



# Welcome

...to Scartho Celebration Church!

Enter into His gates with thanksgiving  
and His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him and bless His Name.  
For the LORD is good; His mercy is everlasting  
and His truth endures to all generations. Psalm 100:4-5.

## July 2017

### Sunday services, all at 11am:

2 <sup>nd</sup> . (communion)	John Lavric;
9 <sup>th</sup>	Andy King
16 <sup>th</sup> .	Dr Annang
23 <sup>rd</sup> .	Joseph Elsdén
30 <sup>th</sup> .	Andy King

### Bible study home groups:

Wednesdays 7.30pm at Glen & Debbie's

Thursdays 10.30am at Margaret's

Fridays at Andy & Karen's, TBA.

### Prayer meetings:

Sundays 7pm: At Ann's

### Prayer for Israel meetings:

Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup>, 7.15pm at Ruth & Tony's

### Mens Prayer Breakfast:

7am, 1<sup>st</sup> at Steve's

7am, 15<sup>th</sup> at Andy's

**Ashgrove** Nursing Home  
service: Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup>, 2.30pm

**Food donations** for CARE &  
Womens Aid: Sunday 16<sup>th</sup>

### Coffee morning and dancing:

Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup>, 10:30 – 12:00 midday, St John Fisher hall.

**Tapestry of Grace** *A look at how God sovereignly wove suffering and trials into the lives of Jacob and Joseph to create a beautiful display of His grace.*

Hebrews 11, the so-called Hall of Faith, praises Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph as role models for trusting God. Yet, though men of faith, they were also sinners who displayed such moral failures as polygamy, dishonesty and dysfunction in family life. That's why the real hero on every page of Scripture is God, not man. The story of Jacob and Joseph shows how a gracious, loving God brings glory to Himself through imperfect people who are rich in faith.

Jacob loved Joseph more than his other children because he was the child of his old age and the first-born son of his beloved wife Rachel. When Rachel died, Jacob lavished Joseph with favour, giving him the famous tunic of many colours (Gen.37:3). Consequently, Joseph's brothers hated him. Their hatred grew even worse when Joseph told them about his dreams, which implied they would someday bow down to him (v.5-7). One day, perhaps unwisely, Jacob sent the 17 year old Joseph to check on his older brothers and their flocks. Despising Joseph and showing no concern for their aged father's feelings, they sold their brother into slavery, soaked his tunic in goat's blood and deceived Jacob into believing a wild beast had killed the boy (v.28-32).

As Jacob held the blood-stained tunic he wailed, "A wild beast has devoured him. Without doubt Joseph is torn to pieces. I shall go down into the grave to my son in mourning." (v.33-35). Surely God was chastening Jacob. Hebrews 12:6 says, "For whom the Lord loves He chastens." God had begun a good work in Jacob and was refining him and his family for God's glory and Jacob's good. **When God disciplines us, He does so out of love, not cruelty.**

Jacob heard nothing more about Joseph for twenty-two years. As far as he knew, his favourite son was dead and he would have to carry on without him. Joseph was sold as a slave to Potiphar, a key military leader in Egypt. But God was with Joseph, and Potiphar promoted him to chief steward of his estate (Gen.39:5). Potiphar's wife then tried to seduce the young Israelite. When Joseph rejected her advances because of his love for God, she lied to Potiphar and said Joseph had tried to sleep with her. (v.7-14).

Potiphar believed his wife and sent Joseph to prison. But God was also with Joseph in prison and had him promoted to a position of authority. There he met Pharaoh's butler and baker and interpreted their dreams. Joseph remained in prison for two more years until Pharaoh had a disturbing dream and sought an interpreter. Then the butler told Pharaoh about Joseph. Joseph interpreted Pharaoh's dream and gave full credit to God. "God has shown Pharaoh what He is about to do," Joseph said (Gen.41:28). Egypt would enjoy seven years of plenty followed by seven years of severe famine. After working already for thirteen years in household and prison management, Joseph was quickly able to outline a life-saving famine-relief programme. Pharaoh immediately promoted Joseph to second in command over Egypt.

Nine more years passed. The famine had struck as Joseph predicted. It grew so severe Jacob sent his older sons to Egypt to buy grain. Little did he know that, through the difficulty, God was about to bless him. **Do you ever feel forgotten by God or wonder why He keeps you in His waiting room? He always has a purpose. Gods silence is not inactivity.**

When Jacob's sons returned from Egypt with food, they brought bad news. The lord of the land (Joseph, whom they did not recognise) had accused them of being spies. To prove they were merely twelve brothers who had a father and a younger brother back home, Joseph demanded they not return without the youngest brother, Benjamin; and he imprisoned Simeon until then.

Benjamin was the only other child of Jacob's wife Rachel, and Jacob did not want to lose him as he had lost Joseph. He refused to send Benjamin: "My son shall not go down with you, for his brother is dead, and he is left alone. If any calamity should befall him...you would bring down my gray hair with sorrow to the grave" (Gen.42:38).But hunger finally drove Jacob to acquiesce when his son Judah guaranteed Benjamin's safe return. So back they went to Egypt.

Joseph's strange treatment of his brothers seems harsh until one realises he concealed his identity until he saw they had changed. He orchestrated a plan in which Benjamin faced imprisonment. Amazingly, Judah offered to be enslaved in place of Benjamin. Then Joseph revealed himself to his brothers. He never rebuked them for what they had done to him twenty-two years earlier. Instead, he told them God had been at work all along: "God sent me before you...to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you who sent me here, but God" (Gen.45:7-8).

When they returned to Jacob, they told him Joseph was alive and governed all of Egypt. Jacob's heart "stood still because he did not believe them". But when he saw the provisions and carts Joseph had sent to bring him to Egypt, Jacob declared, "It is enough. Joseph my son is still alive. I will go and see him efore I die" (Gen.45:26-28). **God's ways may seem strange to us, but they are always perfect because He is perfect. His hiddenness is not inability, and His timing is flawless.**

God had told Abraham his descendents would be strangers in a foreign land for generations before returning to the land they were promised (Gen.15:13-16). He fulfilled this promise by bringing Jacob's family to Egypt.

Reunited with his son in Egypt, Jacob showed great faith during his final seventeen years (Gen.47:28). He made Joseph promise to bury him at the family grave, demonstrating his belief that God would return his family to the promised land. His blessing of Joseph's sons conveyed his faith in the Abrahamic covenant (48:15-16), and His prophecies about his son revealed his certainty that God had a definite plan for all the children of Israel (49:1-28). Jacob learned that God's promises are dependable.

After Jacob's death, Joseph's brothers worried he would finally seek revenge. Joseph's powerful response could be called the Romans 8:28 of the Old Testament: "Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God? But as for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive" (Gen.50:19-20). Joseph remained faithful throughout exile and suffering because he believed in God's sovereign plan. **We can trust Him even when we don't understand, because God's sovereignty brings certainty.**

During World War II, the Ten Boom family exemplified such trust in God's sovereignty. After their beloved Netherlands was overrun by the Nazis, the Ten Booms rescued hundreds of Jewish people. The Nazis eventually arrested the Ten Booms and sent them to concentration camps. Corrie Ten Boom alone lived to tell about it.

After the war, she travelled the world speaking about her experiences and how the Gospel enables us to forgive our enemies. Corrie often used the example of a tapestry to demonstrate God's sovereignty in our lives. The underside may



appear like a knotted mess, but the front reveals a beautiful design. One day we will see from God's perspective what He was making of our lives. Corrie, like Jacob and Joseph, lived with certainty because she believed in God's sovereignty. God's work in our lives may involve chastening, times when He seems silent and hidden. But because of His promises, we can rest in His sovereignty and appropriate His matchless grace.

*Article (abridged version) by Mark Johnson, Pastor, Independent Bible Church, Martinsburg, West Virginia, and as featured in Israel My Glory Magazine, Jan/Feb 2017.*

**Sunday morning services** From 3<sup>rd</sup> September we will be moving the start of our Sunday service forward by half an hour to 10.30am. This will enable us to finish a bit earlier, encroaching less into lunchtime and freeing up more time in the afternoon. Hopefully it will be more convenient for us all.

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**Scartho Celebration Church**

"Behold I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!" John 4:35