

“God Can Use This For Good!”

(10-20-13)

Well, here we are at the end of our time with Joseph. It is true he was put in a pit by his brothers, sold to traders, put into slavery, sent to prison, sat there for two years, and then was brought out to explain a dream. Now he’s made the person in charge of food distribution for the nation of Egypt. In that role, if you needed food, he was the one you had to see.

Joseph’s brothers came asking, but he didn’t punish them or kill them. In today’s society, you would have expected resentment, anger or revenge, but you don’t see it here!

Joseph’s end to this story is different than what we’d expect today, and so is ours—if we know Jesus! This story turns things upside down and surprises us. In God’s story, vengeance is replaced by grace. Death is overcome by life. Judgment is swept aside so forgiveness can win the day! God is truly great!

Our God is not a small God. He goes beyond what’s expected and makes sure everything is taken care of. We have to stop worrying and trust Him! Because we can trust Him, His advice to us is simple: Don’t sweat the small stuff!

Open to Genesis 45. I’d like you to look at this bag I brought with me. Any ideas on what’s inside? Of course, it’s pieces from a jigsaw puzzle. What kind of picture do these pieces make? Can’t tell can you. The way we solve that problem is to look at the picture on the box! In order to put the puzzle together, you have to see the big picture!

Joseph saw a bigger picture! It wasn’t just a picture of him handing out food in Egypt or of his family coming to live with him. As he looked at it, he knew what God wanted him to see. Joseph knew God’s promises to his grandfather, Abraham. God had promised to make of Abraham and his descendants a great nation!

Joseph knew that promise and it helped him keep perspective on what he was going through now! Joseph knew God sent him to Egypt! Even though he had all these trials and struggles, he knew God was with him guiding and leading.

What Joseph did. Look at verses 4-8a, *“So Joseph said to his brothers, “Come near to me, please.” And they came near. And he said, “I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life. For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are yet five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. So it was not you who sent me here, but God.*

He felt God’s hand. He could rely that God was with him every step of the way. He wept for his family. Human nature would lead us to hate those who hurt us, but Joseph was so happy to see his family again, especially his father! He cared for his family. Joseph provided for them and brought the whole family of 70 to Egypt and took care of them.

Look at the picture of your life. Each of us has had highs and lows in life. We don’t see a solution in sight. Many times you have pain, struggles, failures, and sin. Each of these situations can cause you to be depressed or saddened. This question seems to be asked often, *“Why is this happening to me?”* If we’re going to try to find a resolution by our own power, it’s never going to work! That’s where Satan likes to be!

One thing to remember, Satan is alive and active in the world. His goal is for you to lose hope in God and follow him instead. He lays before you all the things that would make you happy and seem easy. He wants you to forget what God says and instead put your focus on what feels good! That’s the way the world lives!

God sees what’s going on in your life. He doesn’t want you to lose hope. He’s saddened that you’ve forgotten that He loves and cares for you and He’s always there at your side. Through God you have talents, gifts, forgiveness, and life!

Open to Genesis 50. Joseph could have said so much to his brothers on how they had hurt him, but he didn't because he knew God was in control. Verses 19-20, *"But Joseph said to them, "Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? 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."*

The pattern of all life throughout all history is: Evil. God. Good. As Max put it, *"When God gets in the middle, evil becomes good!"* You're here for a purpose. God's purpose! He knows every low point in your life, and He's already planned how to turn it around. Your Almighty God can take anything and have it turn out for your good! He's been doing that for humanity since He created it! He doesn't want you to lose heart. He always has your best in mind! He also wants you to remember, that no matter how hard Satan is working on you to fail, God always wins!

Listen to the words that end the book: *"God sees a Joseph in you. Yes, you! You in the pit. You with your family full of flops and failures. You incarcerated in your own version of an Egyptian jail. God is speaking to you.*

Your family needs a Joseph, a courier of grace in a day of anger and revenge. Your descendants need a Joseph, a sturdy link in the chain of faith. Your generation needs a Joseph. There is a famine out there. Will you harvest hope and distribute it to the people? Will you be a Joseph?

*Trust God. No, **really** trust Him. He will get you through this. Will it be easy or quick? I hope so. But it seldom is. Yet God will make good out of this mess. That's His job!"* He does it all because He loves you! May you be blessed as you're filled with His presence!