

Blessed and a Blessing

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[0 : 0 0] All right. Well, good morning, church. Thank you for being here this morning. How many of y'all think the devil messes with the technology sometimes?

We had a little kind of half concert, half participation, and that's all right. But thank y'all for worshiping with us, even when it's not all working according to plan. Genesis chapter 42 this morning. Genesis chapter 42.

Genesis chapter 42. We are finishing our series this morning on the life of Joseph. Principles from the life of Joseph.

Meant for good. What do we mean by that? We find it in our series text in Genesis 50, but we'll get there in just a moment. But I want to do a little bit of a recap of what we have learned over the past four weeks in the life, from the life of Joseph. Week one, we talked about how he was favored but fallen. He was the favorite son of his father, Jacob, his mother, Rachel. And then he was fallen from his high position in that family, even as the youngest son with 10 older brothers.

He was bottom of the pecking order, but he was lifted up, showed all kinds of favoritism. And the takeaway from our sermon in week one was pride and envy can be warning signs, but the start of Joseph's story points us to Jesus. And all throughout the story of Joseph, we are pointed to the Son of God himself. Because Joseph was what we call a type of Christ. Someone in the Old Testament whose attributes in their life would point us forward to the coming of Jesus Christ. They were not God, were not Jesus, but they were someone who would point us forward to and remind us of certain attributes of Jesus Christ himself. And then in week two, we talked about how Joseph was tempted and tried. Tempted and tried. A man, he had befallen so much evil at the hands of his brothers, and then he was sold as a slave into Egypt, and he landed in the house of Potiphar, the captain of the guard, started doing well, started getting elevated to the highest position as a slave. He could hold in Potiphar's house, and then he was tempted by his master's wife, unjustly accused of sin, which he did not give in to that temptation. But instead, even though he did not give in to that temptation, he was still punished for it and thrown into prison. And so the takeaway was that the trials God allows in your life and mine are always designed to draw us into closer relationship with him. Because we see that in the meantime of that prison sentence that Joseph had to endure, he was faithful, but not forgotten. Boy, I'm sorry, faithful, but forgotten. Of course, he was never forgotten by God, but he was forgotten seemingly by everyone else, even the butler or the cupbearer whose life he saved, whose interpretation of his dream came true, and he was freed from prison, but he was still forgotten by this man. So he had to sit in prison for two years, faithful, but forgotten. And our takeaway was to let your season of divine delay make a discernible difference in how you live your faith. We see that in the life of Joseph. Don't waste this season of delay. And then last Sunday, we saw Joseph filled and fruitful. Finally, his time came. His time came, and he was released from prison after he interpreted

[4 : 0 1] Pharaoh's dreams accurately. He gave all the glory to God for this, said, I can't do it, but God can. And so our takeaway was that God can do whatever I cannot do. And when I'm empty, he fills me. When I am empty, then I'm filled with the Spirit of God, and then God can work through me to accomplish what I cannot.

So we see Joseph filled with God's Spirit, even by Pharaoh's own testimony. Man, I've never seen anybody filled with such a Spirit of God, someone who wasn't even a believer, a follower of Jesus, or God himself, the one true God, recognized that this man was different. So today, we're looking at Joseph, blessed and a blessing. Blessed and a blessing. Let's read our text together from the screen, if you can, our series text, Genesis 50 and verse 20. Ready? You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to save many people. Let's do it one more time. You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to save many people. Now today, I'm going to preach through eight

chapters, all right?

See, y'all buckle up. We'll get out of here about four o'clock. That's a joke. All right, here we go. First off, we have Joseph released from prison, interpreted the dream of Pharaoh correctly.

Pharaoh is blown away by God's presence in his life, his power exhibited through Joseph, and he says, I've never seen a man like this, and he elevates him to second in command over all of Egypt. God has finally visibly blessed Joseph in such a unique and special way. And now, in chapter 42, we pivot again, because there was famine in the land, wasn't there? Just like God predicted through the mouth of Joseph, there's going to be seven years of plenty, so store up all the food you can, because seven years of famine are coming when there is no food. I was looking through some of the children's question time, and we didn't have time in the service to do that today. We'll probably bring it in again very soon, but I wanted to draw attention to this one question that came in. They said, what does the word famine mean? So famine, somebody tell me, what does famine mean? No food, right? Pretty simple explanation.

So whichever kid wrote that question, there's your answer. It means no food. There's no food anywhere. Usually across an entire area, there's no crops. There's no grain. There's no corn, wheat, rice, etc.

[6 : 43] Nothing is growing, and so there's no food, very little food to eat. But according to the wisdom of Joseph that came from God and was accepted by Pharaoh, Joseph's plan was put into place, and Egypt had plenty of food stored up to last them through this famine, not just for them, but for the surrounding countries. So we pick it up in chapter 42, and Jacob learns that there was grain in Egypt.

There's food in Egypt. So he said to his sons, why do you keep looking at each other? Listen, I've heard there's food in Egypt. Go down there and buy some for us so we'll live and not die. That's always the goal, to live and not die, right? Am I alone in that? Y'all with me? Come on, people, let's go. Here we go.

Ten of Joseph's brothers went down to buy grain from Egypt. Notice only ten went. Who didn't go? Benjamin, the youngest brother that was born after Joseph had left the house, was made to leave the house, and Joseph had never met him, right? Jacob did not send Joseph's brother Benjamin with his brothers because he thought something might happen to him. Well, he had good reason to think that because the youngest son, something had already happened to him, right? He said, we're not doing this again, so I'm keeping Benjamin back. So he sends the brothers down to Egypt, and they come down to buy food there, and what happens? His brother came, his brothers came and bowed down before Joseph with their faces to the ground. They didn't know who he was. He looked so different. He'd been Egyptianized, probably, with his haircut, with the clothes he wore. He had aged, obviously, from the time they last saw him. They had no clue that this was their brother, the grand vizier of Egypt. So imagine this scene. Joseph is sitting here. Another group comes in asking for food from another country, as was happening all the time these days, because the famine was all throughout this region of the world. And they're all coming to seek food from Joseph, and he has to give his okay to every one of them. So they get an audience with Joseph, and they come, and they bow their faces to the ground, and he saw them, and he recognized them. But he treated them like strangers, just like he would anybody else. And he says, where do you come from? From the land of Canaan to buy food.

And he says, you're spies. You've come to see the weakness of our land. No, my lord, your servants have come to buy food. We're all sons of one man. We're honest. Your servants are not spies.

And he's probably thinking, yeah, how honest exactly are you? No, you've come to see the weakness of the land. No, no, no. We, your servants, are 12 brothers, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan. The youngest is now with our father, and one is no longer living. Can you imagine Joseph's reaction internally as they tell the story?

[9 : 56] No longer living? Yeah, there's a little more to the story there, my brothers. Joseph says to them, I have spoken. You are spies. This is how you'll be tested. As surely as Pharaoh lives, you will not leave this place unless your youngest brother comes here. You see Joseph's playing. I have a brother. I have another brother, and he's not one of you guys. Wonderful. I got to meet this kid, but he can't say that. So he's got to, he's got to work it according to his plan here.

Send one from among you to get your brother. The rest of you will be imprisoned. I'm going to give you a little taste of my medicine so that your words can be tested to see if they're true. If not, then

as surely as Pharaoh lives, you are spies. So he imprisoned them together for three days. He's probably thinking, guys, I made it there for years. You can handle it for a few days. You'll be all right. On the third day, Joseph says to them, I fear God. Do this and you will live. If you are honest, let one of you be confined to the guardhouse. The rest of you goes and takes the grain to relieve the hunger of your households. So it seems like none of the brothers stepped forward to say, okay, I'll be the one to go back and get Benjamin. You know why? Because nobody wanted to face Jacob and try to get Benjamin to leave him and go to Egypt. There's no way somebody wanted to step forward and volunteer for that task. There's no way Jacob was going to release Benjamin, his new youngest son, to go out on this long journey where something could happen to him.

So he says, okay, now one of you stay and the rest of you go back and bring your youngest brother so your words can be confirmed. Otherwise, I believe you're spies. These guys are losing it at this point. This did not go how we thought it was going to go. We heard that if you just go to Egypt and ask for food, they'll give you food. And now he's given us the runaround.

He's accusing us of spies, being spies, and all this has just gotten so much more complicated. So they said, obviously, we're being punished for what we did to our brother. Huh? You think?

We saw his deep distress when he pleaded with us, but we would not listen. That is why this trouble has come to us. At least they got self-aware at this point, right? All these years ago, and now they're finally coming back to, guys, we might have messed up. This might not have been the best idea to kidnap our brother, think about killing him, and then sell him into slavery.

[12:48] Well, did you think that was a... Yeah, I'm glad you finally figured out that wasn't the best plan. So Reuben steps forward and says, didn't I tell you not to harm the boy? If you just want to listen to me back then, I don't think that's exactly how it went, but close enough. But you wouldn't listen.

Now we must account for his blood. They didn't realize that Joseph is sitting here listening and understanding this entire conversation. But of course, he had only spoken to them before through an interpreter as he was speaking Egyptian. By the way, there's no longer a language called Egyptian. It's a dead language. But back then, that's what they spoke. I don't know any Egyptian. I'm sorry. I never learned that in seminary. They didn't teach it. But at this moment, he's watching what's going on, and he turns away from them, and he can't hold the tears back anymore. And so he hides his face. And then he turns back after he's wiped away his tears, and he takes Simon from the... Simeon, I'm sorry, from the crowd, and has him bound in chains before their eyes. And then he gives the order, watch this, to fill their containers with grain, and then return each man's silver, his payment for the food, back to his sack, and then give them supplies for their journey. So the order was carried out. They loaded the grain of their donkeys and left there. So the brothers are now leaving Egypt. Simeon is staying as a prisoner. They're going back to get Benjamin and bring him back, try to convince Jacob to let him go. One of them, they spent the night, they stopped for the night, and he looks in his bag and sees the silver lying there. And he says, my silver has been returned. It's here in the bag. And it says their hearts sank. They're thinking, oh great, what happened here? Somebody messed up, and we're going to get blamed for it.

Their hearts sank. They turned to one another and said, what is this that God has done to us? Now finally, they're starting to recognize God's sovereignty over all things. What is God doing to us? He's going to get us in so much trouble with the Egyptians. And finally, they get home, and they reach their father, Jacob, and they tell him all that happened to them.

And there's the man who's lord of this country spoke harshly to us, accused us of spying, but we told him we're honest and not spies. And they tell the tale. And he said, this is how I know if you're honest. Leave your brother with me. Take food to relieve the hunger of your households, and go and bring back your youngest brother. And then I'll know you're not spies, but honest men.

[15:29] And then I'll give your brother back to you, and you can trade in this country. They emptied their sacks, and they found that every one of them had their money returned. And they were so scared, afraid, terrified. And their father, Jacob, says, it's me that you make childless. Joseph is gone. Simeon is gone. Now you want to take Benjamin.

Everything happens to me. Jacob is having a meltdown here, having a little pity party for a moment. Understandable, right? He's about to lose maybe his third child. Reuben says, you can kill my two sons if I don't bring him back to you. Put Benjamin in my care. I'll return him to you. Jacob says, no, can't do it. I won't let him go. Now, time passes. Simeon's still in prison. Nobody's gone back to Egypt because Jacob won't let Benjamin go. In chapter 43, the famine gets worse. The famine of

the land was severe. They used up all the grain that they brought back from Egypt. And his father said, go back and buy more. Judah says, we can't go back. And thus, we bring Benjamin with us. He won't sell us any more food. He'll throw us in prison, accuse us of being spies again. Jacob says, called Israel, by the way. God had changed his name to Israel. And he says, why did you tell the man you had another brother? What were you thinking? He says, they kept asking us about our family and is your father still alive? Do you have a brother? I don't remember that being in the record here. Now, maybe they didn't put everything that Joseph said in here. So, we got one of two choices. Either we don't know that

Joseph asked him that or Judah's making it up. Well, he was pushing us for info, dad. And we answered him accordingly. How could we know that he would say, bring your brother here? So, Judah said to his father Israel, apparently, when Reuben offered, Jacob wasn't interested. When Judah offered, Jacob finally gave in. And he said, send the boy with me. We'll be on our way so that we may live and not die. Neither we nor you nor our dependents. I'll be responsible for him. You can hold me personally accountable.

He didn't offer to have his sons killed. Grateful for that, especially since Jesus was going to come from his line. If I do not bring him back to you and set him before you, I'll be guilty forever.

However, if we had not delayed, we would have come back twice by now. We should have gone already, dad. Father Israel says to him, it must be so. Then do this. Take some gifts. Take the best that our land has to offer. A little balsam, honey, aromatic gum and resin, pistachios, almonds. Take twice as much money as was in your bags when you came back. Return this plus interest, guys. This is how you need to handle this. And may God cause this man to be merciful to you. So they go, they do it.

[18:42] They bring the money back twice the amount that they, that was in their bags. They bring Benjamin, they bring the gifts, and they immediately went down to Egypt and stood before Joseph. And Joseph finally gets to see Benjamin. And he says to his servant, take these guys to my house. Kill an animal, prepare it, and we're going to have a big feast at noon. The man did what Joseph said.

Brought him to Joseph's house. And these guys are getting nervous. They were afraid because they were taken to this great man's house. They said, we've been brought here because of the silver that was in our bags the first time. They're going to overpower us, seize us, make us their slaves, and take our donkeys. Why they were so worried about the donkeys. But anyway, so they approached Joseph's steward and spoke to him at the doorway of the house. They said, my Lord, we really did come down here the first time only to buy food. When we came to the place that we were lodged for the night, opened our bags of grain, each one silver was at the top of his bag. They said, it wasn't our fault. We didn't do this. Now we brought additional silver to buy food. We brought the full amount back and we brought more. We don't know who put it in our bags. And the servant says, relax guys, don't be afraid. That's me paraphrasing. Okay. That's not what my Bible says, but I'm just paraphrasing. Y'all stick with me. Your God and the God of your father. Ooh, little clue there.

Your God and the God of your father must have put treasure in your bags. I received your silver. That's interesting. How does this guy know about their God? Maybe because it was Joseph's God too.

The steward brought the men into Joseph's house, gave them water to wash their feet, and got feed for their donkeys. And they'd heard that there was going to be a meal there. They prepared their gift for when Joseph was going to arrive. He comes home. They bring in the gift they'd carried into the house and they bowed down before him. And he asked if they were well.

How is your elderly father you told me about? Is he still alive? Our father's well. He's still alive. Joseph. And they look up. Joseph looks up and he sees Benjamin. And he says, is this your youngest brother that you told me about? He said, yes. He said, may God be gracious to you, my son.

[21:00] And Joseph, that's all he would get out. He got so emotional. He sees this brother he didn't even know existed. And he comes, he leaves the room, weeps, cries, washes his face, regains his composure, and comes back and says, serve the meal. They served him by himself, his brothers by themselves, and the Egyptians eating over here because Egyptians would not eat with Hebrews since that was detestable to them. There was racism even back then, okay? Egyptians, Hebrews, nah, we're not gonna eat with those guys. They didn't know that Joseph was also

Hebrew, right? They were seated before him in order by age from the firstborn to the youngest. Then the men looked at each other in astonishment because portions of food were brought to them from Joseph's table. And Benjamin's portion was five times larger than anybody else. He's like, I got a lot of spoiling to do of my little brother here. Gotta catch up.

They drank and became drunk with Joseph. That is not an okay to go out and get drunk, okay? Folks, don't do that. Chapter 44, Joseph commands his servant, fill the men's bag with as much food as they can carry, and once again put each one's silver at the top of his bag. And then put my cup, my personal royal cup, this big silver cup, at the top of the youngest one's bag along with the silver for his grain. He's setting them up again. So it happens again. They leave the next morning. They hadn't gone very far. Joseph sends his servant, get up, go after him, stop him, and say, why have you repaid my kindness with evil? What in the world? I was so nice to you guys, and now you stole my cup.

What have you done? It's wrong. And so it happens. He goes. He overtakes them, comes back, and says, guys, I can't believe you did this. My master was so nice to you, and then you stole his royal cup.

How could you? He says, the one whose bag we find this in, he's coming back as a slave. And the brothers are all denying this. What? We didn't steal anything. Are you crazy? There's no way we would do that. He was so nice to us. Tell you what, search our bags. Search our bags. You won't find anything.

Fine. We agree to your terms. The one whose bag you find this in, he can be the slave of Joseph. Of course, they find it in Benjamin's bag. And then they had been riding so high. Everything was so great. And then it all fell apart. It all crumbled. What? Benjamin? How in the world? And what happens?

[23 : 51] Judah says, they get back to Egypt, and Joseph says, what is this you have done? Didn't you know a man like me could uncover the truth by divination? Like, guys, I interpret dreams. You didn't think I knew that you stole my cup? He's putting it on for him. Judah says, what can we say? How can we plead? How can we justify ourselves? God has exposed your servant's iniquity. We're now your Lord's slaves, both we and the one in whose possession the cup was found. And Joseph says, I swear I will not do this.

Only the man whose possession the cup was found will be my slave. The rest of you can go in peace to my father. Why do you think he did that? Because his big plan was to get his family to Egypt.

And he knew the only way that he was going to get Jacob there was to keep Benjamin. Judah approached him and said, my Lord, please let your servant speak personally to my Lord. Let me talk to you, please. Don't be angry with us, for you're like Pharaoh. You said, do we have a father or a brother? And we said, yes, we have an elderly father, a younger brother. The boy's brother is dead.

He's the only one of his mother's sons left, Rachel. His father loves him. He said, the boy cannot leave his father. If he were to leave, his father would die. Then you said, if your younger brother doesn't come down with you, you'll not see me again. So we went back, we told my dad, and he finally let him go with us. And now this has happened. And he said, so if I come to your servant, my father, and the boy's not with us, my dad's life is wrapped up in his son's life. When he sees that he's not with us, he'll die.

Please don't do this to us. So he said, I told my dad, if I don't return him to you, I'll always bear the guilt for sinning against you, my father. So please let me remain here as the Lord's slave.

[25 : 50] Judah says, in place of my brother Benjamin, let him go back with his brothers. How can I go back to my father without the boy? Could not bear to see the grief that would overwhelm him.

That did it for Joseph. He finally dropped the charade. And he could no longer keep his composure in front of all his servants. So he called out, everyone clear the room. Give me the room, please. He said, send everyone away from me. No one was with him. And then he had revealed his identity to his brothers. He wept so loudly. He cried so loudly that the Egyptians heard it outside the room. And Pharaoh's household heard it in their rooms of the palace. And Joseph said to his brothers, I'm Joseph. Is my father still living? But they couldn't even answer him. They're looking at him.

They're terrified like, what? What? He said, please come here, get close. I am Joseph, your brother. He had to tell him twice. The one you sold into Egypt. Don't be grieved or angry with yourselves for selling me here because God sent me ahead of you to preserve your life. Folks, Joseph understood

that all the trouble that had befallen him, all this hard road that he had had to walk, God had a greater purpose for it. And he's telling them, guys, you did me evil, but God, what? Meant it for good.

[27 : 22] So he says, God sent me ahead because this famine has come and he has sent me ahead to establish you as a remnant within the land to keep you alive by great deliverance. Therefore, verse eight, it was not you who sent me here, but God. What a story. What a powerful tale. It's incredible.

Now, what happens? Joseph throws his arms around his younger brother, Benjamin, weeps. Benjamin weeps on his shoulder. Joseph catches up with his brothers. Everyone's rejoicing. They can't believe that Joseph is not only alive, but he's speaking kindly to them. He's seemingly not holding a grudge.

It's blowing his mind. The news reaches Pharaoh's palace. Joseph's brothers have come, and Pharaoh was all excited. Joseph was pretty high in his estimation. He's like, I like this Joseph guy. I want to meet his brothers. This is great. He said, tell Joseph, I'm sorry, Pharaoh told Joseph, tell your brothers, go back, get your animals, get your families, get your father, come back to me. I'll give you the best land of Egypt, and you can eat from the richness of this land and take wagons from the land of Egypt. Bring everything, all your people, all your servants, all your animals.

[28 : 44] Don't be concerned about your belongings. You don't have to pack up your house. We'll give you everything you need here, and it'll be a whole lot better than what you have. He said, all the best of the land of Egypt is yours. So they did that. They brought, they came back, they brought the family, and what happens. Let's jump ahead all the way to chapter 50. Israel, Jacob is blown away. His sons come back, and they said, Jacob, Joseph's alive. While you're turning to chapter 50, I'll just read that part to you. They went up from Egypt, and they came to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan. They said, Joseph is still alive, and he's ruler over all the land of Egypt. Jacob was stunned, for he did not believe them. You think? Would you believe that little bit of information? But when they told Jacob all that Joseph has said, and he sees the wagons that Joseph had sent to transport him, his spirit is revived, and he said, enough. I get it. My son Joseph is still alive. I will go and see him before I die.

He's thinking, this journey is going to kill me, but it's worth it, because I'm going to go see my son who was dead, and now he's alive. He was lost, and now he's found. So now we get up, and they arrive in Egypt. Jacob says, Joseph, you got to come meet us. We're not coming to the palace. We're going to drop our stuff where we're going to stay, and you just got to meet us there. So they go and have this great meeting in the land of Goshen, where Pharaoh had said, this is where you should stay, since you are shepherds. And Pharaoh welcomes Jacob. He welcomes the brothers. He meets them all. He gives them a hero's welcome into Egypt. All this beautiful ending to the story was made possible because Joseph kept his faith in God. Because Joseph did not allow the evil that had come into his life to pull him away from God. So God's ending was able to be realized. God's ending came to pass.

But you and I have a hard time with that, don't we? If we will hold on and not lose our faith, then we get to experience the ending that God has.

But if we lose our faith when the storms get dark and rough, then oftentimes we miss the ending that God had for us. So I'm reminded of something else. This journey to Egypt that Jacob and his family made was because Egypt was providing a place of safety during a time of trouble for Jacob and his family.

And this was all made possible because of God's plan for Joseph. Centuries later, God had a plan for another man named Joseph. Once again, Egypt would provide a place of safety during a time of trouble as Joseph and his wife, Mary and the Christ child, Jesus would flee away from Herod and his plan to kill Jesus into the land of Egypt. So once again, God used this heathen nation to provide a place of safety that would protect the line of Jesus back in Joseph's day and then Jesus himself when Joseph and Mary fled to Egypt. God is in charge. God is sovereign and he can use anything and anybody at any time. Sometimes we look down our nose at what God chooses to use.

Sometimes we question, well that can't be part of God's plan. God can use Egypt. He can use anything to see his plan come to pass. As a Roman province under Emperor Augustus himself, God used Egypt to get, which was outside of Herod's rule. You understand that? King Herod is the one who was trying to kill Jesus and issued that terrible decree to kill all the boys two years and under. But Egypt would have been outside of

[33 : 08] Herod's rule, couldn't touch him there. And so they escaped Herod's decree of a certain and premature death for the Christ child. So this journey to Egypt holds great significance of what would later happen.

Verse, I'm sorry, you're in chapter 50 and then verse 19. Look at verse 19 to chapter 50. This is awesome, you guys. This is the end of the story. Here we go. Ready?

Ready? Let's back up to 15 first. Look at 15, verse 15, Genesis 50. Now that their father was dead. Wait, what happened? Jacob died. Jacob died. He didn't last long, but he lasted about 17 years. So he got to live about 17 years in Egypt, which in the grand scheme of things back then where people are living to be 150, 200, 300 years old. That wasn't that long. But he got to enjoy the land of Egypt. All his family, Jacob, Joseph, Benjamin, all the sons together. He got to meet his two grandsons, Manasseh and Ephraim, that were Joseph's sons. And so he gets to experience all this together. And then in verse 15, what happens? Jacob has now died. They buried him. Everything was great. But then the brothers started worrying again. When Joseph saw that their father was dead, they said to one another, if Joseph is holding a grudge against us, he's been holding this 17-year grudge, now he's certainly going to repay us for all the suffering we caused him. Maybe they thought that

Jacob was the only reason that Joseph wasn't exacting his revenge. They didn't understand still the heart of Joseph. Seemingly, they were struggling to understand still the God of Joseph and Joseph's commitment and faith in his God because they were still nervous. So they sent this message to Joseph. Joseph, before he died, your father gave a command. Say this to Joseph, please forgive your brother's transgression and their sin and the suffering they caused you. And therefore, please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father. And please don't do anything to us.

And we're really scared. And you're a really nice guy. So we believe that. So please be one. I think that was included in there somewhere. Joseph wept when their message came to him.

[35 : 49] His brothers also came to him, bowed down before him and said, we are your slaves. Joseph, please don't do anything to us. We know dad's dead now. And it seemed like that was maybe the only barrier between you and us. You hurting us. Y'all don't miss these next verses. This is the key to the whole story. This is it. You ready?

God's children are already forgiven and have nothing to fear. Joseph's brothers were already forgiven and had nothing to fear. They didn't know that.

And they allowed fear to get in their minds, their hearts, and undermine their faith in Joseph and their faith in God. They didn't know what he would do. And fear got in and messed up their relationship with Joseph. And it wasn't anything that he did. It was all in their own heads.

That is how the devil gets to you. He gets to you in your heads through fear. And he convinces you that everything is wrong. Everything is not as it should be. Something bad is going to happen. God doesn't really love you anymore.

There's all kinds of ways that the devil gets inside your minds, just like he did with these brothers. 17 years they had been with Joseph. You think he couldn't have gotten his revenge at some point? But they got this narrative in their head. Well, it was just dad. He didn't want to do anything while dad was alive. But now dad's dead. He's going to take it all out on us now.

[37 : 54] And so it completely affected their relationship with him. How many of you don't raise your hand, but how many of you can say my relationship with my heavenly father has been affected because of fear, because of uncertainty, because of doubt, time and time again in the dark of night, or sometimes in the middle of a storm that you're going through in your life, your relationship with Jesus is strained. It's affected. Your faith is undermined by this fear.

Our disciple group on Wednesday nights has been going through this book talking about faith over fear. And I can't tell you that enough that that is arguably the number one cause of doubt in your walk with Jesus is fear. But Satan is the author of fear. He is the father of fear.

And he is the father of lies. So don't believe the lies. Look at the truth, the reality of who God is, how he has treated you, how he has brought you this far, how he has blessed you. If they had stopped and looked back at the kindness that Joseph had already shown them, they could have been assured that he would never change how he treated them. So he breaks down crying, guys, I can't believe you would believe this about me. I can't believe you would think that I would do this to you. And in verse 19, don't miss this. He says, don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God?

Am I in the place of God? Church, how often do we put ourselves, our ideas, what we have constructed in our own minds, our values, in the place of God? We build up this whole world apart from God because we place ourselves in the seat of God. We give ourselves his level of power and authority.

[40 : 02] I told our starting point course this morning, we were talking about the church and according to the Bible and talking about what all that means. And we talked about the structure of the church. And we said, look, it's been said before, kind of jokingly, that if Jesus himself showed up at a church business meeting and wanted to do something apart from the bylaws, he'd get voted down.

Because we often place ourselves or our human constructs in the place of God. And all of it must come under the authority of Jesus. Joseph said, look, I have to come under the authority of Jesus. All authority has been given to me in the land of Egypt. Pharaoh has held nothing back from me. He will let me do whatever I want in this land. But I must submit myself to a higher power.

I cannot be in the place of God. What a way to respond. I'd love to think that's how I would respond if someone wronged me like he had been wronged. But I don't know. That's tough. He said, guys, don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? He didn't just say, guys, it's okay. I'm not going to hurt you. He made the point, just like he always had every step of the way to give glory to God.

At every moment when he interpreted the dreams, when he was tempted by his boss's wife, every moment of the journey, Joseph had said, I can't do this to God. This miracle comes from God.

[41 : 37] It all comes from God. He said, I am not in the place of God. You planned evil against me, verse 20. But God planned it for good. Joseph consistently chose God's truth over his own feelings. Joseph consistently chose God's truth over his own feelings. Folks, that's where we go wrong.

That's where you and I go wrong. We get seduced, sidetracked by our feelings. And instead, we need to stay steady and grounded in God's truth.

When we say steady and grounded in God's truth, then we can't be pulled aside or swayed by our feelings. James talks about that. It says, you're pulled or blown to and fro with every wind of doctrine. Everything that comes along that sounds good to you, appeals to your feelings, pulls you one way or another, and instead you stay steady and grounded on the bedrock, the firm foundation, which is God's truth. God's truth is that he loves you, he values you, he has forgiven you, and he has a plan to use you for his glory.

And when we stay grounded in that truth, then God can do powerful things that you and I cannot imagine, just like he did with Joseph.

And then verse 20. You intended to harm me, but God meant it all for good. He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people. Genesis 50, 19 through 21 are three of the most powerful verses in the story of Joseph, and that's what we're concluding with today.

[43 : 27] I am not in the place of God. Evil came against me, but God meant it for good to save many people. And I just want to remind us, God is always working behind the scenes to accomplish his purposes.

We've seen it every step of the way, haven't we? Every step of the way, God was working where Joseph didn't even know. During the two years in prison, when he was on the back of a donkey as being sold into slavery, headed toward Egypt, he didn't know what was going on, but God was working behind the scenes, arranging for him to be sold into Potiphar's house to complete the next step of the journey.

How is God working in your life? Sometimes it's easy to look back at the past and see how God connected the dots to get you where you are today or to get you where he wants you to be. But until then, until we can connect the dots, we just have to trust that he's got it all figured out.

We just have to stay walking with him and not get pulled to the side by our own feelings or our own fears. God is always working behind the scenes to accomplish his purposes.

No matter how hard Satan tries to stop you, no matter how dark the night gets, no matter how rough the opposition against you comes, God can win.

[44 : 48] Guess what? God will win. Tertullian, the great church father, wrote this many, many centuries ago. He said, Our numbers increase the more you destroy us.

The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church. You see, during that time, the church was being stamped out. That was the mission of the government, to stamp out the church.

They were literally killing Christians, people who would name the name of Jesus and identify themselves as followers of Jesus, would be subject to death. But the church was spreading like never before.

Y'all, we put our hope in elections. We put our hope in political candidates. And I'm looking back at the history of the church, and the church grew more under opposition than it did in times of peace. God's plan will win, regardless of who's in the White House. God's plan will win, regardless of whether it's legal or not for us to gather in buildings like this.

[45 : 56] Tertullian said, Our numbers increase the more you destroy us. The blood of the martyrs, those who gave their life for Christ, is the seed from which the church grows.

What a powerful statement. And we see that in the life of Joseph. All the opposition that came against him, God used it to grow, to maximize, to make his name famous, to bring glory to himself and good to his people.

And then in verse 21, Don't be afraid. I will take care of you. I will continue to take care of you and your children. That's our last theme for today.

Joseph is once again a type of Christ. He showed mercy and grace to those who had sinned against him, and he promised that it would continue in perpetuity.

It would not end. Ephesians chapter 2 verse 1. Would you stay with me for just one moment more? Ephesians 2 and verse 1.

[47 : 06] You were dead in your trespasses and sins in which you previously lived according to the ways of this world. Just a reminder from Paul there. By the way, you weren't always cleaned up, looking nice, acting nice.

You too were sinners, just like all of us still are. But you were dead in your sins, and you previously lived according to the ways of this world, the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit now working in the disobedient.

We too all previously lived among them in our fleshly desires, carrying out the inclinations of our flesh and thoughts. And we were by nature children under wrath, as the others were also.

But watch this in verse 4. But God, who is rich in mercy because of his great love that he had for us, made us alive with Christ, even though we were dead in our sin, our trespasses.

You are saved by grace. And then he also raised us up with him. You see what happened to Joseph and how he's describing this?

[48 : 11] You were dead, you were gone, you were lost, you had no hope. But then God forgave you, he transformed you, and he raised you up and seated us with him in the heavens with Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might display the immeasurable riches of his grace through his kindness to us in Christ Jesus, for you are saved by grace through faith.

And this is not from yourselves. It is God's gift. Not from works. So no one can boast. This is the problem with the Catholic Church and with others that preach that we can be saved by the works that we do.

It's in direct conflict with Ephesians 2, 8, and 9. Not by works. There's nothing that I can do to achieve God's favor.

There's nothing that those brothers could do to achieve Joseph's favor. He gave it by grace. God gives his favor to us not because we're nice, high society church people.

He gives his favor to us because of his son's payment for your sins, for mine. And if you think you've been forgiven for any other reason, then maybe you haven't been forgiven yet because you haven't yet humbled yourself and admitted that you're a sinner in need of a Savior.

[49 : 44] And I pray that today would be that day for you when you get to experience what those brothers experienced, that pure, no-strings-attached grace from the one they had sinned against so much.

You think you've sinned against God? Do you realize how much you've sinned against God? Do you realize how much our sin, my sin, put Jesus on that cross?

When we see it personally, then we get to experience his personal grace, his personal forgiveness. forgiveness. So, that's how we know.

That's how we know that all things will work together for good because God keeps his promises. So I want you to believe this morning that it's going to be okay.

Why? Because we have the same promise that Joseph gave to his brothers I will take care of you. Not because of anything you've done. In spite of everything you've done, I will take care of you.

[51 : 07] So I can stand before you on this Sunday in November and tell you it's going to be okay. You ever had somebody try to tell you it's going to be okay when you're all stressed out and you're worried?

How effective was it? Not very, right? But I can stand with the authority of Almighty God and promise you it's going to be okay.

How do we know that? Because God promised it. Romans 8, 28, we know that for those who love God, it doesn't say that for those who do everything that they're supposed to do, it says for those who love God, all things work together for good for those who are called according to his purpose. We are called according to his purpose. He called us, 2 Thessalonians teaches us this, we are thankful that God chose you to experience salvation, a salvation that came through the Spirit who makes you holy and through your belief in the truth, he called you to salvation when we told you the good news.

So when someone came to you and told you the good news of Jesus, then God opened your eyes, called you from darkness to light, you were saved and so now you can share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[52 : 28] So you are called according to God's purpose. Are you fulfilling God's purpose in your life? If you're not, that's probably why you're sad. That's probably why you're depressed.

That's probably why you can't figure out why things aren't as satisfying as they should be because you're not fulfilling the purpose that God called you to. Called you out of darkness into his light and then he says that all things work together for good for those who are called.

If you're a child of God this morning, you're called. So everything is going to be okay. You might end up in a dungeon.

You might end up sold by your brothers. There might be dark, dark storms that you have to endure but trust that everything is going to be okay.

God's going to use you for his greater purpose. So the question we're left with, who's your God? What's your God?

[53 : 39] If your God is Joseph's God, then you can claim those promises. But if you're your own God, if your retirement is your own God, if your bank account is your God, if your kids are your God, if your spouse is your God, if your desires are your God, then it's going to be hard to claim those promises.

Jesus. But if you follow the God of Joseph, then you get to see the ending of Joseph's story.

Doesn't mean you're going to be put second in command of Egypt. But it means God is going to show you great and mighty things which you can't even possibly know what's coming.

So our takeaway this morning is in any situation, God can use my faith to show his goodness. It doesn't matter what situation you're in this morning. Say, preacher, you don't know my situation. You don't know what's going on with my family. You don't know what's going on at work. You don't know what's going on with these things that I'm so stressed out about. You don't know what's going on with our country. You don't know what this person did to me.

[55 : 00] No, I don't. But I know that somebody else walked a road that most of us will never have to walk and his name was Joseph but he kept his faith in Jesus and God used him every step of the way and God grew him every step of the way and one day he stood before those who had wronged him and said, you meant it for evil but God used it for good and he blessed my faith, my little bit of faith that I held on to.

God blessed it and used it to show his goodness and then many years later somebody else walked a road that you and I will never have to walk and he walked for 33 years on this earth and he did many miracles and he poured himself out for the good of the people around him but the religious people of the day hated it.

Imagine that. Religious people hating things. He said, no, we don't like that. We don't approve. That's not according to our traditions. That's not according to our laws. We don't like that and they crucified him.

They put him on the cross and they killed him and that's a road that you and I will never have to walk but thank God Jesus did and then he was lifted up and glorified for the good of all of us.

So now we can come and kneel before him and he can show us grace and mercy and say, Satan meant it for evil but God used it for good to save many people.

[56 : 31] To save you and to save me. Joseph's story points us to Jesus. Would you bow your heads with me? God, in any situation that our church congregation finds itself in, please use their faith to show your goodness.

God, we got hurting people in this room. Got people who are in financial trouble. Got people with relationship problems. Got people overcome by fear, by darkness, by doubt.

Got people overcome by pride. Self-absorbed. God, we struggle with the same sins that anybody else struggles with.

We're human. But you just ask us to have enough faith to stick with you. And then you will show your mighty goodness.

Thank you for teaching us from the life of Joseph. God, help us to honestly answer the question right now, who is our God?

[57 : 46] If we polled the audience, every one of us would say the Lord is our God. But the habits of our daily life don't always support that. Sometimes, too often, we allow other things to become God in our life.

And then our story doesn't turn out like Joseph. Sometimes we've got to go through things that you never intended us to go through. But you stay with us anyway. Right now, God, I pray over my congregation, over your congregation, that your truth would triumph over the lies.

That faith would win over fear. We would learn from Joseph's story that you can use anything, any situation to show your goodness, your glory.

It's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen.