**Howick Presbyterian Church Service of Worship**

**Sunday, 10th May 2020 @ Home**

**CALL TO WORSHIP** *- based on Psalm 8*

God, our God, how glorious is your name in all the earth!

**Your glory is sung by all of your creation!**

When we look to the heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, we wonder — Who are we that you care for us and for this world?

**You are the God of life, crowning us with glory and honour to serve you all our days. O God, our God, how glorious is your name in all the earth!**

Let’s open our worship and sing this contemporary arrangement of Praise to the Lord.

**Hymn: Praise to the Lord the Almighty**

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation!  
O my soul, praise Him, for He is thy health and salvation!  
Come all who hear, now to His temple draw near;  
Praise Him in glad adoration.

Praise to the Lord, above all things so wondrously reigning  
Sheltering you under His wings, yea, and so gently sustaining  
Have you not seen, all that is needful has been  
Sent by his gracious ordaining

Praise to the Lord, who will prosper your work and defend you  
Surely His goodness and mercy shall daily attend you  
Ponder anew what the Almighty can do,  
If with His love He befriends you.

Praise to the Lord, oh, let all that is in me adore Him!  
All that has life and breath, come now with praises before Him;  
Let the Amen sound from His people again,  
Gladly forever adore Him.

**OPENING PRAYER**

Yours, Lord is the Glory,  
in everything I see,  
a country scene,  
mountain stream,  
sunrise, sunset, rain and snow.

Yours, Lord is the Glory,  
wherever I might go.

Yours, Lord is the Glory,  
in everything I hear,  
a roaring sea,  
bumblebee,  
laughter, loving, a tender poem.   
Yours, Lord is the Glory,  
wherever I might go.

Yours, Lord is the Glory,  
in everything I feel,  
a special place,  
warm embrace,  
accepted, helped to become whole.

Thank you for this time of worship.

We pray as you taught us to pray together:

***Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy Name,   
thy kingdom come,   
thy will be done,   
on earth as it is in heaven.   
Give us this day our daily bread.   
And forgive us our trespasses,   
as we forgive those  
who trespass against us.   
And lead us not into temptation,   
but deliver us from evil.   
For thine is the kingdom,   
and the power, and the glory,   
for ever and ever. Amen.***

**KIDS TIME AND BIRTHDAYS/ANNIVERSARIES**

Today is Mothers day! We celebrate and say thanks to those who have mothered in our lives. We love and appreciate you! I hope some of you have been able to have a special day of some sort.

We also acknowledge those for whom today might be hard a number of reasons. We hold you in our prayers and hearts today.

Hello to any boys and girls who are reading, listening to or watching this!

What was this week like for you? Did you do anything different or exciting? How was home learning this week? What was the best part about that? What was the trickiest part?

Today we celebrate everyone who had a birthday or anniversary this week. We give thanks to God for your life amongst us! You have made this world so much better for so many! This will probably be one of the stranger birthdays you’ve had but you are still worth celebrating!

Ally is going to read the story of Joseph to you…

**KIDS PRAYER**

Heavenly Father, your name is awesome.  
You are the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords.  
You are the biggest and the most beautiful and the most powerful.  
Yet you love to hear us sing and pray.  
You really love it when children and babies praise you.  
Help us to worship you today, Amen.

**What do we say each week? “God loves us and we are special!”**

**SONG: Oceans**

You call me out upon the waters  
The great unknown where feet may fail  
And there I find You in the mystery  
In oceans deep  
My faith will stand

And I will call upon Your name  
And keep my eyes above the waves  
When oceans rise, my soul will rest in Your embrace  
For I am Yours and You are mine

Your grace abounds in deepest waters  
Your sovereign hand  
Will be my guide  
Where feet may fail and fear surrounds me  
You've never failed and You won't start now

Spirit lead me where my trust is without borders  
Let me walk upon the waters  
Wherever You would call me  
Take me deeper than my feet could ever wander  
And my faith will be made stronger  
In the presence of my Saviour

**READING:** *Genesis 37:3-11  (NIV)*

*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 robe for him. 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.*

*Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more. He said to them, “Listen to this dream I had: 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.”*

*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.*

*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.”*

*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?” His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind.*

**SERMON – Joseph**

Last week we looked at the story of Moses, and the Exodus from Egypt. Maybe you wondered, how did the Israelites end up in Egypt anyway? Today’s story will answer that question, as well as teach us many other things. Today we look at the incredible story of Joseph, and told in Genesis 37 – 50.

Jacob had twelve sons and at least one daughter, by his two wives, Leah and Rachel, and by their handmaidens Bilhah and  Zilpah.

Joseph was favoured by Jacob, as they thought Rachel could never have a child. Jacob gives Joseph a beautiful coat, which makes his half brothers incredibly jealous.

Joseph has a gift of interpreting dreams, and he has 2 dreams which he shares with his family. The grains and stars bowing down to Joseph is seen as a sign that one day they will all be under Joseph.

His brothers can’t stand this. They’ve had enough of their spoilt, favoured half brother. They end up taking his coat, throwing him in a pit, and then selling him to merchants who take him to Egypt.

They cover his coat in animal blood, and then go their father Jacob and say that Joseph was attacked by a wild animal.

Joseph goes from being favoured, to the place of a slave. Once in Egypt he is sold to Potiphar, the captain of Pharaohs guard.

He does such a great job working for Potiphar that he is made the household superintendent.

However, Potiphar’s wife thinks a little too much of Joseph and tried to seduce him. Refusing to dishonour his master in this way, Joseph rejects her offer, and in return she accuses him of assaulting her.

Joseph is thrown in prison, and once again has gone from a place of prestige to the bottom.

What must he have been thinking about those dreams of being in power now?

However, even in prison he keeps doing his best and is put in charge of the other prisoners.

While there he interprets the dreams of Pharaohs former butler and baker. The baker won’t make it, but the butler will be returned to service. Joseph asks the butler to let Pharaoh about him. It doesn’t happen till much later.

Pharaoh himself becomes troubled by a dream. The butler mentions Joseph, and next thing you know Joseph is before Pharaoh interpreting his dreams.

There will be 7 years of abundance and 7 years of famine. Egypt needs to make a plan and be prepared, otherwise it will not survive.

Joseph advises to store surplus grain, and in an incredible turn of events, Joseph is appointed the Vizier of Egypt – the second highest position, under only Pharaoh.

It is his job to oversee the plan to save Egypt. To put aside the grain and manage the storehouses. Josephs excels once again, and saves Egypt. He is a hero. Whether it was working for Potiphar or Pharaoh, everything Joseph does prospers and is blessed by God.

The drought and famine hit the lands, and back in Canaan Jacob and his sons are aware that there is extra food in Egypt.

So the brothers travel there, and without recognising Joseph, they stand before him requesting help. However Joseph does recognise them, an becomes incredibly distressed by it all.

He keeps his identity from them, and instead accuses them of being spies. He demands that they go back to retrieve this new brother, Benjamin, pops the brothers in prison for a few days, then send them with supplies and their silver back to Canaan to retrieve Benjamin, and keeps Simeon hostage until their return. In a sense he’s playing with them a bit – as he manages his own internal struggles over seeing them again.

The brothers return with Benjamin, they bow down before him, and Joseph shows hospitality to them all. When it’s time for their departure, Joseph plays one more trick and hides a silver cup in Benjamins bag. He then accuses the brothers of theft, to which the brothers plead innocence. They reveal their story of regret over what they had done to their brother. Judah offers to stay as Joseph’s slave in Benjamin’s place.

Then Josephs weeps. The game is done. He reveals his identity to his brothers and they are reconciled. “What you meant for evil, God meant for good.”

Following this Jacob and the families of the brothers all move to Egypt, and Joseph is reunited with his Father. So this is how the people of Israel came to be in Egypt.

Looking at Josephs story, there are some clear similarities to the life of Jesus.

Miraculous birth.

Beloved of his Father.

12 brothers/disciples.

Envied and hated - brothers/pharisees

Foretold that he would rule.

Rejected and condemned to die.   
Falsely accused.

Stripped of clothing.

Sold for silver.

Becomes a servant.

Everything he did prospered.

Resisted tempation.

Promoted to honour and glory.

All commanded to bow to him.

Reconciliation.

There are six things I want to touch on from this story.

1. The first is that it shows us that life isn’t fair. Though Joseph was possibly arrogant, the treatment he received was still unfair.

Though he comes from a special birth and is blessed, it doesn’t mean that he will live an advantaged life.

We don’t know why life seems easier for some than others. Life is not fair. In Jesus, God plays by the same rules, because life was not fair for Jesus.

2. The second thing is pride.

It was not wise of Jacob to have favourites. Though it doesn’t excuse the brothers actions, it is still unkind to lavish favour on one family member and disregard the others. Certainly God does not have favourites – neither should we.

It was also unwise of Joseph to speak of his early dreams to his brothers, who were already frustrated by him. We’re not sure if Joseph did this in arrogance or pride, but sometimes to better to keep things to ourselves that need not be shared publically.

There’s a possibility Potiphar’s pride stopped him from questioning what had really happened with his Joseph and his wife.

Pride will get us into all sorts of trouble and leads to all sorts of division. We are called to be humble, and though life may not be fair we are still to treat all people fairly.

3. Doing the right thing can be costly. Joseph chooses the right thing to do when pursued by Potiphar’s wife, even though it cost him his freedom again and put him back at the bottom of the heap.

We are often tempted to act deceitfully in different ways and on many levels. Sometimes offering up a white lie to deal with a situation is the easiest way out, but it only digs a deeper hole for you.

When you notice that an injustice is happening but you know if you raise it, it could cost you something – these are the moments when we have to choose.

4. Even when you find yourself at rock bottom, don’t lose hope in God’s promises. People who love God have often found themselves in such pits.

And yet God’s promise to reconcile all things still stands. His promise to always be with us still stands. He joins us in the pit, on the cross, in our suffering.

*In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.* **John 16:33**

*Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age* **Matt 28:20**

He will still have the final word, not our suffering.

What we can do is be present with each other in the highs and lows, give practical outworkings of kindess and love, and anticipate what is to come.

How are you present in the lives of people going through difficulty?

5. God can redeem any situation and turn it for good.God doesn’t send disasters to us to teach us lessons. Disasters happen in a broken world. But can redeem these disasters for good.

*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.* **Rom 8:28**

6. Forgiveness is always part of the plan.

At the heart of this story is a brother and his fractured relationship with his family. In the end the moment of reconciliation is the most powerful.

No matter what the conflict, we are to always be working for reconciliation – for this is the heart of the gospel.

Let us pray.

**PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

For all whose nights are broken  
by pain, discomfort, anxiety,  
caring duties, noisy neighbours  
and so many other reasons,  
leaving them irritable, tired  
and unable to concentrate,  
refresh their minds, grant  
patience in times of stress,  
keep them safe when driving,  
and in the nights to come  
may they find peace and rest.

For those weighed down by ill health,  
bring wholeness to body, mind and spirit.  
For those weighed down by worry,  
bring wisdom, peace and reassurance.  
For those weighed down by fear,  
bring freedom, release and liberation.  
For those weighed down by sadness,  
bring comfort, strength and joy.

For all whose hearts are troubled  
at the start of this new day,  
be the voice that they hear,  
the warmth that they feel,  
the wisdom they seek,  
the strength they require,   
and the one in whose arms they rest.

Amen.

Thank you for joining together this morning in worship. Let’s close this time and sing, Love divine all loves excelling.

**CLOSING HYMN: Love Divine all loves excelling**

Love divine, all loves excelling,  
Joy of heaven to earth come down,  
Fix in us thy humble dwelling,  
All thy faithful mercies crown.  
Jesu, thou art all compassion,  
Pure, unbounded love thou art;  
Visit us with thy salvation,  
Enter every trembling heart.

Breathe, O breathe thy loving Spirit  
Into every troubled breast,  
Let us all in thee inherit,  
Let us find that second rest.  
Take away the love of sinning,  
Alpha and Omega be;  
End of faith, as its beginning,  
Sets our hearts at liberty.

Come almighty to deliver,  
Let us all thy life receive;  
Suddenly return and never,  
Never more thy temples leave.  
Thee we would be always blessing,  
Serve thee as thy hosts above,  
Pray, and praise thee without ceasing,  
Glory in thy perfect love.

Finish then thy new creation,  
Pure and spotless let us be;  
Let us see thy great salvation,  
Perfectly restored in thee;  
Changed from glory into glory,  
Till in heaven we take our place,  
Till we cast our crowns before thee,  
Lost in wonder, love and Praise.

**BLESSING**

*And now may the Lord bless you and keep you: The Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you: The Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace.*

**Amen.**