn't it, God can appear to be hidden. Maybe you feel like God and his power is hidden from you at the moment. Maybe you cannot see God at work in your home, family, work, community and world?

God is in the business of dreams, visions and prophecies. The Holy Spirit gave Joe a dream,

a sign of a future to come. His future would be in power and we would all bow down to him. God's dreams and visions can seem strange at first, you might not understand what God is saying to you, but as we found out after the famine – God meant it for good.

As Joe started to share his dream, looking back I can see God at work. In a small way in the beginning but gradually it grows and grows. Bit by bit, God's hidden face comes into view.

My dad really mucked up being a father, he set his younger son against all his older brothers. And yet Joe turned out alright, he was never bitter, never held a grudge. I think that's because he had an outstanding faith in God. And it shows you that God can use even bad situations for his purpose. God meant it for good.

In the oldest story of the world, the story of how the world began, we're told that we are made in the image of God, male and female he created them. That means that we are all equal in God's eyes, boys and girls, men and women, each and every human is made in the image of God. If Joe was the apple of my dad's eye, then each of us is the apple in God's eye. My dad had just one favourite, God only has favourites – you, me, you, you, you – everyone!

I know what favouritism can do in a family, it nearly led to murder. Has that happened to you? Have you held onto it for a long time? Please remember that God is at work in your life, the holy spirit is trying to breath thru into you, and help you see God at work.

May those of us who are parents be fair to our children

May those of us who have been hurt by parents know God's healing

May each of us live life knowing that God only has favourites, and that most definitely includes you.

Intercession

Blessing

**Enlarge our dreams,  
and enthuse our minds,  
inspire our faith  
and empower our resolve,  
that growing  
in the likeness of Christ,  
we may be unafraid to live this day  
to your praise and glory.**