

“You’ll Get Through This!”

(09-15-13)

I got a call to be a third grade teacher at the Lutheran School Association in Decatur, Illinois in 1975. I had already spent time observing and student teaching. My room at the school was in the basement. Since it was a large school, there were two teachers for each grade. I was brand new and my teaching partner was Gertrude who was in her last year after teaching for 40 years.

Before school started, I visited every student at their home and met them and their parents. I was very confident about the new year! I got the bulletin boards up and put names on each desk. I studied hours upon hours to be ready. On the first day, the students walked into the room and started putting their things in their desk. Some parents were there watching and even helping their child get settled.

When the bell rang at the beginning of the day, all the parents left and I closed the door. As I walked to the front and turned around to the class, I realized there was no supervisor, no seasoned teacher, there was just me! And on top of it, this class was known as the roughest class in the school!

At that moment, I felt just like Joseph in the Old Testament who had been thrown in a pit by his brothers. I started to wonder, “What do I do now?” I felt totally abandoned!

Open your Bibles to Genesis 37. Joseph was very special to his father. His father loved him more than the other sons and treated him with extra care. While the brothers were out working hard, they also had to take care of Joseph. The brothers had old, dirty clothes because of their work, but dad gave Joseph a coat of many colors!

Look at verses 2-4, *“Joseph, being seventeen years old, was pasturing the flock with his brothers. He was a boy with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father’s wives. And Joseph brought a bad report of them to their father. Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his sons, because he was the son of his old age. And he made him a robe of many colors. But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peacefully to him.”*

Because of their hatred for Joseph, the next time he came out to them, their plan was to kill him! Look at verses 23-25, *“So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe, the robe of many colors that he wore. And they took him and threw him into a pit. The pit was empty; there was no water in it. Then they sat down to eat!”*

The Pit. The pit hurts! There are rocks and roots and sharp stones in it. When Joseph was thrown in, all he could do was plead for mercy. Genesis 42:21 tells us, the brothers’ response, *“In truth we are guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the distress of his soul, when he begged us and we did not listen!”* And it’s the same way for us when we’ve been abandoned, betrayed, hated, and forgotten! We don’t feel like we belong and we’re of no value!

Sometimes the situations in which we find ourselves: will hurt! They won’t seem fair! And as we look at them the situations don’t seem to have a solution!

And that’s exactly how Satan wants us to feel! We know we are called God’s own in the waters of Baptism, but when these kind of situations come, we feel God’s left us out to dry! Satan is a destroyer for us! We feel all alone, and we can’t see an end in sight!

The 50/20 Principle. Joseph was sold by his brothers to some merchants who sold him in Egypt. Joseph’s story got worse before it got better. Abandonment led to enslavement, then entrapment, and finally imprisonment. But Joseph never gave up. Bitterness, anger, a hardened heart and giving up, never happened. He not only survived; he thrived!

In God’s hands, intended evil becomes eventual good! Even when we think there’s nothing right, God shows us His perfect plan for us. All we have to do is trust Him! Even

when things don't look like they will go well, God makes sure they do! God is the Master Weaver! He puts everything together in the best way!

Look at Genesis 50:20, to see Joseph's response to his brothers, "*As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.*" Even in the midst of pain and injustice, the way we react knowing God is with us screams His power and majesty to the world around us!

The Promise. Open to Isaiah 43. No matter what you find yourself in, please remember God is there to take you through it! Look at verses 1-2, "*But now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you."* When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you."

Always remember, God can get you through anything! It doesn't matter what it is, He **will** get you through it, even when you can't see how! God sent Jesus to redeem you! He knows your sin and He knows your weaknesses. Because of that, He sent His One and Only to take your place and take your punishment!

God is all powerful and has a plan! As you walk by faith, Satan has no power over you! God is the One Who directs everything! He's the One with the power! God will guide you! You might not know what to do next, but as you turn to Him in prayer, God will guide you by His Holy Spirit to exactly where you need to be!

No matter what the rest of the people around you are like, you can trust Him! God loves you with a never-ending love and wants the very best for you because He sees you as His special, favorite child!

The one thing He's promised to you and it will get you through anything is, God will always be there! Even when things look dark and impossible, no matter where you find yourself, God is there!

To close, I'd like you to look at the very bottom of the sermon sheet, and speak with me the words written there with all your heart and faith: "*I'll get through this. It won't be painless. It won't be quick. But God will use this mess for good. I won't be foolish or naïve, but nor will I despair. With God's help, I know, I will get through this!*"

May God grant each of you as extra measure of His grace as you walk with Him no matter what!