

Matthew 22-10-23b

Let's resume our study. We're looking at the bread and the cup in the upper room, and we've seen it in the life of Joseph back in chapter 40 and 41 of Genesis, and before we leave that scene, when you get to chapter 41, with the Manasseh episode, in the sense that the cup bearer, despite being impressed with the truth of the interpretation of his dream, forgot all about it in the hilarity and celebration of his restoration, of his salvation. He forgot that not only was it Joseph who interpreted the dream and foresaw and foretold his restoration, but the words of Joseph before he delivered that interpretation.

The interpretation is from God. What conclusion can you draw if you think about that for a moment? If the interpretation of the dream is from God, likely the dream itself is from God, and likely the deliverance and the restoration that are pictured in the dream are from God. So, by forgetting the interpreter for whom he and the baker were looking, remember earlier on, where we don't have an interpreter, he forgot the interpreter, therefore he forgets the dream, he forgets the God who provided the interpretation and ultimately the God who provides the deliverance.

So then it came to pass, chapter 41 verse 1 of Genesis, it came to pass at the end of two full years that Pharaoh had a dream, and behold, he stood by the river, out of the river come seven cows, fine looking and fat, they fed in the meadow. Then behold, seven other cows came up after them out of the river, ugly and gaunt, and stood by the other cows on the bank of the river. The ugly and gaunt cows ate up the seven fine looking cows, and the fine looking and fat cows, Pharaoh woke up.

He slept and dreamed a second time. Two dreams in the same night, very similar to what we just covered, slept and dreamed a second time. Suddenly, seven heads of grain came up on one stalk, plump and good.

Then behold, seven thin heads, blighted by the east wind, sprang up after them. The seven thin heads devoured the seven plump and full heads. So Pharaoh awoke and indeed, a dream.

Now it came to pass in the morning that his spirit was troubled, and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt and all its wise men. Pharaoh told them his dreams, but there was no one who could interpret them for Pharaoh. Then the chief cupbearer spoke to Pharaoh saying, I remember my faults this day.

I forgot, but now I remember. When Pharaoh was angry with his servants and put me in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, both me and the chief baker, we each had a dream in one night, he and I. Each of us dreamed according to the interpretation of his dream. Now there was a young Hebrew man with us there, a servant of the captain of the guard, and we told him, and he interpreted our dreams for us, to each man he

interpreted according to his dream.

And it came to pass, just as he interpreted for us, so it happened. He restored me to my office, and he hanged him." Look at the wording of that verse. Look at verse 13.

"...as he interpreted for us, so it happened. He, Joseph, restored me to my office, and he, Joseph, hanged him." The interpretation of the dream was so certain, it was as though Joseph himself had brought about the result. Of all of the possible ways this could have been written and could have been recounted by the cupbearer, how significant is this? Joseph is intrinsically involved not only in the interpretation, but in the fulfillment.

He promoted me. He hanged him. "...then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him quickly out of the dungeon.

He shaved, changed his clothing, and came to Pharaoh. Pharaoh said to Joseph, I've had a dream. There's no one to interpret it.

I've heard it said that you can understand a dream to interpret it. What does Joseph say? Same thing he told the baker and the cupbearer. It is not in me.

God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace, or a favorable answer. Pharaoh said to Joseph, Behold my dream. He recounts the two dreams.

Joseph, in verse 25, said to Pharaoh, The dreams of Pharaoh are one. God has shown Pharaoh what he is about to do. And you know the story from here that it represents seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine.

And there is so much here in terms of Joseph being the means by which the people of Egypt themselves ultimately are redeemed. They are purchased by Pharaoh. They are granted life in exchange for redemption.

They belong to Pharaoh. They sell themselves and everything they have to Pharaoh through Joseph. But we're focusing here on the beginning of chapter 41.

It came to pass at the end of two full years. You get the idea that Joseph stopped short after having interpreted for the cupbearer and the baker of recognizing that the dream also had a pertinence for him. Within three days, these two heads are going to be lifted up.

And within three years, Joseph's head will be lifted up. So after at the end of two full years, early in the third year, Joseph emerges from his death at the hands of his brothers to kingship second only to Pharaoh himself. And it is the administration of Pharaoh's kingdom.

I just want to read the end of this chapter and pay attention to the words of Pharaoh in verse 37. Because Joseph says in verse 34, let Pharaoh do this as a result of what these

dreams mean. Select a discerning and wise man, set him over the land of Egypt.

Let Pharaoh do this. Let him appoint officers over the land of Egypt to collect one-fifth of the produce of the land in Egypt in the seven plentiful years. Let them gather all the food of those good years that are coming.

Store up grain under the authority of Pharaoh. Let them keep food in the cities. That food shall be as a reserve for the land for seven years of famine, which shall be in the land of Egypt, that the land may not perish during the famine.

So the advice was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, in the eyes of all his servants. Pharaoh said to his servants, Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom is the Spirit of God? Pharaoh said to Joseph, Inasmuch as God has shown you all this, there is no one as discerning and wise as you. You shall be over my house, and all my people shall be ruled according to your word.

Only in regard to the throne will I be greater than you. Pharaoh said to Joseph, See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt. Pharaoh took his signet ring off his hand, and put it on Joseph's hand, clothed him in garments of fine linen, and put a gold chain around his neck.

The two sets of clothing, I could expound on this for another hour. What's the first garment of Joseph that occurs in this story? Joseph's actual father favors him and grants him a coat, the coat of many colors, as we've come to know it. It is that coat that is returned to Jacob stained in blood.

Now, his father in Egypt, Pharaoh, grants him garments of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck. We've just seen this gold chain around the neck in Proverbs, what wisdom and knowledge and understanding will do for God's people. It will be an ornament of gold around your neck, an ornament of silver.

He had him ride in the second chariot which he had, and they cried out before him, He set him over all the land of Egypt. Pharaoh also said to Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without your consent, no man may lift his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt. Then he's called Zaphnath-Paneah, and he is 30 years old, verse 46, when he stood before Pharaoh, king of Egypt.

How old was Jesus when he began his ministry? Thirty years of age. And down in verse 50, you find the birth of Manasseh and Ephraim and so on. You see here an anticipation of the millennial kingdom, where God puts all the kingdoms of the earth, the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ.

And he will reign forever. He will rule for the thousand years of the millennium. And the Lord Jesus Christ is the visible acting ruler.

All authority, Jesus says, has been given to me in heaven and on earth, in Matthew 28, where we will soon be. All authority has been given to me. So much Christology here, but the attachment point from our passage is the bread and the cup, the bread and the cup.

As you move forward, and I will just say that the timing here, within three days, the fate of the cupbearer and the butler are decided. Within two years, after two years, and within three years, Joseph's own fate is everlastingly changed. In thinking about the dream of the cupbearer, you can go to Isaiah chapter 11, verse one, which says, there shall come forth a shoot out of the stump of Jesse and a branch out of his roots.

It is going to be a fruitful branch. You go to Isaiah 53, verse two. He is going to be a root from dry ground, from seeming hopelessness and lack of potential.

This root is going to spring forth. He is the branch. He is the netzer.

He shall be called a Nazarene. John 15, I am the vine, you are the branches. Abide in me, be fruitful.

It is a renewal of the opportunity given when man was first created. Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. Be fruitful.

Ephra, Ephraoth, Ephraim. Ephraim, when Joseph names his son, it's fruitfulnesses. It's fruits in the dual, which is the intensive plural.

The heavens are Hashemayim. So the cup theme appears again. Can you think where? As a result of Joseph's actions, Egypt is the only place one can survive.

One can receive the nourishment to live. So eventually Jacob is going to send his sons to Egypt because there is a famine in the land. So when you get to Genesis chapter 42, Joseph's brothers come and go.

We can't go into all of the details of his interactions with his brothers. I just want to focus on his insistence that they not come back unless they bring their youngest brother, Benjamin. Ben-Yamin, unless they bring the son of the right hand, who is Joseph's full brother, where the other ten are half-brothers.

Same father, different mothers. Same father, different mothers. Where does that first appear in Scripture? Who's the first person or first people you know of that had the same father but different mothers? Abraham.

Abraham, father of the impending nation of the people of God. What does he tell Abimelech? She is my sister. We've been pointing out instances of partial truth that are dangerous.

Is Sarai Abraham's sister? Yes. Is it the whole truth? No. Has Isaac been born yet when Sarai is taken into Abimelech's harem as Abraham's sister? What is the risk to the

fulfillment of God's promise if Isaac ends up being sired by Abimelech instead of Abraham? Abraham has no idea.

Why does he tell this lie? I looked around and I saw no fear of God in this place. No fear of the Lord. I've decided there's no fear of the Lord in this place.

So I'm going to take actions into my own hands. This is Jacob's constant failing. There's so many things I am trying to discipline myself to not just try to point all of them out.

You remember Pharaoh's dream. Seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine. Go back to Jacob and his two wives.

One is Leah, but the one he really wants is Rachel. Rachel is the mother of Joseph and Benjamin. How long does Jacob serve for each wife? Seven years.

Two sets of seven. Deliverance is going to come through the line by Rachel. Without Joseph, they die of famine.

Joseph wants Benjamin to come back. And remember, Simeon is held captive. The brothers don't go back because they found the money in their sack and they're afraid they're going to be accused of being thieves.

And they delay and delay and delay. Ultimately, when they're arguing with their father and they say, well, it's time to go back, but we can't go back without Benjamin. And Jacob adamantly refuses.

He's the child of my old age, just as Isaac was the child of Abraham's old age. I mean, the interweaving of these things is so profound. Zachariah and Elizabeth, John the But when you get to the arrival of Benjamin, eventually Jacob relents.

And poor Simeon has been down there living in the lap of luxury, but he's in prison. Kind of like Joseph was in prison, but he's in the prison keeper's house. And no doubt that was pretty plush.

So if you're going to be in prison, at least be comfortable. Simeon's been down there imprisoned, but he's pretty comfortable. And so in chapter 43, the famine was severe and they'd eaten up the grain they brought from Egypt.

Go back and buy some food. Judah said, the man warned us, we can't go back without Benjamin. Long story short, verse 13, take your brother also arise, go back to the man.

May God Almighty give you mercy before the man that he may release your other brother and Benjamin. I am bereaved. If I am bereaved, I am bereaved.

We're just going to have to risk a loss. So the men took the present and Benjamin. You remember this, that they come and are invited to a feast in verse 23.

Peace be with you. Do not be afraid. Your God and the God of your father has given you treasure in your sacks.

I had your money, says the steward. When they confess and say, we found the money in our sacks. So the man brought the man into Joseph's house.

Verse 24, this is 43, 24 in Genesis. The man brought the man into Joseph's house and gave them water and they washed their feet. These men come into Joseph's presence and Joseph's servant washes their feet.

They made the present ready for Joseph's coming at noon. They heard that they would eat bread there. They're going to eat bread in Joseph's presence.

When Joseph came home, they brought him the present, which was in their house. This is almonds and cakes and figs and dates and things that they brought and bowed down before him to the earth. He asked them about their wellbeing.

Is your father well? The old man of whom you spoke, is he still alive? They said, your servant, our father is in good health. He is still alive. They bowed their heads down and prostrated themselves.

He lifted his eyes and saw his brother, Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, is this your younger brother of whom you spoke to me? He said, God be gracious to you. My son, his heart yearned for his brother. So Joseph made haste and sought somewhere to weep.

And he wept, went into his chamber and wept there, yearning for his brother. He wept. You can think of occasions where Jesus wept.

Then he washed his face, came out, restrained himself and said, serve the bread, serve the bread. We are going to break bread together, together, but separate. So they set him a place by himself, they, by themselves and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves, because Egyptians could not eat food with the Egyptians.

And you think about the self-righteous separation that the Pharisees are going to practice with the Gentiles and the unwashed sinners. They got there late to the party. The Egyptians thought the Hebrews were filthy and not worthy to be eaten with.

It was an abomination to be anywhere near them. These Egyptians in this context are probably scratching their heads thinking, how can Joseph abide them? But they sat before him, the firstborn, according to his birthright and the youngest, according to his youth. And the men looked in astonishment at one another, because Joseph remembers what they have forgotten.

And he seats them according to their birth. They should have gotten a clue. How could he know this? But it doesn't impinge, it doesn't penetrate.

They don't say, wait a minute, how does he know this? They are just astonished. But their astonishment doesn't convert to understanding. So often the case with the nation of Israel and so often the case with the individual believer who follows the pattern of national Israel as presented in the Old Testament.

He took servings to them from before him, but Benjamin's serving was five times as much as any of theirs. What did they do? He took servings, but what is the verb here? They drank and were merry with him. Some translations mess up this merriment and say they feasted.

It doesn't mean feast. They drank and got tipsy with him. They drank the wine to the full.

Bread was set before them and the cup was placed before them. They ate and they drank in his presence. What happened at Mount Sinai when the 70 elders go up the mountain? They eat and drink in God's presence.

Here the brothers specifically eat and drink in their brother Joseph's presence, but they don't see him for who he is. The elders didn't see God. All they can remember is the glassy sea under his feet.

They don't perceive God. They see him, but they don't see him. Joseph's brothers see him, but they don't see him.

Jesus tells the leadership in Israel over and over again, if you knew my father, you would know me. If you listened to my father, you would listen to me. They don't figure it out.

You remember how this story proceeds? When they leave with their sacks full of grain so that they can go home and make more bread, what happens? All of the money from the first purchase, all of the money from the second purchase, which is silver, is in the sacks. And what else? Verse 4 of chapter 44, when they had gone out of the city and were not yet far off, Joseph said to his steward, get up, follow the men. And when you overtake them, say to them, why have you repaid evil for good? Why is he doing this? Look up at verse 2, put my cup, the silver cup in the mouth of the sack of the youngest and his grain money.

So Joseph's steward puts Joseph's cup of all of the items that were in this profusely furnished Egyptian domicile. He is the most powerful man in Egypt, say Pharaoh himself. Do you think he's got knickknacks and trinkets and candlesticks and bowls and dishes and items of every kind of all of the possible things to put in the sack of Benjamin? What gets put there? The cup.

And this is not just any old cup. So in verse 6, the steward overtakes them and he spoke to them these same words, say to them, why have you repaid evil for good? Is not this, I'm reading verse 5, is not this the cup from which my Lord drinks and with which he indeed practices divination? This word for divination is real close to the word for snake.

It's Nahash, Nahash, N-A-C-H-A-S-H, divination.

And it's prohibited in the law of Moses, those who practice divination. This word has only been used once, previous to this chapter in Genesis. You'll never guess where.

If you go back to the days when Jacob is working for his uncle Laban in chapter 30, verse 25, it came to pass when Rachel had born Joseph, no accident. This is Genesis 30, verse 25. It came to pass when Rachel had born Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, send me away that I may go to my own place and to my country.

Joseph has been born, but not Benjamin. Jacob now has 11 sons. Joseph is born.

Rachel has not had Benjamin yet. So he says to Laban, give me my wives and my children for whom I have served you and let me go. You know my service, which I've done for you.

Laban said, stay. I found favor in your eyes. I've learned by experience that the Lord has blessed me for your sake.

In verse 27, when Laban says to him, please, if I have found favor in your eyes, I have learned by experience, it's not experience. I have learned by divination. I have learned by nakash is the verb from which this noun comes.

I have learned by divination that the Lord has blessed me for your sake. Do you think the sons of Jacob know this story? Do you think in their long years of dwelling with their father in the land, that Jacob has never told the story of how he came to marry their mothers and how they came to be born and his time with Laban and that these words that are recorded in Genesis have come down from the recollections of Jacob's sons? Do you think they knew this story? Do you think they knew this word that Laban, it's the only time previous to this in Genesis that it occurs. I have learned by divination that God has blessed me for your sake.

Think about the phrase, God has blessed me on account of you. Laban says, I have been blessed because of you, Jacob. Now Joseph tells his steward to tell his brothers, this is the cup by which my master divines.

What is their only knowledge of what divination does? Divination told Laban that he is blessed for Jacob's sake. Joseph is giving them a clue with the words associated with this cup that they are being blessed for, Joseph has been blessed for their sake. They are Jacob's offspring.

And Joseph says, I have been blessed for your sake. You are blessed because I have been blessed. You have money in your sack.

This cup is the symbol. We have shared bread and wine together and you are receiving

this blessing because of your association with me and I have been blessed for your sake. It's very interesting the link between these two words and between this cup.

So the cup once again has made an issue of all possible things that could have been put. He could have put five times the silver in Benjamin's sack, but he specifically puts in the cup. And of course this sparks the return.

They open their sacks in verse 11. The steward searches and he begins with the oldest left off with the youngest and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. Verse 13, they tore their clothes and each man loaded his donkey and returned to the city.

Judah and his brothers come back and what deed is this you have done? Did you not know that such a man as I can certainly practice divination that I would know? Judah said, what shall we say to my Lord? What shall we speak? How shall we clear ourselves? God has found out the iniquity of your servants. Here we are, my Lord's slaves, both we and he also with whom the cup was found. Far be it from me that I should do so.

The man in whose hand the cup was found, he shall be my servant. As for you, go in peace to your father. And you know what ensues with Judah offering to redeem his brother Benjamin and stand in the place of Benjamin.

But once again, the cup is made an issue. When Jesus takes the cup and tells his disciples, this cup is the new covenant in my blood. There is life.

What does the old Testament tell us about blood and flesh and life? The life of the flesh is in the blood. Jesus bore our sins where? According to Peter, he bore our sins in his own body on the tree. The baker's body consumed as a penalty and the satisfaction of the justice of Pharaoh, the body of the Lord Jesus is sacrificed.

And by identification, by consuming symbolically that body, the satisfaction of justice. But do we have redemption through his body? Do we have forgiveness of sins through his body? What does Ephesians 1.7 say? In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins. His body and his blood are separate.

The bread and the cup are separate. One speaks of death. The other speaks of life.

Do any of the resurrection passages, any of the rapture passages, any of the future life with God passages talk about our blood being brought back to us? What is it that we leave behind? The body. The body of this flesh is left behind. We are transformed and given a new body.

We are transformed in the moment in the twinkling of an eye. And the life that comes through the blood of Christ gives us a new incorruptible body, not the corruptible bread of this flesh. So many profound issues at stake here to reflect on.

But going to Joseph, you can pound the tent pegs in that enable understanding much of the rest of what is spoken of. Turn with me real quickly to Hosea, chapter 5. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, chapter 5, verse 14. God says, speaking of Judah and Ephraim, you can go back to the preceding context.

I don't have time to review it, but please do this in your spare time. I will be like a lion to Ephraim and like a young lion to the house of Judah. I, even I, will tear them and go away.

I will take them away and no one shall deliver, no one shall rescue, no one shall save. I will return again to my place until they acknowledge their offense. Then they will seek my face.

In their affliction, they will earnestly seek me. Remember, it is not until Joseph's brothers acknowledge their offense in selling their brother into slavery. Joseph surveys the presence of the 11 when Benjamin is there, and he says, did you not have another brother? And they ultimately confess that they did.

When they acknowledge their offense, then they will seek my face. In their affliction, they will earnestly seek me. In the days of the famine, they come, they acknowledge their offense, and it is through that that the brothers of Joseph, the sons of Jacob, and indeed the impending and incumbent and nascent nation of Israel will ultimately find its foundation.

But look at chapter 6 now. Come and let us return to the Lord, for He has torn, but He will heal us. He has stricken, but He will bind us up.

After two days, He will revive us. On the third day, He will raise us up, that we may live in His sight. After two days, the cupbearer is restored.

After two days, the baker is hung on a tree and his flesh is eaten by the birds. After two years, Joseph is restored. In the third year, he is lifted up and made second only to Pharaoh.

For this reason, God has highly exalted the Lord Jesus Christ and given Him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. How does it end? To the glory of God the Father. To the glory of God the Father.

It is all ultimately about the Father. So much here to reflect on. I just want to close with a quick side note.

That's the end of our Bible study. But I have mentioned in the past, this is by way of observing current events. Most of what you hear in the news is quite myopic.

If it's not the war between Ukraine and Russia, it is the aftermath and fallout in our economy and the wiggling tail of the COVID disaster and the consequences of our responses to it. And because of that, there is international news and international situations that is getting short shrift. I mentioned the pipeline, which would have solved a lot of the problems in terms of energy shortage and high fuel prices that Israel was trying to run.

And they were going to run it under the Mediterranean Sea and up into the southern regions of Europe. You remember what stopped that? Erdogan. Erdogan got in cahoots with Mr. Biden and that pipeline was blocked.

You never hear about it in the news. So speaking of Erdogan, let me bend your ear for just a few minutes and let me ask you this. How many of you have heard of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization? SCO.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Ever heard of it? It is one of the biggest deals on the planet, and our news is entirely ignoring it. Let me tell you a little bit about the SCO.

This is a news story from September 20th. If you dig, you can find this information. Ahead of his visit to New York to attend the UN General Assembly, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan signaled that NATO member Turkey is targeting membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, SCO, a platform dominated by Russia and China.

This organization began in the 90s as the Shanghai Five. It was founded as an alternative and opposite to NATO, and it is Russia and China, and Turkey now is angling to become an official member. Once in the United States, Erdogan repeated the same message that he has signaled in other contexts, even on the PBS NewsHour.

Asked by Judy Woodruff how Turkey can reconcile its possible membership in the SCO, an organization whose members include China, Russia, and in 2023, Iran, with their membership in NATO, Erdogan replied that Turkey positions itself as a global rather than a Western or Eastern power. We don't only want to be NATO. We don't only want to be SCO.

We want to be global. The European Union has kept us a strong country at its gates for 52 years. The EU has not admitted Turkey.

They're in NATO, but they're not in the EU. And for 52 years, the EU has kept them out. It's amazing that the EU has been around that long.

It is natural that we are looking at other alternatives. So if that is not enough, Iran is going to be officially recognized and a part of it next year. Experts say, given that the Western world's outlook to Russia, particularly after its invasion of Ukraine and toward China, you cannot claim to be a member of both organizations and claim to have an

equilibrium policy.

Erdogan is the sole decision maker in foreign policy for Turkey, so most everything in Turkey's external policymaking system seems to be geared toward keeping Erdogan in power. His pragmatism is sometimes referred to as equilibrium policy, but the fact remains that some foreign policy decisions are mutually exclusive, adding that membership to SCO while trying to maintain membership in NATO is one. Not only that, but Syria, Egypt, and Israel have formally applied for membership in SCO.

The SCO's current six permanent members are Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, China, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. In addition to the six permanent members, observer countries include Afghanistan, India, Mongolia, Pakistan, and Iran. They are observer nations.

Iran is going to become a full-fledged member next year. So I just say this to say, when we were pointing out Erdogan as somebody to watch some months back, don't forget to watch. There is a realignment of power taking place in Europe and the Middle East that is foreshadowed, that will ultimately find itself to be a fulfillment of what we have studied in Old Testament prophecy.

So keep your eye on Mr. Erdogan. Where is Satan's seat? We are told twice in Revelation. Turkey.

Don't forget to watch. Look up the SCO. It's a fascinating history, background, and their purposes.

Iran is providing weaponry to Russia to attack Ukraine. And Ukraine has been soliciting help from Israel with their Iron Dome, I think it's called. They've got a missile defense that is unrivaled.

But contention over Israel and their technology is going to produce great tension between NATO and Israel's ally, the United States, and those in the conflict over there that want to obtain, leverage, neutralize, or otherwise interest themselves in Israel and their strategic advantage. So something to watch just by way of observing the signs of the times, shall we say. Let's close here in a word of prayer.

Father, we thank you for the truth of your word. We thank you for the richness we find in the Lord Jesus Christ and the wonderful truths that are our inheritance. They are our daily bread.

They fuel our hope. They motivate us to faith and obedience in this life as we anticipate the next. We pray that as we seek to refine our perception and our skill for living in the light of your plan and purpose, that your Holy Spirit will impress these truths on our hearts in a way that is meaningful and motivating, that we can see clearly how we can best serve, how we can best represent the Lord Jesus Christ as his body on this earth in

the time that remains to us before his return to take us to himself and present us in your presence.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.