

## **Chronological: A Journey Thru Scripture**

### **God Works All Things for Good Lessons from the Life of Joseph Genesis 37 - 50**

Welcome church to week 4 of our sermon series...

## **Chronological: A Journey Thru Scripture**

Here's what **we learned** this week from our reading...

- ◆ We learned from Leah and Rachel that envy is an ugly on anyone and leads to strife, pride and fleshly decisions. Envy can even convince you that God is working for you when He is really isn't. It wasn't until the birth of Joseph that we are told God has acted. G. 30
- ◆ We learned that God still answers prayer and prospers Jacob with Laban's sheep. G. 30, 28
- ◆ We learned that God keeps His promises by sending Jacob back to Canaan. G. 31, 35
- ◆ We learned about forgiveness and restoration as Esau and Jacob restore their family ties. G. 32-33
- ◆ We learned that wrestling with God increases faith, brings peace and leaves us changed forever. G. 32

I don't know about you but the more I read each week the more I **understand God's mercy and grace**. He certainly didn't choose the men and women He used because they were the most upstanding individuals...it was all a work of Grace.

Today we will wrap up Genesis by looking at the **life of Joseph**. I titled the message today...

## **God Works All Things for Good Lessons from the Life of Joseph**

When you read his story, you see clearly that **Joseph didn't have an easy life**. Sure, things ended well but the journey, the journey was **hard and riddled with uncertainty, abandonment and pain**.

And yet Joseph knew he could **depend on God's grace and mercy**. He knew God was working **all things out for his good**.

**We need this perspective!** We need this faith! We need to trust that God is at work in and around us for our good. We may not like the situations we face but He is at work in them.

I know **you don't see it right now**...I can relate because I have been through times when I don't see Him at work. But I do know He is working, and the outcome is good.

Let's see how He worked in Joseph's life and how that can help us.

Let me give you the **back story** to our text this morning. The life of Joseph reads like a soap opera – tales of love, hate, betrayal and success.

Joseph grew up in a dysfunctional family. If you want to know the intimate details of his life read **Genesis 37-50**. Today we only have time to survey the highlights.

### **➤ Joseph's Family, Genesis 37**

- Father's Favorite = coat, son of Rachel
- Brother's Hate Him = tattletale, favored son
- Joseph's 2 Dreams = family bows down to him
- Brother's Plot = kill him, sell him, sold
- Brother's lie to their father = Joseph is dead

### ➤ **Joseph is Falsely Accused, Genesis 39:1-19**

- Serving in Potiphar's house
- God's Hand on Joseph = he is successful
  - Verse 2 = Lord was with Joseph
  - Verse 5 = Lord blessed the house because of Joseph
- Joseph is Falsely Accused = Potiphar's Wife
  - Refused Her
  - Refused to Betray His Master
  - Refused to Sin Against God

### ➤ **Joseph Goes to Jail, Genesis 39:20 – 41**

- Verse 21 – But the Lord was with Joseph
- Verse 23 = the Lord Made All He Did Prosper
- His Success = Trustee of the Other Prisoners
- Pharaoh's Butler and Baker Dream = God Interpretation
- Two Long Years = Forgotten in Prison

### ➤ **Joseph Rises to Power, Genesis 41**

- God Gives Him Interpretation of Pharaoh's Dream
  - God Has Showed Pharaoh
  - God Has Established – God Will Bring it to Pass
- Pharaoh Promotes Joseph = 2<sup>nd</sup> in Command, 30 years old
- Joseph's Sons are a Reflection of His Faith
  - Manasseh = God made me forget my toil & Father's House

- Ephraim = God caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction

## ➤ **Joseph Reunited with His Family, Genesis 42 – 50**

- Brother's Come to Egypt, 42
  - He Weeps, v.24
  - He Sends Them to Get Benjamin, Keeps Simeon
- Brother's Return with Benjamin, 43
  - Confess about the Money = God Blessed You
  - They Bowed Down to Him, v.26, 28
  - He Weeps, v. 30
- Brother's Discover Joseph's Identity, 45
  - God Sent Me Here to Preserve Life, v. 5
  - God Sent Me Before You to Preserve You, v. 7
  - Not You Who Sent Me Here, but God, v.8
  - God Made Me Lord of Egypt, v9
- Brother's Fear of Joseph's Revenge, 50
  - Jacob dies in Egypt, 46-50
  - Brother's Fear
    - He will hate us
    - He will repay us
  - They beg for forgiveness = bow before him, 50:15-17

**Joseph's response is where we pick up the text...**

## Genesis 50:19–21

*<sup>19</sup> Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God? <sup>20</sup> But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive. <sup>21</sup> Now therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones." And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.*

Here's our takeaway...

### **1. Don't Play God**

Although Joseph had the **power and authority to avenge** his brothers for all that they put him through, he didn't. Why? Because he **knew it was God's place** to take vengeance not his. His heart was **free of any malice and hate**.

Instead of revenge he **offered them peace and forgiveness**.

At this point let me **clarify something**. There is a difference between vengeance and consequences.

**Vengeance is when we take matters** into our own hands and demand payment for the wrong done to us. Vengeance lends itself to **hate and hate pollutes our souls**.

On the other hand, **consequences are the natural outcomes** of an action. Joseph's brothers had to face the consequences for their wrongdoing...**embarrassment, lying, fear, and inferiority to Joseph**.

We are not God and we allow Him to avenge us, but there is nothing wrong for **allowing the natural consequences of sin to be pursued**.

## 2. Acknowledge the Unpleasant

Joseph didn't take vengeance, but **he did acknowledge the wrong** done to him. Don't think for an instant that he was a superhuman, able to push his emotions and pain aside.

What he went through was **unpleasant and painful**. He was **betrayed by his family, falsely imprisoned and forgotten**. And even though we see God's hand at work all throughout it all...Joseph **wasn't spared the real everyday** events that caused him pain.

Realizing that God is working all things to our good does not mean that **pretend nothing happened** or is happening. We can acknowledge the pain while at the **same time trusting** that God is in the midst of it working for our good.

## 3. Trust God's Providence

**Their intention vs. God's intention**

**They intended death vs. God provided life**

God took their plan and **turned it around** and used it in a good way – to fulfill His plan!

Joseph knew God had a plan, now we are not told just how much he knew but we do know that God had blessed him more than once along the journey.

He must have known that without God's providence there would be no way for a Hebrew to be the 2<sup>nd</sup> in command of Egypt.

**God's plan was bigger than Joseph** – God was saving a nation but used the circumstances of Joseph's life to accomplish His will.

We have no idea what God is doing **through our pain and tough times. We must trust His goodness and providence.**

The writer of Hebrews tells us that Joseph did...

*Hebrews 11:22*

*<sup>22</sup> By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones.*

Look for His hand in your tough times – He is there!

#### **4. Extend Grace**

Joseph does just the opposite of what his brothers thought he would do. He **extends to them grace**. God's hand extended to us His grace, now we have the opportunity to pass it along.

Our Lord Told us...

*Matthew 5:44–45*

*<sup>44</sup> But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, <sup>45</sup> that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.*

#### **CONCLUSION:**

See God really does...

*Romans 8:28*

*<sup>28</sup> And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.*

But Why?

*Romans 8:29*

*<sup>29</sup> For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.*

He is making us like Jesus!

**CONCLUSION:**