

Guest Preacher - Mr Calum Campbell (High Free church)

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Preacher: Mr. Calum Campbell

[0:00] Now, seeking the Lord's help, this morning we'll turn to the portion of Scripture that we read together in Genesis chapter 37.

! And we will take the last few verses of verse 2 and part of verse 3 as our text this morning. And Joseph brought a bad report of them to their father. Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his sons because he was the son of his old age. Amen.

And in my original intention to preach a sermon on these 11 verses. But I found that the more I started to study it and the more I started to dig into it, it proved impossible to do so.

[1:26] And then the service that I was putting together turned into two sermons. And then by the time it was finished, it turned into three.

So what I hope to try and do this morning is speak a little bit about Joseph being loved by his father. And then next week, God willing, in the evening, we shall look at Joseph being hated by his brothers.

And maybe some other time, the third service will come into place with regard to the two dreams. This, sadly, the story, these 11 words that we have read together here.

It would be so sad if we read it and think that this was a one-off situation from long, long ago. But this is not the case.

This is a story that could be told even this day around with regard to broken homes and broken families, both on our island and off the island and worldwide as a whole.

[2:45] Families that have been torn apart through favoritism, through tailbearing, families that have been torn apart with regard to holding grudges and murderous hatred, swelling up in the hearts of people.

And that has brought so much grief and sorrows into people's families. I'm sure every one of us knows of families that have gone through that experience.

And here, in this chapter, we have the history of Joseph beginning in the opening verses. Here we have the introduction to this man, Joseph, who is going to be the central character and the main character for the remainder of the book of Genesis.

And we hear time and time again, and we read time and time again, that in the life of Joseph, that he is Christ-like in his experience and in his example.

And surely, as we read chapter 37, and I would encourage you all when you go home to read the whole chapter, and there you will see truly how Christ-like he is.

[4:08] He is Christ-like on many different ways, but let me name just four of them. He is one who was beloved of the Father, and he was obedient to his will.

Even from verse 12 onwards, when we read that Jacob sends his father to go and find his brothers, and to give a report of how they are and how the flock is, he is fully aware of the hatred of his brothers for him at this point.

But he does not say to his father, I will not go. He knows of his father's love, and he was obedient to his will.

Can we not say the same of Christ? He knew of the father's love, and he was obedient to his will.

You think, my friends, of that time, that instant, throughout eternity, when there was the plan of salvation made between father and son, and he said to the father, I will go.

I will do even that. You know, I am reminded of a worldly song that I heard many years ago, and the song was called I Would Do Anything For Love, But I Won't Do That.

[5:41] But when it comes to Christ, he even did that. He even went that far as to go to Calvary for you and for I.

He was hated and rejected by his own brethren. And that was true also of our Lord and of our own Savior. Even his own brothers, even those that were born after Christ came into the world.

Through the marriage of Mary and Joseph, even his own brothers rejected him as being the God-man, the promised Savior of the world.

And of course, we know the story of Joseph who was falsely accused and unjustly punished and went to prison due to the lies of Potiphar's wife. Well, who was more unjustly punished and who was more falsely accused than our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in the lead up to his death at Calvary.

And yet, despite all that, Joseph was elevated from a place of suffering to a powerful throne, thus saving his own people from death.

[7:04] death. And is that not what Christ did at Calvary when he rose from the dead? Because he was the way, the truth, and the life.

And no man cometh unto him but through Christ. But there is one distinct difference when we compare Joseph to Christ.

And that is that Joseph was only presumed to be dead. Joseph's father had been tricked by his brothers in saying that his body had been torn apart when they produced the blooded coat of many colours to his father.

But Christ, the God-man, he did die. And he defeated death when he rose again. And we praise his holy name this day that we come and we have hope and we have refuge in the risen Christ.

So let's look then at this report this bad report that we read of here. The authorised version of the Bible calls it an evil report.

[8:28] And let's look at also how Joseph was loved by his father. Jacob loved Joseph. It is interesting to note that in the book of Genesis he is given another name.

Jacob is given another name in Genesis chapter 32. And we read in that portion of scripture where Jacob wrestles with God.

We read in verse 27 of chapter 32. And the Lord said to him what is your name? And he said Jacob and then he said you shall no longer be called Jacob but Israel for you have striven with God with men and have prevailed.

That is what the name Israel means. God strives. His original name Jacob in the original language means the deceiver.

and here we find that by the time we read of the life of Joseph that his name has been changed but yet we know in the experience of Joseph and in the experience of Jacob that the meaning of the word Jacob deceiver that deception is yet going to be part of the ongoing problem in the family of Jacob and in the life of Joseph.

[10:02] You know I stand here today and I stand here and I thank the Lord for the blessing of family unity within our own home.

It is a gift from God but it can change very quickly over one thing. It can change very quickly. And those of us that can say we have family unity we should praise the Lord and thank him for that because it is a gift from God.

But this was not something that was in Jacob's family. It was a divided family. It was a divided home. It was a home that was filled with chaos and concern.

And that was largely due to the fact that this man Jacob has got four wives. he has got Leah as a wife and he has got Rachel as a wife.

And just to confuse things even more they are both sisters. And over and above that we read that he has also got two other wives who are mentioned here in verse 2 Bilhah and Silpah.

[11:17] And it turns out that Bilhah and Silpah are actually Leah and Rachel's maidservants. can you imagine the confusion between the four of these women and they are all married to the same man.

This is a home that has one father. This is a home that has got four wives. This is a home that has four different mothers. This is a home that has got 13 children, 12 boys and one girl.

And here are the ingredients for chaos and dysfunction in the life of this family.

We read in verse 2 here that a new section of Genesis is beginning with a generation of Jacob and we read of Joseph being just 17 years of age.

So we ask the question, well, who is Joseph? Where is he in this family line? Where is he in this genealogy?

[12 : 28] And he is actually the 11th son out of 12 that Jacob had. And he is the firstborn son of Rachel who is Jacob's favorite wife.

Now we must remember that scripture tells us in previous chapter that Jacob was 90 years of age when Joseph was born. So if we do the maths, we find that when Genesis 37 is recorded that Jacob is 107 years of age.

And sadly, we read that by the time Joseph is 17, his mother Rachel has died. He is recorded here in chapter 37 and in verse 2 as he is a boy.

In the authorised version, it says the lad. And when we picture this 17 year old boy or this 17 year old lad, we must remember that what scripture is actually telling us is that here he is with the other sons of Jacob who are older than him and he is being presented as a servant and as a helper to the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Silpah, his father's wives.

And just to remind us one more time how Christ-like Joseph is, the first introduction we have of Joseph is that of a young shepherd.

[14 : 14] That is why we will be singing the Lord's my shepherd at the end of the service today.

And although scripture tells us that Joseph is mentioned as his favourite child of Jacob, when we read verse 2 it would appear that he is not exempt from the work that his father has for all his sons.

He is tasked with the same duty of looking after his brethren's flock. And this is where we find him. We would almost call him as a young boy, as a lad of 17, an apprentice shepherd.

And so the story begins and you read verse 2 and everything is quiet and everything is peaceful. and Joseph is going to work with his older brothers or with his older, as we would term it today, stepbrothers or with his older half brothers.

But we will call them his brothers. Everything is peaceful. Everything is quiet. What on earth could possibly go wrong? But we find that doesn't last long.

Because lurking in the shadows are three things that the devil uses to destroy homes and lives and families. Lurking in the shadows is tale bearing, telling tales.

[15 : 53] And this is something that belongs to Joseph. Lurking in the shadows also is favoritism.

And this is something that belongs to Jacob. And lurking in the shadows too is envy, which will lead to murderous hatred.

This is something that belongs to the brothers. We only see in verse 2 that there is mention of the sons of Bilhah.

But when we study scripture further and we ask the question, well, who are the sons of Bilhah? We find out that the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Silpah, the sons of Bilhah were called Dan and Naphtali.

And the sons of the other wife, Silpah, were called Gad and Asher. So here on the field on that day, there is Joseph and these four older brothers.

and he is learning how to care for the sheep. Nobody would have known then, not even Joseph, not his father, not his brother, nobody would have known at that moment in time that this man, this young lad Joseph, this young boy Joseph, was destined for greater things, although he starts out as a servant.

[17 : 14] And although we would call them Joseph's half-brothers or step-brothers, in the eyes of Joseph, it would appear that he treats them all with dignity and with respect.

He loves them. You know, I often wonder what life was like for Christ, growing up as a young boy, from his young years to his teenage years, with other children from his mother and father, from Mary and Joseph, what life was like for him, growing up as a young boy, and what was his experiences, how they treated him.

These things are not written and revealed to us, how the God-man was treated by his own family, but even as a young babe, we can say of Christ, that he was destined to for the greater good, for our greater good, for our redemption, for our hope, for our peace, for his promises for you and I, that by trusting in him we could have salvation for our sins.

And so we read that he brings an evil report, and immediately we want to find out what the evil report is, but I can't tell you that because we don't know what it is.

But neither do we need to know what it is. But whatever it was, Joseph automatically came to the conclusion that his father needed to know about this.

[19:07] At these times, at that time, it was the father who always made the big decisions to do with family and to do with land.

And Joseph is here and he is strong and he is courageous in his moral convictions. He knows that something awful has happened. He knows that something evil has happened.

He knows that immoral behavior is going on. And his immediate task, is to report this to his father. What moral convictions he has.

This tells us that Joseph surely was a moral boy, a moral lad. conviction he has done. And we thank the Lord for those of us, hopefully all of us, I'm sure, who can say that we have moral convictions, convictions, that there are things we just simply will not do because we know it is wrong and evil and wicked.

And it is a wonderful thing to have these moral convictions as men and women. They are God-given gifts, but even moral convictions, my friend, will not save us.

[20:30] We can have all the moral convictions in this world and in this life, but if we do not have the conviction of knowing that we need Jesus Christ as our Savior, all of our moral upstandings will be meaningless at the throne of judgment.

Even here in the history of Joseph, we can see how the Lord is at work in his life, how the Lord is working in this man's heart. His heart was different to that of his brothers.

His heart was pure. His heart was God glorifying, unlike his brothers. And he knows that whatever has happened, it is both dishonoring to his father, and it is dishonoring to God, and it is dishonoring to the family.

Well, my friends, can I need I remind you that already the Lord, in a sense, has a report made up of you and I.

And when we leave this world, the report will be, look, something like this, and it will simply say, did you honor or did you dishonor the Lord when you lived in this world?

[22:02] Did you honor the Lord by trusting in him, a savior and friend, or did you dishonor the Lord by rejecting him as the God, man, the Christ, the Redeemer?

Whatever things Joseph saw, whatever things Joseph heard, he is so vexed within his righteous soul, because he knows that whatever has taken place, it would never have taken place in the presence of his father.

And he is so furious with it, with the behavior of his brothers, that he immediately seeks to bring it to his father's attention to deal with it.

And when we read scripture, we read that Joseph doesn't do this so that he can take pleasure in doing so.

He does this for the good of his brothers. He does this for the good of his family. He does this to glorify the Lord. I stand here today and I am reminded of things that I have done in the past.

[23:18] And as I have said, I have but one sister, Anna. And you know, you look back and you think, I wish I had been a better brother when I was younger.

There were times, it shames me to say in my life, where I went to my mother and father to give a bad report, as it were, to tell her Anna about things that she had done to get her into trouble, to make myself look good.

And maybe some of us have done that in the past with their own brothers and sisters. You know the phrase, we had it in school, you're nothing but a telltale tit, you're nothing but a grass.

Well, Joseph was not a telltale tit. Joseph was not what we would call a grass. He is not here gossiping, he is coming to his father as a faithful steward and as a faithful brother to bring to his father's attention their scandalous conduct in order that he would deal with it.

And this shows us of Joseph's love for righteousness. You know, my friends, telling the truth often ends with painful consequences.

[24:47] Maybe you've experienced that in your life as a Christian. maybe it has been your experience where you have had to give a bad report and it has cost you.

Telling the truth often ends in painful experiences, painful consequences. I wonder today how interested you are as a Christian with persecuted Christians.

I wonder today how often you remember our brothers and sisters in Christ who are persecuted for righteousness sake. I got the Steadfast Global newsletter a few days ago.

And let me read to you two stories. One from Somalia. A Christian convert who was a mother of eight, whose name was Sophia Abraham, was beaten unconscious by fundamental Muslims after

they discovered that she had left the Muslim faith and become a Christian. She had been meeting with other Christian women in her home when four Muslim men entered in, rebuked the group and began beating them with sticks. After Sophia fled the home the men followed her and attacked her with blunt instruments and also with bladed weapons. [26 : 18] She received hospital treatment and she is now in hiding. Oh yes, telling the truth can have painful consequences.

And in Nigeria the killing of three Christians on Saturday the 5th of September by the suspected Fulini herdsman in the Mangu country plateau state brought the total number of Christians killed in that area over the past month to over 30 people.

And we remain unmoved and we remain sometimes uninterested. But telling the truth often ends in painful consequences.

What a lesson there is for you and I then my friends. That there are times when we have to give a bad report. When things are not right.

And if we do that it could very well cost us. Jacob after all has already had bad news. He has already had distressing news.

[27 : 31] He has already had heartbreaking and disappointing news with regard to his older sons in the past. And now Joseph is bringing him report and news of other sons.

Who of us my friends can understand what Joseph endured and the pain that he endured when his favourite wife Rachel died at childbirth, giving birth to her second son.

In chapter 35 we read in verse 16 Rachel went into labour and she had a hard labour. And then we read, and as her soul was departing for she was dying, she called his name Ben-Omi and his father called his name Benjamin.

So Rachel died and she was buried on the way to Ephraim, that is Bethlehem. And Jacob sent up a pillar over the tomb. It was a pillar of Rachel's tomb.

which is there to this day. And Israel journeyed on and put his tent beyond the tower of Edir. And then we read these words, and while Israel lived in that land, Reuben his son went and lay with Bilhah, his father's wife, and Israel heard of it.

[28 : 51] Can you imagine? He's just burying his favourite wife, and his eldest son is having an affair with another one of his wives.

That is why Joseph stays clear of immorality. He has heard these things. He knows of immorality in the life of his brothers.

That is why, my friends, he runs when Potiphar's wife comes day upon day upon day to seduce him. And he goes to his father with this evil report.

Now, as I've said, I don't know what it is, but I can't help but think, maybe you're like me, and wonder what it was. Maybe it is too speculative, but I wonder, was this to do with the act of selling some of his father's flock?

I wonder, was it in a sense, I wonder, were these four sons in a sense robbing their father? We don't know. I wonder if Jacob was at all suspicious of his four sons?

[30 : 11] We don't know. I wonder if part of the reason why he sends Joseph with them is in the hope that he will bring to them an evil report because he knows Joseph is so different?

We don't know. I wonder if whatever happened on that day, whatever said, I wonder did these four brothers threaten Joseph? I wonder did they say to Joseph, peek aside, you'll either stand with us or you will stand with Dad.

But choose a side. We don't know. But one thing is for sure. If things like that were said and done, if he was going to choose a side, he chose his father's side.

And he was now going to learn how lonely and unpopular it was to do so, to choose to stand for God and for righteousness.

just like Christ himself knew what it was to be lonely and unpopular, even in the midst of great multitudes.

[31 : 20] they would soon desert him. And here today, my friends, the Lord is saying to us one more time, will you not choose a side?

Will you not be on the side of Christ? Will you not get off the fence? There is no fence. fence. And if there were a fence, you're still on the side of those who do not trust and fully believe in Christ.

And so he goes and he tells his father of their evil report and immediately these four men, these four brothers would have known in that moment where the information came from.

And they hated him. for it. Instant hatred. And in a sense, in a very small sense, you might be able to understand it.

Because nobody, nobody in a sense, likes a tale-bearer. Even when the tale-bearer is telling the truth. And so you find in these 11 verses of chapter 37, you have the first of four stages of hatred in the life of Joseph from his brothers.

[32 : 50] In verse 2, Joseph is hated by four brothers. By the time you come to verse 4, he is hated by every single one of them.

for righteousness sake. And then you read that Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons because he was the son of his old age.

and we are not to understand from that that Israel's love somehow flourishes and reaches a new level because of the evil report. It was there from the moment that Joseph was born.

But what an awful statement that is to read when you are blessed with 13 children that you love one more than other. And he of all people should have known about the dangers of favoritism.

He knew about it as a youngster. He knew about it growing up. In Genesis chapter 25 we read this with regard to Jacob.

[34 : 04] We read that Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game. But Rebekah loved Jacob. So growing up this man he knows of favoritism.

And what he has experienced as a child he now takes into adulthood. And he now does the same thing with regard to his own children.

You know when you have more than one child there is a sense in which you can feel drawn to one child more than another.

let me illustrate. Let me bring my sister into it again although she lives in Inverness. Let me bring to you my parents who live across the road to me.

And let me present to you the situation if Anna lived beside me. And Anna cared and did as much as she could for my elderly mom and dad.

[35 : 10] she was in the house every day seeking to do what she could to help them. She would do various things and I would do nothing.

I might pop in on a Saturday or on a Sunday for two or three minutes just to take the box and say it's all well. In a situation like that my friends it is understandable how parents might feel drawn to one over the other.

But it doesn't mean that they love the other one more than the other one. But trouble looms my friends when you spoil a child. And this is what is taking place here.

After serving Laban for all these years we read in scripture that he serves Laban for seven years in order to marry the love of his wife Rachel.

But we find that Laban tricks him. And on the day of his wedding instead of marrying the woman that he loves he marries her sister. And he has to serve another seven years for Rachel.

[36 : 30] What a story that is. This man Jacob whose name means the deceiver is deceived by Laban. And we read that when the time comes when he eventually marries Rachel.

We read in scripture that she is unable to have children. We read that she is in some languages the term is used barren.

and she is unable to have children. And in these days and in that time for a woman to be married and to live out her life in marriage and not to have children it was to be a disgrace upon her.

It was to be a stigma upon her and also her husband. But there was no stigma with Israel because he's already got three children three wives.

And all these wives over these extra seven years they produce seven children, six sons and a daughter.

[37 : 45] And here is this woman year upon year pleading and praying with the Lord that she might be able to be blessed with a family.

During these years my friends Rachel prayed that her womb would be opened. We were nearly eight years married before we had a family.

And I can still hear the comments. What's wrong with you? Get a move on. You ought to be so careful what you say to people when they've been married for a number of years and there is no family.

family. Maybe they don't want a family. But maybe too sadly they can't. And you have no idea how much your words hurt them.

But the Lord in his mercy provides her after many, many tears, after many, many tears, and after many prayers, and she is blessed with her firstborn son.

[38:59] and his name is Joseph. And as we read here, he is the son of Jacob's old age. One who would be unlike his brother in character and in attitude.

One who would be different. This man, Joseph, was to be a great comfort to Jacob in his old age when his beloved wife, Rachel, passed away.

And you know, sometimes I don't think we fully realize the comfort that Christ would have given his mother when her husband Joseph died.

We know not when it was, but you can be sure of this, that the God-man comforted his own mother when Joseph died at a young age.

And so we read here in Scripture, it would seem that every time that Jacob would look at Joseph, he vividly saw the love of his beloved wife, Rachel.

[40:10] Every time he looked in the eyes of his son. And is that not true of Christ? every time that Christ was at Calvary, and every time that he looked at the eyes of hatred that were screaming at him, that were shouting at him, that were swearing at him, the mouths that were spitting upon him.

He was thinking of you, and he was thinking of me. And in these angry, hateful eyes, he vividly saw, the redemption of his own people.

Oh, my friends, are you one of them? Can you say that you have been redeemed? Can you say that when Christ was experiencing the full anger of these wicked men, that he was thinking of your salvation?

Because that's the depths he went to. God is and it's remarkable that when we read in scripture that Rachel gives birth to Joseph, that we read in chapter 30, that we read these words, words that are unique, words that almost stand out of place after all these years of not being able to have a child.

We read in chapter 30 and in verse 22, and God remembered Rachel and God listened to her and opened her womb and she conceived and bare a son and said, God has taken away my reproach and she called his name Joseph saying, May the Lord add to me another son.

[42:03] Imagine after being blessed with a child and her immediate thought is, May the Lord add to me another son. And then some people think, well surely in that case, Benjamin ought to be the favourite son.

Maybe in that case, Benjamin ought to be the son that is the most loved son of Jacob because of his old age. But that is not so.

It is easy for us to accept this because of the fact that her womb has been opened. with her firstborn son. And when you have these words here, the son of old age, it's a Hebrew meaning and it simply means this, a wise son who possessed observation and wisdom above his ears.

We would call such a person today an old head upon young shoulders. Well my friends, here in Joseph, here in Joseph we find one who observed wisdom and will be greatly used by the Lord for his glory at a future time.

But until that day comes, in the life of Joseph, there was going to be many tears and many heartaches and many broken experiences of being broken before he was given his great reward.

[43:37] God's love. And so it is in the life of grace. Before I became a Christian, I was fully convinced I wouldn't even get a cold because I was a Christian.

But that's not the way it is, is it, brothers or sisters? That's not the way it is at all. And we give thanks today then in conclusion for the story of Joseph, that we're barely even scratching the surface in the opening two verses about him.

We give thanks for his life, despite the fact that he saw his brothers doing different things, despite the fact that his father misused love in giving so much love to him.

We give thanks for the life of Joseph, and we give thanks for the life of Christ. And we give thanks today that our God, who we are worshipping just now, right here, right now, is not like Jacob.

Because our heavenly father shows no favouritism for his own children. No matter how sinful they have been, he shows no favouritism.

[45:02] Do you know, we read in the book of Jude, we read these words, now unto him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy to the only God and Saviour through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The time came when Joseph died. you know what Christ did for him? He presented him before the father blameless in the presence of his glory with great joy.

Do you know what he's going to do for you and for me when we die? He's going to present us before the father in the exact same way, with great joy as though we were blameless because of his equal love.

Oh, what a God we serve. Joseph is now going to have a greater reward and glory than any reward that he would ever have in this world, either on the throne or with regard to the coat of many colors that his father has yet to give him.

And may that be the experience of each and every single one of us in here today. May our end be like that of Joseph because of the finished work of Jesus Christ at Calvary.

[46 : 42] God's love for God's love for his own children. It is the same love that he has for each one of us.

It's not as if the Lord will only give to every 13 of his own saved people a coat of many colors like Jacob did to his own family.

No my friends. What does the Lord give to you and I? We might not receive a coat of many colors like Joseph received but Isaiah 61 tells us what we will receive.

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord. My soul shall yet exult in my God for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation and he has covered me with the robe of righteousness.

Well as we leave here today can you say that you have been clothed with the garments of salvation and can you say that he has covered you with the robe of righteousness?

[47 : 58] If you can say that my friend. Glory awaits you. But if you can't at this moment in time glory does not await you.

But if you seek the Lord and if you ask the Lord to come into your life and if you come to the Lord who is the shepherd and if you pray and if you plead with all of your heart and all of your being he will I promise you clothe you yet in the garments of salvation and in the robe of his righteousness. Amen. May the Lord bless to us these thoughts from his own word. We shall sing now together in conclusion Psalm 23 The Lord's my shepherd I'll not want he makes me down to lie and past your screen he leadeth me the quiet waters by.

We shall sing down to the end of the psalm goodness and mercy all my life shall surely follow me and in God's house forevermore my dwelling place shall be.

Shall we sing these words to the Lord's presence. The Lord's my shepherd I'll not walk he makes me down to lie in pastures green he leaden me the quiet water by my soul he doth restore again and me to walk the name within the path of righteousness he for his own name say yea though

[50 : 31] I walk in death start fail yet will I fear not ill for thou art with me at thy rod and stand thee comfort!

me comfort still my table! love has furnished yet in presence of my foes!

my head with oil annoyed and my cup overflows my life goodness and mercy all my life shall surely follow me and in God's house forever forever more my worldly place shall be let's pray in conclusion oh lord our god may it be the experience of each and every single one of us in here this day may it be our experience throughout all eternity that goodness and mercy all of our lives will surely follow us and that in

God's house forever more our dwelling place shall be may it be oh lord that before we leave the scene of time that in your mercy and that in your grace that you would clothe us with the garments of salvation and with the robe of righteousness and made be that on that great day each and every single one of us will be presented blameless and faultless with great joy in the presence of the father until then keep us oh lord guide us and keep us be with our brother who will be taking the service in here this evening we ask your blessing to be upon Andrew McKeever this afternoon we pray!

peace and that he might know of your presence and that he might know of your great liberty as he comes to proclaim the glorious word of God this night part us now with your blessing and grant us traveling mercies to our home in Jesus name Amen