

Thought for the Day August 2020

Good morning, our thoughts today are built around part of the story of Joseph from the book of Genesis.

Reading: Genesis 45: 1-15

Joseph Reveals Himself to His Brothers

45 Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, "Send everyone away from me." So no one stayed with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. **2** And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard it. **3** Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?" But his brothers could not answer him, so dismayed were they at his presence.

4 Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come closer to me." And they came closer. He said, "I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. **5** And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. **6** For the famine has been in the land these two years; and there are five more years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. **7** God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. **8** So it was not you who sent me here, but God; he has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. **9** Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not delay. **10** You shall settle in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children, as well as your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. **11** I will provide for you there—since there are five more years of famine to come—so that you and your household, and all that you have, will not come to poverty.' **12** And now your eyes and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see that it is my own mouth that speaks to you. **13** You must tell my father how greatly I am honored in Egypt, and all that you have seen. Hurry and bring my father down here." **14** Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, while Benjamin wept upon his neck. **15** And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them; and after that his brothers talked with him.

Thoughts

During lockdown one of the big plusses was being able to watch some of the hit West End musicals on the YouTube stream "The Shows must go on". I spent a wonderful evening singing along to my heart's content, with only Ian to annoy, as the story of Joseph and his Amazing Technicoloured Dreamcoat unfolded. If we weren't restricted to just 30 minutes this morning I would have played you the song, "Close every door to me" when Joseph proclaims his faith in the God who is with him no matter how bad things are getting in prison.

As an only child I never had to compete for the attention of my parents, but you have to feel sorry for Joseph's brothers as Jacob, their father, made it perfectly clear that Joseph was his favourite son and then Joseph happily tried to "lord it" over his brothers sharing with them the dreams that marked him out as superior to all of them. Perhaps you might feel he really "had it coming" when the brothers finally sold him to some Ishmaelites who took him off to Egypt. If you've never read the story in *Genesis* have a go, or read a children's version.

Times got very tough for Joseph, and he must have wondered what on earth was going to be the outcome, possibly not good at all! But amazingly, through a number of coincidences, or we would say "Godincidences" Joseph became Pharaoh's right hand man and was able to save not only the Egyptians from 7 years of terrible famine but his own father and brothers and bring them to a new life with him in Egypt.

And so to our reading, the point in the story when Joseph revealed himself to his brothers who naturally were shocked, ashamed and no doubt terrified at the revenge that was about to come down on their heads.

But in verse 5 Joseph declares "And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life." And verse 8 " So it was not you who sent me here, but God; he has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt."

Throughout the whole of his life Joseph knew that his life was in God's hands and this enabled him to keep going and then to forgive and be reconciled to the brothers who had wanted to be completely rid of him.

Throughout the Old Testament we often see "pictures" which lead us into our understanding of the life and death of Jesus. Joseph's story is a forerunner of how Jesus gave himself up in order to bring forgiveness and life to humankind. Jesus was and is "God with us" so that when life is tough and painful, as it is for so many in our world right now, we can know, like Joseph, that God is with us and will bring us through.

Amen.

I have used a video to follow my thoughts, entitled "Scars" by Dan Stevens - I hope that the words will be meaningful as you read them even without the visual images.

Commentary for Scars

All scars tell a story
Stories of wounds suffered
Some of them outside - some inside
our individual scars
tell the story of our lives
But there are scars
that tell a very - different story
A story that begins - and ends
WITH LOVE
God created Humanity
to live in a LOVING RELATIONSHIP with their CREATOR
But LOVE is a choice
And we chose
to leave that relationship
Wounding ourselves
With sin - Death -
and separation from God
It was a wound - that would never heal
except by an unimaginable act of love
God's only begotten Son
placed humanity's sin upon himself
and suffered it's consequences
Death - and separation from God
God made the ultimate sacrifice
His precious Son - died in our place
to forgive our sins
to heal our wounds
Three days later
Jesus took up his life
In a magnificent resurrected body
Perfect in everyway
Except one
His scars remained
The marks of the sacrifice

made to return us to our Father
Endured
and would never fade
because all scars tell a story
Our stories of pain and brokenness
But God's are a story
of forgiveness and healing
And for all eternity
His scars will continue to tell the story
of God's unending love.

To close today's thoughts I have chosen the Stuart Townend version of Psalm 23 "The Lord's my Shepherd" as a prayer which I find really helpful in times of trial. STF 481

The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want, he makes me lie in pastures green,
he leads by the still, still waters, his goodness restores my soul.

And I will trust in you alone, and I will trust in you alone,
for your endless mercy follows me, your goodness will lead me home.

He guides my ways in righteousness, and he anoints my head with oil;
and my cup - it overflows with joy, I feast in his pure delights.

And though I walk the darkest path - I will not fear the evil one,
for you are with me, and your rod and staff are the comfort I need to know.