

Rev Tim Perkins

May 6th 2020

Dear Friends,

I have had the story of Joseph on my mind for much of this last week. Maybe it is because I have enjoyed watching a weekly Andrew Lloyd Webber musical on his Youtube channel, "The shows must go on." My family will tell you that I have been driving them crazy by fairly constantly listening to a musicals playlist on my computer while stuck at home. And Joseph, of course, was the first one I ever came across as a school child. You may not believe this but in my last appointment, I even played Pharaoh, in a Circuit Youth Group production, rising up out of the pulpit in a full-length white PVC suit!

The story of Joseph and his brothers is one of the major stories of the Bible. There are some 13 chapters of Genesis, devoted to it. There are not many other Biblical characters who get such coverage. And it is a fascinating story that I think has much to offer to us at this time because in many ways it is a story of wilderness and waiting, of faithfulness, reflection and the formation of godly character in the life of one individual, who then had a massive impact on the world around him.

I have written over previous weeks of the importance of listening and waiting as key aspects of discerning what God might want to do in and through each one of us and in and through God's church. And a wilderness experience actually provides the best opportunity for learning how to listen to and wait on God for God's guidance. In the wilderness unnecessary distractions are removed. We are stripped of the things we have come to rely upon and we are forced to our knees in prayer. We are confronted with the true nature of our own ego and how it seeks to be in control, and hopefully, with time, we come to a position of recognising that we cannot control everything. It is not our place to.

Joseph had to learn all of that and more as he was sold into slavery in Egypt and spent 14 years of his life either as a slave or a prisoner, but the forced withdrawal of everything that he held dear, the years of service and solitude taught him massive life lessons. When he emerged from his chains, the boastful, arrogance of youth had been worn away and replaced by a deep sense of humility and trust in God, no matter what situation he faced. Only now, was he properly equipped to lead, only now was he able to reconcile himself with his brothers. He had learned, through listening, waiting and serving others, what it means to trust that God knows better than we do. Perhaps we can use these days and the example of Joseph to learn for ourselves what it means to listen, to wait, to serve and to allow God to change our character from the inside out. It is not always an easy process.

It is not usually an easy process. But God can take any trial that we face and use it to make us better people; people who are willing to let go of the need to be in control and allow

God to use us in the way God alone knows will transform our hearts, our minds, and our actions.

I want to finish with the words of one of the songs on my musicals playlist. It is called "Better than I," and is from the animated Dreamworks film, "Joseph: King of Dreams."

I thought I did what's right,
I thought I had the answers.
I thought I chose the surest road
But that road brought me here.
So I put up a fight
And told you how to help me.
Now just when I have given up
The truth is coming clear:

You know better than I.
You know the way.
I've let go the need to know why,
For you know better than I

If this has been a test
I cannot see the reason
But maybe knowing I don't know
Is part of getting through.
I tried to do what's best
But faith has made it easy
To see the best thing I can do
Is put my trust in You.

I saw one cloud and thought it was the sky.
I saw a bird and thought that I could follow
But it was You who taught that bird to fly.
If I let You reach me
Will You teach me?

For You know better than I.
You know the way.
I've let go the need to know why,
For you know better than I

Words by John Bucchino

With every blessing,

Rev Tim Perkins