

ABBAY INTERNATIONAL BAPTIST CHURCH, READING

WORSHIP SERVICE

10.30 AM 7TH JULY 2024

Jill Bird Leading & Andrew Bowers Preaching

www.abbeybaptistchurch.org.uk.

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HEBREWS 11 WEEK 6 The confidence of faith Joseph took a long walk with GOD

DECLARATION:

We will run with patience the race marked out for us,

We will fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.

We will set our hearts on things above, that never ever change.

For you LORD are the ever faithful one, who will never leave us. Amen

HYMN MP 1072

In Christ alone, my hope is found, He is my light, my strength, my song
This Cornerstone, this solid ground, Firm through the fiercest drought and storm
What heights of love, what depths of peace, when fears are stilled, when strivings
cease

My Comforter, my All in All, here in the love of Christ I stand

In Christ alone, who took on flesh, fullness of God in helpless babe
This gift of love and righteousness, scorned by the ones He came to save
'Til on that cross as Jesus died, the wrath of God was satisfied
For every sin on Him was laid, here in the death of Christ I live.

There in the ground His body lay, light of the world by darkness slain
Then bursting forth in glorious day, up from the grave He rose again
And as He stands in victory, sin's curse has lost its grip on me
For I am His and He is mine, bought with the precious blood of Christ

No guilt in life, no fear in death, this is the power of Christ in me
From life's first cry to final breath, Jesus commands my destiny
No power of hell, no scheme of man, can ever pluck me from His hand
Till He returns or calls me home, here in the power of Christ I'll stand

A PRAYER OF PRAISE

Thank you, Jesus; there are so many words we can use to declare your faithfulness. You are our rock, our shield, our fortress, our ever present help in time of trouble. You are the Kings of Kings and Lord of Lords; You never change. You are utterly trustworthy and we give you all our worship and praise; The cry of our heart, today, is LORD grow our faith! **Amen**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours
now and for ever and ever. Amen.**

FAMILY TIME: INTRODUCTION TO THE BOWER FAMILY ANDREW AND NICE – AMY, SAM, LIZZIE AND JOSHUA

(An offering will be taken during the next song)

The wise man built his house upon the rock,x3
And the rain came tumbling down.
The rain came down and the floods came up,x3
And the house on the rock stood firm.

The foolish man built his house upon the sand,x3
And the rain came tumbling down.
The rain came down and the floods came up,x3
And the house on the sand went CRASH

So, build your life on the Lord Jesus Christ,x3
And the blessings will come down.
The blessings come down as the prayers go up,x3
So, build your life on the Rock.
[the children will leave us for their own groups]

Faithful one, so unchanging, ageless one, you're my rock of peace
Lord of all I depend on you
I call out to you, again and again I call out to you, again and again
You are my rock in times of trouble. You lift me up when I fall down
All through the storm Your love is the anchor
My hope is in You alone MP 825

Our confidence is in the Lord, the source of our salvation.
Rest is found in him alone, the author of creation.

We will not fear the evil day, because we have a refuge;
In every circumstance we say, 'Our hope is built on Jesus.'
He is our fortress, we will never be shaken; x4
We will put our trust in God. We will put our trust in God.

Reading 1 Genesis 50. 15 -26

Reading 2 Hebrews 11. 32-39

SERMON

We are continuing the theme that *faith is not only for heroes*. Faith is God's gift and call to all of us. This morning we are exploring this through the life of Joseph and our title is "The Confidence of Faith".

When I was a young boy, we used to sing a song in Sunday school about the wise man building his house on the rock. It was a fun little song, but I ended up thinking that the point of that parable was that that you should build your house on the rock rather than the sand. That is the analogy that Jesus uses, but He is making a deeper point. When you hear God's word and put it into practice you are building on the rock. Hearing God's word and not putting it into practice is building on sand. As you make your way through this series, are you putting what you are hearing into practice? How are you stepping out in faith?

The Bible, in several places, says that "the righteous [the follower of Christ] will live by faith". As I think about that verse how I understand it is that faith is like oxygen for the believer. Just as we are unable to live without breathing in oxygen every few seconds, so also the believer cannot live as a Christian without breathing in the oxygen of faith. Faith keeps us alive. It keeps us connected to Jesus.

Joseph did not begin life as a hero of the faith. He had a long and eventful life and grew in faith all the way through until, on his deathbed, he made a bold declaration that God would save his family, the people of Israel, in the future.

I see several phases in Joseph's life that led him to that point. The first phase of Joseph's life is the phase in which, as a teenager, he had dreams about his future. The dreams came true, but Joseph did not seem to give much thought to his need for God in those dreams. He came from a wealthy family and was his father's favourite child. We get the impression from the story of his dreams that he was arrogant, and his arrogance caused his own brothers to hate him. There is little evidence of faith in God at this point in Joseph's life.

Jeremiah 17:5-6 talks about the person – like Joseph – who has confidence in themselves. "This is what the Lord says: cursed is the one who trusts in man, who draws strength from mere flesh, and whose heart turns away from the Lord. That person will be like a bush in the wastelands; they will not see prosperity when it comes. They will dwell in the parched places of the desert, in a salt land where no one lives." This passage is not talking about healthy self-confidence where we are able to contribute ideas or

thoughts to others without being overwhelmed by insecurity. This passage is about unhealthy reliance on yourself and your own abilities instead of reliance on God. Joseph placed confidence in himself. He knew from the dream that he was destined for greatness, and he rubbed that in the faces of his own family around him.

Over the next following years, Joseph faced significant and painful trials, which refined his faith. It is possible that Joseph already had faith in God from his childhood, however the trials brought about humility and faith in God that had not been present earlier. The trials were:

- hatred and animosity from his brothers
- being thrown into an empty well by his own brothers
- being trafficked to traders and taken to Egypt
- enslavement by Potiphar, the Captain of the Guard in Egypt
- temptation, betrayal, and false accusation of immorality
- imprisonment that was a miscarriage of justice
- being forgotten by the Butler and Baker, even though he interpreted their dreams

Any one of these trials would have been enough to ruin his life and make him bitter and angry. Remarkably, for Joseph they helped him become the person God wanted him to be: he forgave his brothers; when enslaved, he served to the best of his ability and became highly trusted; in the place of temptation, he resisted and refused to compromise his own integrity; when falsely accused, he did not fight back; even in prison he was trusted and honoured. His faith in God overcame his self-reliance. He counted on God to come through for him and give him the wisdom to interpret dreams.

How would you or I deal with the problems and tests like Joseph faced? We all have difficult experiences and trials. We can allow these things to shape us into the kind of person God wants us to be. Or we can allow them to damage us so that we never recover from them. Joseph's confidence in God grew because he could not win his own battles. Yes, he worked hard. He used his skills and talents for the tasks set before him. His attitude was outstanding! But more than that, he placed his faith and trust in God.

Whatever tests and trials you're facing today, let God grow your confidence in Him, and *through those* trials, cause your faith to become more secure in his love and goodness.

In Genesis 40:8, Joseph says ["Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell me your dreams."](#) In the next chapter, he says to Pharaoh, ["I cannot do it, but God will give the answer Pharaoh desires."](#) [Genesis 41:16](#). In Chapter 50:18-21, we read: ["...His brothers then came and threw themselves down before him. We are your slaves, they said. But Joseph said to them, don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children. And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them."](#) What an amazing outcome! Joseph shows

such generosity of heart towards those who tried to destroy his life. No longer is this a brash teenager bragging that his family members would one-day bow down to him. Instead, it is a loving and mature response from a man whose heart has been changed by God.

Jeremiah 17:7–8 talks about what it looks like when we put our trust in God, instead of relying on human ability. [“But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in the year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.”](#)

This is a picture of God's invitation to each one of us. He is calling us away from self-reliance to a life of dependence upon him. Self-reliance is trusting in your own ability to sort out your future, to secure your economic future, to make the big decisions of your life, to choose your spouse or career move. Self-reliance tries to overcome illness or bereavement in your own strength. When you rely on yourself you become what Jeremiah 17:5–6 talks about: [“a bush in the wasteland; they will not see prosperity when it comes. They will dwell in the parts places of the desert, in a salt land where no one lives.”](#) Or you can trust in God and through prayer and faith, and leaning into your family in Christ, find that stream that will supply your roots even in great heat or drought.

In the last phase of Joseph's life he makes a prophetic statement about how God would deal with his family – the nation of Israel – and bring them to the Promised Land. You can see that Joseph is still a dreamer at the end of his life, but now he is a dreamer with faith in God. I love the force of his words to his brothers: [“I am about to die. But God will surely come to your aid and take you up out of this land to the land he promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.”](#) “God will surely come to your aid.” Joseph had confidence that God would come through for them.

I want to finish by highlighting a challenging aspect of the faith journey that Joseph was on experienced. The time from when Jacob's family went to Egypt until the time of the Exodus when God delivered them was 430 years. Imagine being in the generation of Jews living in Egypt after 100, 200, 300 or even 400 years of waiting. They will have heard of an oath that was sworn by their ancestors many years earlier to carry the bones of Joseph to the Promised Land. And yet they will have seen their situation in Egypt gradually deteriorating over the decades and centuries from being the family of the second-most-powerful person in Egypt, to instead being despised and enslaved as a nation. How can you have faith in God when the fulfilment of the promises is so slow? In our society we look for instant fulfilment. Having faith in God requires us to patiently endure. That means we hang onto His word, whether it takes 2 months, 15-20 years like it did for Joseph, or many hundreds of years. God will never break His promises. Even in times of testing, let us hang onto Him and not give up our faith.

HYMN Hillsong

I love You, Lord, for your mercy never fails me
All my days, I've been held in your hands

From the moment that I wake up until I lay my head
I will sing of the goodness of God

All my life you have been faithful
All my life you have been so, so good
With every breath that I am able
I will sing of the goodness of God
I love your voice, you have led me through the fire
In the darkest night you are close like no other
I've known you as a Father, I've known you as a Friend
And I have lived in the goodness of God.

And all my life you have been faithful,
And all my life you have been so, so good
With every breath that I am able
I will sing of the goodness of God.

Communion

What we are doing together now is a proclamation of the eternal faithful covenant that Jesus made with us as we believed in his death and resurrection. We have been chosen, forgiven and given the hope of eternal life through the Holy Spirit. We are confident in the faithfulness of Jesus to walk with us through this life. Jesus we worship you and give you the place of highest honour as we take the bread and wine and remember your suffering for us. Fill us again to overflowing with your presence and power. Jesus we are hungry for more of you today, we need you so much AMEN

The Lord Jesus on the night he was betrayed took bread and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said This is my body broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way after supper he took the cup saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me. For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

This is the body of Christ, broken for you. *(eat the bread as it is served to you)*

This is the blood of Christ, shed for you. *(we drink together once all have been served)*

Thank you Lord Jesus for feeding us with your body and blood. Thank you for all you faithfully do for me day by day. I put my trust in you for all the days to come. AMEN

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION: ANGEL YU

Dear Lord Jesus, May you lead the new Government to truly serve all from different classes and backgrounds. We pray that the Lord will lead them to make the most appropriate policies in terms of health care, education, economy and people's livelihood, public security and crime, transportation and immigration. We also pray for wisdom, love and grace for the new Government as they start their first week in power. **Lord Jesus we pray that the quality of life for more citizens will be improved. Amen.**

Lord Jesus, thank you for providing all our daily needs. May the Lord bring more new friends to know

the Lord, especially at our Alpha courses. May many will be willing to accept Jesus as their Saviour. Lord, please revive more brothers and sisters to rise up and serve the Lord together.

May God bring all of us into a closer relationship with the Lord. Amen

Lord Jesus, thank you for leading the Thailand missionary family to visit our church. May the Lord keep Nice and Andrew Bowers' ministry in Thailand going smoothly and raise up more leaders to serve the Lord with them. **We also ask the Lord to give them wisdom and ability to help more people to know Jesus and experience His faithfulness and love. Amen**

Lord we also pray for the different needs of the brothers and sisters in our church. Jesus please protect them and their families from any spiritual attacks. **We pray that the Lord will keep us strong in body, mind and spirit, and guide us to walk with the Lord and be filled with the Lord's grace. We pray in the name of Jesus , Amen!**

HYMN MP 269:

I do not know what lies ahead, the way I cannot see;
yet one stands near to be my guide; he'll show the way to me.

*I know who holds the future, and he'll guide me with his hand.
With God things don't just happen; everything by him is planned.
So as I face tomorrow, with its problems large and small,
I'll trust the God of miracles, give to him my all.*

I do not know how many days of life are mine to spend;
but one who knows and cares for me will keep me to the end.

I do not know the course ahead, what joys and griefs are there;
but one is near who fully knows; I'll trust his loving care.

THE BLESSING: JUDE 24-25 To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.

THE GRACE: May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. Amen.

Dates for your Diary:

Church Meeting – after the service 14 July

Church walk Saturday 20th July - see Simon Next Baptismal Service – 21st July

QR Code for Offering

Special Church Anniversary weekend – Church Vision Day 3 August 10.00 -3 pm
Anniversary Service 4 August followed by a Church Lunch