

9th August 2026 – Morning Service

All Age Team

Call to Worship

We are a chosen people. **A family people.**

Chosen for love **and to share love.**

Chosen for joy **and to spread joy.**

Chosen for friendship **and for befriending.**

Chosen for blessing **and to bless.**

Chosen for fruitfulness **and to harvest.**

We are a chosen people. **A family people.**

Your family. **Our family. Amen.**

Song – Jesus, Your name we raise

1) Jesus, Your name we raise,
Giving You the highest praise,
God I love You more than words can say.
Jesus, Your name we raise,
Giving You the highest praise,
God I love You more than words can say.

2) Lord I give my life to You,
All my worries and my cares.
God You are much bigger than this world.
Lord I give my life to You,
All my worries and my cares.
God You are much bigger than this world.

*Ch) We lift You high, we lift You up,
For You are good and You love us.
And You will never let me go,
'Cause I am safe with You I know.
For the battle You have won,
And with You we overcome.*

Jonathan Dean, Claire Nicholls, David & Richard Gooding © 2003 Daybreak Music

Introduction

In Matthew Chapter 5 we find the Beatitudes. The Beatitudes were sayings that Jesus taught; they're part of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount which was a time when Jesus instructed the followers through a series of sayings and teachings. They're called Beatitudes because the word means 'blessed'. Each saying starts with 'Blessed are....' Jesus was explaining that those who follow the way of God will be favoured – or looked upon kindly – and will receive strength and help in time of trouble. Basically, the best life is the blessed life. You might like to read all of the Beatitudes at some point for yourself, but this service is focusing on the Beatitude in verse 7:

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Or put another way....

Blessed are those who behave mercifully, God will be generous to them in return.

To help us with that, we are going to hear the story of Joseph throughout the service, starting with where all the troubles began...

Joseph Part 1 – The Amazing Coat – From Genesis 35: 23-26 & Genesis 37:1-4

Jacob lived in the land of Canaan. He had 12 sons; Rueben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Joseph and Benjamin; and at least one daughter, Dinah. Unfortunately, Jacob didn't treat all his children equally – he had a definite favourite – Joseph. Jacob loved Joseph more than any of his other children. One of the ways he showed this was by giving Joseph a very special coat. Different translations of the Bible have different descriptions of this coat. Some say it was a long coat with long sleeves. Others say that it was embroidered or richly ornamented or had many coloured threads or was a

coat of many colours. But they all agree that it was a very special coat – and it was only Joseph who was given one.

Prayer of Thanks and Praise

We pause our Joseph story there to pray some prayers of thanks and praise. Using the theme of Joseph's multi-coloured coat, pause for a moment to think about what you would like to praise or thank God for – using different colours as your source of inspiration. For example, if you focused on the colour green you might thank God for the greenness we are fortunate to see around us – in the trees, the grass and other plants and how they are integral to the 'right-functioning' of our world... or if you focused on red you might thank God for his love for you, love so amazing and unconditional...

The Lord's Prayer

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, the power, and the glory for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. **Amen.**

StF 77 – Give thanks to the Lord

1) Give thanks to the Lord, our God and King:
His love endures forever.
For He is good, He is above all things.
His love endures forever.
Sing praise, sing praise.

*Ch) Forever, God is faithful
Forever, God is strong
Forever, God is with us, forever
Forever, God is faithful
Forever, God is strong
Forever, God is with us, forever, forever*

2) With a mighty hand and an outstretched arm,
His love endures forever
For the life that's been reborn
His love endures forever
Sing praise, sing praise,
Sing praise, sing praise

3) From the rising to the setting sun,
His love endures forever.
By the grace of God, we will carry on.
His love endures forever.
Sing praise, sing praise
Sing praise, sing praise

Chris Tomlin © 2000 worshiptogether.com songs

Joseph Part 2 – Jealousy and sold – From Genesis 37:12-35; 39

As you can imagine, Joseph's brothers were quite upset about Joseph being their father's favourite – especially as it had made Joseph behave like he was much more important than all his brothers and as a result he wasn't particularly nice to them! This is what happened next...

One day, Joseph's brothers were out working, looking after the sheep. Joseph was at home with his father, Jacob – because he was Jacob's favourite, Joseph didn't have to do any work! Jacob told Joseph to go and check up on his brothers. The brothers saw Joseph coming and decided that it was time to do something and get rid of him. So, when he arrived, they grabbed his coat off him and threw him down a well.

Whilst they were deciding what to do with Joseph, along came some merchants who were heading to Egypt to sell the things that they had. The brothers decided to sell Joseph to them – so they got Joseph out of the well, agreed a price and handed him over. The merchants carried on to Egypt and the brothers headed home to Jacob with Joseph's coat to tell Jacob that Joseph must have been attacked by wild animals. Jacob was heartbroken.

Meanwhile, the merchants took Joseph to Egypt and met a man named Potiphar. Potiphar looked Joseph up and down and decided that he would make a good slave. So, he bought Joseph from the merchants and Potiphar took Joseph home to meet his wife. Joseph did well in Potiphar's house – so well that Potiphar put Joseph in charge of everything in his house. But one day, when Potiphar returned to the house, Potiphar's wife lied and accused Joseph of something serious that he hadn't done and Joseph was arrested and thrown into prison. And there we leave Joseph for a little while....

Prayer of Confession

We are going to spend a bit of time now thinking about some of the people in that part of the story and their behaviour towards others. Jacob showed such favouritism to Joseph that it seemed that he stopped behaving well to his other sons. Because of this favouritism, Joseph thought he was more important than his brothers and so he didn't behave well towards them either. So the brothers became jealous. Their behaviour became aggressive – they attacked and sold their own brother. As if that wasn't bad enough, Potiphar's wife made up lies about Joseph and because she behaved like that, it got him into trouble.

Sometimes we don't behave well. Sometimes we do things that we are not proud of. These things are like a row of dominoes knocking one another down; they not only upset other people, but they cause us upset and, most importantly, they upset God too. So, let's say sorry to God for these things. Let us pray...

Think of a time when you behaved in a way you shouldn't have done...

Think of a time when you hurt or upset someone because of something that you did...

Think of a time when you weren't completely honest...

Lord God, your love for humankind, extends throughout history and touches all our lives. Your love sees sin and still loves the sinner. Your love sees failings and yet forgives. Forgive us now for the things that we have brought before you in our minds and help us to live lives that better reflect your love. **Amen.**

And we continue in prayer as we sing:

Song – Jesus hear my prayer

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) Jesus hear my prayer
Jesus hear my prayer
Take your place within my heart
And Jesus hear my prayer. | 3) Jesus live in me,
Jesus live in me;
Take your place within my heart
And Jesus live in me. |
| 2) Jesus forgive me,
Jesus forgive me;
Take your place within my heart
And Jesus forgive me. | |

Adapted from 'Jesus reign in me' by Chris Jackson © 1988 Powerpack

Joseph Part 3 – Dreams in and out of prison – From Genesis 40 and 41

So, Joseph is in prison. Whilst he is there, he meets two fellow prisoners – a baker and a wine steward. One night, both these other prisoners had a dream, and they told Joseph about them. The wine steward dreamt about a vine with branches that first blossomed and then produced grapes. In the dream he squeezed the grapes into Pharaoh's cup and then gave the cup to Pharaoh.

The baker dreamt about three baskets of bread, stacked up. In the top one was all sorts of lovely baked goods but birds came and started eating them.

Joseph asked God to help him interpret the dreams and was able to tell the two prisoners what they meant. Fortunately for the wine steward, his dream meant that he would soon be out of prison and back serving wine to Pharaoh. Unfortunately for the baker, his dream meant that he would not get out of prison and would be sentenced to death.

When the wine steward was released from prison, Joseph asked him to remember him and speak to Pharaoh about him in the hope that he would also get out of prison.

Sadly, the wine steward forgot about Joseph completely until, one day (two years later!!) Pharaoh had a dream. When Pharaoh shared this dream with his advisors, in the hope that someone would explain it to him, that jogged the wine steward's memory and he finally told Pharaoh about Joseph. Joseph was summoned from prison to appear before Pharaoh – and Pharaoh shared his dream with Joseph...

He said: In my dream I was standing on the bank of the Nile, when out of the river there came up seven cows, fat and sleek, and they grazed among the reeds. After them, seven other cows came up—scrawny and very ugly and lean. I had never seen such ugly cows in all the land of Egypt. The lean, ugly cows ate up the seven fat cows that came up first. But even after they ate them, no one could tell that they had done so; they looked just as ugly as before.

He went on to say: Also in my dream I saw seven heads of grain, full and good, growing on a single stalk. After them, seven other heads sprouted – withered and thin and scorched by the east wind. The thin heads of grain swallowed up the seven good heads.

God revealed the meaning of the dreams to Joseph – they were effectively the same dream. There would be seven years of plenty in the land of Egypt – followed by seven years of terrible famine. Joseph advised Pharaoh to put someone trustworthy in charge of storing up some of the abundance from the first seven years to see the people of Egypt through the seven years of famine. Pharaoh was so grateful to Joseph for interpreting his dreams, and recognised that God was with Joseph, Pharaoh immediately put Joseph in charge of everything – only Pharaoh was more important than Joseph in Egypt from that day.

Joseph Part 4 – In charge and merciful

So, Joseph was put in charge of storing the excess food during the years of plenty and was then also in charge of distributing the food during the years of famine. During the famine years, Jacob and his sons ran out of food in Canaan, and, because they were starving, Jacob's sons travelled to Egypt to buy food from the Egyptians. The brothers arrived and appeared in front of the man in charge of the food – their own brother Joseph. The brothers did not recognise him at all – but Joseph recognised them. Eventually, Joseph told them who he was – but the brothers were so very afraid because they knew how badly they had treated Joseph all those years ago. But Joseph was no longer angry with his brothers – he showed mercy towards them and forgave them. Then he had his father Jacob brought to Egypt and from then on Joseph looked after them all.

So that brings us back to the verse from the beginning of the service:

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are those who behave mercifully, God will be generous to them in return.

But what is being merciful all about?

To live the blessed life of the Beatitudes is to wear your 'Jesus clothes'. However, we recognise that sometimes putting on our Jesus clothes is not that comfortable because we need to let go of part of ourselves or lose something that is weighing us down. The thing we need to let go of if we are to grasp what being merciful means is any thought that we are better than anyone else. We all make mistakes, and our mistakes, big or small, are just as much a part of the mess and muck which separates the world as it is from the world God intends, as those of anyone else. There are many mistakes by lots of different people in Joseph's story. The upset and problems these created remind us why we must put on our merciful clothes... every single one of us needs forgiveness.

Forgiveness is at the very heart of what it means to be merciful. If you are merciful, you are forgiving to people you would otherwise have power over – the power to forgive or not. When you forgive, you let go of that power and open yourself up to a relationship which is built on respect rather than judgment. When we show mercy, we show people that they are more important than their actions and mistakes, and we

allow people to learn from their mistakes and grow as people. The turning point in Joseph's story comes when he receives God's mercy, finds that he is more than his mistakes to God, and sees how he has been part of God's plan to deliver God's people.

The turning point in our story comes when we believe for ourselves that we are part of God's plan. When we know that Jesus came, lived, died, and rose again so that we might learn to forgive as we have been forgiven, because just like Joseph, we are more than our mistakes to God. God's love for us is complete, even when we make mistakes and do selfish and bad things. God is always there when we want to say sorry or to just cry out for help because God's love for us is eternally merciful.

Like many things that Jesus taught, there is more to the meaning he places on being merciful than just being forgiving. Biblical scholars tell us that Jesus used a word which brings together forgiveness, compassion, kindness, loving goodness, all motivated by deep personal care. We see this in Joseph's story when he is reunited with his brothers. In Egypt, because Joseph followed God's instruction, the people were well-fed during the time of famine; this was not the case for his brothers, who made the journey from Canaan because they had run out of food and were starving. Joseph's heart is moved by their plight; he doesn't judge them for their past actions or their present condition. His actions toward his brothers bring together forgiveness, kindness and loving goodness and are motivated by deep personal care – he shows them mercy in the completeness that God showed to him.

When Jesus said, "Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy", he was reminding those with ears to hear and eyes to see that showing other people mercy in this complete sense is one of the ways we can show others and know for ourselves what it is like to be part of God's family. This is how Jesus lived whilst he was on earth. Even though he was perfect and without fault, he consistently acted with deep personal care for others. He showed kindness and loving goodness to the homeless, the sick, the misguided, even to those who treated him badly and so taught us the final lesson about being merciful... we should be merciful to all – not just to those close to us or those we find it easy to be merciful to. Complete mercy has no favouritism.

Song – Jesus went out of his way

*Ch) Jesus went out of His way,
Out of His way, Out of His way to help others
Jesus went out of His way,
Out of His way, Out of His way to do right.
So let's go our of our way,
Out of our way, Out of our way to help others
So let's go out of our way, Out of our way,
Out of our way to do right.*

2) When I had no clothes, did you clothe me?
When I was so sick, did you look after me?
When in prison, did you visit me
Or did you turn me away?

1) When I was hungry, did you feed me?
When I was thirsty, did you give me a drink?
An outsider, did you welcome me
Or did you turn me away?

John Hardwick © 2002 Song Solutions Daybreak

Prayers of Intercession

One way we can be practically merciful in our community is to support organisations like the [Black Country Foodbank](#) – by giving to such an organisation we see what being merciful is all about to strangers at their point of need. The Foodbank makes no judgment about an individual's or a family's past actions or their present condition; instead, motivated by deep personal care, they use the food donated to them to show that whatever has been done or not done, God's love is complete, eternal and is for all.

For our prayers for others, we will focus on their work. Let us pray.

Imagine a bag of pasta. It is enough to feed many. It reminds us of God's abundance and kindness. We pray for those who cannot afford enough food for themselves and their family – and ask that the gifts people donate to the foodbank will bless those in our community who find themselves in that situation. Your grace extends to all **and your mercy lasts forever.**

Imagine a tin of mushy peas, crushed and squashed. They remind us of the times when we feel beaten down. We pray for all those who are feeling beaten down today. May they know you are with them and receive your love and peace. We pray especially for those who we know are facing difficult times. Your grace extends to all **and your mercy lasts forever.**

Imagine a packet of party rings. Whilst they are fun and delicious, they also have a hole in the middle. This reminds us of the holes in our lives and in society, where we feel something, or someone is missing. Lord, we pray for your comfort to be with all those who are grieving. We also bring before you all those in our society who are forgotten, those who fall through the holes in our world, those who need help and support but cannot find it. Show us how we can stand up for those who fall through the gaps. To be a voice for the voiceless. Your grace extends to all **and your mercy lasts forever.**

Imagine a family pack of baked beans, separate but connected. They remind us of our families, and how we are all connected as one family. We pray for children across the world. Help us to be a blessing to all the children in our lives. May we guide them in the right direction, lead them by example, and help them to grow in faith, kindness and love. Your grace extends to all **and your mercy lasts forever.**

Imagine a fruit salad, full of different colours, different flavours, all coming together. It reminds us that we are called to live in peace and unity with one another. We pray for the parts of our world that do not know peace. May there be an end to war, violence, and persecution. Be with those who have influence to bring peace. Give them wisdom and courage to bring about change. Your grace extends to all **and your mercy lasts forever. Amen.**

StF 59 – Lord the light of your love

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1) Lord, the light of Your love is shining
In the midst of the darkness, shining;
Jesus, Light of the World, shine upon us,
Set us free by the truth You now bring us,
Shine on me, shine on me. | 2) Lord, I come to Your awesome presence,
From the shadows into Your radiance;
By the blood I may enter Your brightness,
Search me, try me, consume all my darkness.
Shine on me, shine on me. |
| Ch) <i>Shine, Jesus, shine,
Fill this land with the Father's glory;
Blaze, Spirit, blaze, set our hearts on fire.
Flow, river, flow,
Flood the nations with grace and mercy;
Send forth Your word, Lord,
And let there be light.</i> | 3) As we gaze on Your kingly brightness
So our faces display Your likeness,
Ever changing from glory to glory,
Mirrored here may our lives tell Your story.
Shine on me, shine on me. |

Graham Kendrick © 1987 Make Way Music

Blessing

We bless you, God of Love and Mercy, and we bless each other, that the beauty of this world, and the love that created it, might be expressed through our lives and be a blessing to others, now and always. **Amen.**