

The Corona Chronicle.

West Worthing Evangelical Church.

Rugby Road, Worthing. Sunday February 21st

Being Church in Lockdown



Genesis 41 v52-53

Joseph had two sons from his Egyptian wife, Manasseh and Ephraim. His Father in law was a Priest of the Sun god Ra, but Joseph made no concessions and gave his sons Hebrew names.

Manasseh means 'made to forget'. And this summed up Joseph's attitude to the past. Now he is married with a home.

Although a foreigner he is able to call Egypt his home. While in Prison he would miss the rolling hills of Canaan, Jacob and his brothers. Joseph might be inclined to go to his family as a Prince of Egypt, but he waits in God's providential time. Joseph had not forgotten his family and the love for his family but he believed the time was not right.

"Is forgetting the past biblical? Does the Bible instruct us to forget the past?"

Philippians 3v 13-14 "One thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus"

Is this a command to purge our minds of all memories?

It is important to consider the passage that precedes these words. Paul had just listed all his religious qualifications that, to the Jewish mind, were of supreme importance, he then states, "I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord" (verse 8).

Paul is making the point that no fleshly accomplishment matters in comparison with knowing Christ and trusting in His righteousness alone for salvation.

Regardless of how good or how bad we may have been, we must all come to Christ the same way: humble, repentant, and undeserving of His forgiveness.

The word *forgetting* in this passage means "**no longer caring for, neglecting, refusing to focus on.**"

Our memories store millions of pieces of information gained through our senses since birth. Some experiences are impossible to forget, and any effort to forget them only makes them more prominent.

Paul is not advising a memory wipe; he is **telling us to focus** on the present and the future, rather than the past.

It's easy to "live in the past." Whether it's a past victory that our minds continually replay or a past defeat that hangs over us like a shroud, it needs to be left in the past. Nothing hinders present service quite like being mired in another time. Modelling Paul's forgetfulness means we count the past as nothing. We cut the strings that tie us to that bygone moment.

We refuse to allow past successes to inflate our pride. We refuse to allow past failures to deflate our self-worth. We leave it behind and instead adopt our new identity in Christ

¹⁷Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new 2 Corinthians 5v17

We are not to forget *everything*, however, in the sense of being oblivious to it. In fact, there are many times God instructs us to remember.

We are encouraged to remember all God has done for us.
Psalm 77v11 Psalm 103v2

But the remembering should be to the glory of God and for our spiritual benefit. If we are cleansed by the blood of Christ, then no judgment remains for past failures.
Romans 8v1

If God chooses not to remember our past sins Hebrews 8v12 we can choose to set them aside as well and embrace the future He promises to those who love Him.
Romans 8v26; .

Manasseh reminds Joseph that although he suffered harsh treatment from his brothers, becoming a servant in Egypt and being put into prison wrongly, he was able to overcome them in his mind.

We can let the past bring us down but in Christ we can overcome.

Ephraim

Ephraim means, God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction. Joseph chose names for his sons that expressed his gratitude to God and his effort to make sense of his life. The name Ephraim reminded Joseph that God had blessed him richly. Yet such blessing came at a great cost to Joseph. Ephraim also reminded him that he lived in **"this land of my grief"** or, more literally, **"the land of my affliction."** Yes, God made Joseph fruitful, but in the midst of his suffering God did not preserve Joseph from pain, but rather made His presence known in the pain and made Joseph fruitful in spite of it . . . or maybe even because of it. So it is with us. Though we may want the Lord to make our lives easy, He does not protect us from all hardships. Instead, He uses our suffering for His purposes and for our growth. Affliction prunes us so that, in God's grace, we might live more fruitfully.

John 12:24 Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

Situations in life we would desperately love to see changed can plague us. God tells us to pray for His will to be done,

for His name to be hallowed, and for His kingdom to come.

We desperately during this pandemic want to get back to normal.

But in the midst of waiting for the affliction to end and God's kingdom to come, we can be blessed by God's story in the life of Joseph, and **we meditate on what it looks like to be fruitful in the very places from which we would most like to be delivered.**

Joseph's story reminds me that affliction doesn't end the possibility of fruitfulness but may instead be the very thing that prepares the ground for "fruit that remains."

John 15:16 "You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain

We see in scripture God uses the hardest parts of the life of a believer in order to bear beautiful fruit for His name.

It is the **God** of Joseph's story that causes hope in the midst of the pandemic.

When Jacob was dying Joseph brought his two sons to him.

He blessed them both but he blessed Ephraim with his right hand and Manasseh with his left showing that the biggest blessing and inheritance would go to the tribe of Ephraim.



Bible Pathway Adventures

BIBLE QUIZ

BIBLE HEROES

Match the Bible hero on the left with the facts on the right.



_____ Noah
_____ Moses
_____ David
_____ Daniel
_____ Paul (Sha'ul)
_____ Yeshua
_____ Joseph
_____ Abraham
_____ Samson
_____ Esther

1. Lived in the kingdom of Persia. Helped save the Hebrews from destruction.
2. Anointed by Samuel as king of Israel. Fought the giant Goliath and won.
3. A Nazarite. Helped saved the Israelites from the Philistines.
4. Grew up a prince in Egypt. Asked Pharaoh to free the Hebrews and later led them out of Egypt.
5. Born in Bethlehem. The Savior of Israel.
6. Was a Pharisee. Became a follower of Yeshua. Traveled around Asia Minor teaching people about Yeshua the Messiah.
7. Left his family in Haran and moved to Canaan. Married Sarah. Had a son named Isaac.
8. Sold into slavery by his brothers. Thrown into prison in Egypt. Later became a ruler of Egypt.
9. Followed Yahweh's instructions and built an Ark. Survived the great flood.
10. Taken prisoner to Babylon. Became chief of the Magi. Thrown into the lion's den and survived.



Answers: Esther = 1, David = 2, Samson = 3, Moses = 4, Yeshua = 5, Paul = 6, Abraham = 7, Joseph = 8, Noah = 9, Daniel = 10.

Hymns Prayers and Readings.

CONFESSING OUR SINS From Lamentations 5

Remember, O Lord, your people in their sorrow:
look, and see our disgrace.

Joy is gone from our hearts; our dancing has turned to
mourning:

we are no longer proud -
the crown has fallen from our head
- for we have sinned.

Yet You, O Lord, reign for ever, Your throne endures to every
generation:

do not forget us now,
do not forsake us -
forgive us, restore us and renew us;
through our redeemer, Jesus Christ. Amen.

1 How long will You forget me, Lord,
And hide your face away?
How long shall evils tear my heart
And troubles fill my day?

2 Look on my need, O Lord my God
Who grants my every breath;
Give light that I may see Your light,
Not sleep the sleep of death.

3 Look on their threats and hear my cry,
And answer when I call:
Or they will claim the victory
Who long to see me fall.

4 Lord, in Your mercy is my trust;
I shall be glad and free;
Then shall I sing with all my heart
How You have dealt with me.

Christopher Idle from Psalm 13
© Christopher Idle/Jubilate Hymns Ltd
CM

Spirit of God who dwells within,
Spirit converting, convicting of sin,
Spirit who aids us from where we begin,
show us the glory of Christ!

Spirit of truth who opens eyes,
Spirit who acts when the prodigal cries,
Spirit who urges us, 'Run for the prize!'
show us the glory of Christ!

Spirit who comes like wind and fire,
Spirit who moves in our hearts to inspire,
Spirit who works in us godly desire,
show us the glory of Christ!

Spirit of life and love and light,
Spirit who guides us to do what is right,
Spirit who arms us to fight the good fight,
show us the glory of Christ!

Spirit who brings forth fruitfulness,
Spirit who strengthens the saints in distress,
Spirit who works through us, others to bless,
show us the glory of Christ!

Brian Black (b. 1926)

Genesis 41

⁵⁰ And to Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came, whom Asenath, the daughter of Poti-Pherah priest of On, bore to him. ⁵¹ Joseph called the name of the first-born Manasseh: "For God has made me forget all my toil and all my father's house." ⁵² And the name of the second he called Ephraim: "For God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction."

God our Father,
gracious and compassionate,
slow to anger and rich in mercy:
We thank You that You keep Your promises,
and love all that You have made;
You uphold those who fall,
and lift up those who are bowed low;
You open your hand
and satisfy the desires of Your people
who fear You,
You hear our cry and save us.
Therefore we proclaim Your goodness:
let every creature praise Your holy name,
for ever and ever.

Amen.

(from Psalm 145)