Sermon Series Study Guide

Trusting God: When Life Doesn't Make Sense, Pt. 3

Pastor John Riggs

Sermon Summary:

This sermon explores how to maintain faith and integrity during life's most challenging and confusing seasons through the story of Joseph. Pastor John emphasizes that God's sovereignty, omnipresence, and faithfulness remain constant even when circumstances seem unjust or incomprehensible. Joseph's journey from favored son to slave to prisoner to second-in-command of Egypt demonstrates how God uses difficult circumstances to prepare us for His purposes. The central message is that Christians must continue practicing spiritual fundamentals—prayer, Scripture reading, fellowship—even when life makes no sense, trusting that God works all things for good for those who love Him. The sermon concludes with communion, reminding believers that Christ's sacrifice provides the ultimate example of God turning the worst circumstances into redemptive good.

Main Scriptures:

1. Romans 15:4 - Things written in former days for our instruction
2. Proverbs 3:5-6 - Trust in the Lord with all your heart
3. Romans 8:28 - All things work together for good
4. Psalm 20:7 - Some trust in chariots, but we trust in the Lord
5. Isaiah 26:3-4 - Perfect peace for those whose minds are stayed on God
6. Psalm 139:7-12 - Where shall I go from your Spirit?
7. Genesis 15:13-14 - God's covenant with Abraham about 400 years of slavery
8. Genesis 39:1-2 - Joseph brought to Egypt, the Lord was with Joseph
9. Genesis 39:6-9 - Joseph's integrity with Potiphar's wife
10. Genesis 39:21-23 - The Lord was with Joseph in prison
11. Genesis 50:20 - You meant evil, but God meant it for good
12. 1 Corinthians 11:23-32 - Instructions on taking communion

13. Proverbs 10:9 - Whoever walks in integrity walks securely
14. Proverbs 2:5-6 - The Lord gives wisdom and is a shield to those who walk in integrity
15. Proverbs 11:3 - The integrity of the upright guides them
16. Romans 8:35-39 - Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ
17. Deuteronomy 7:6-9 - God's faithfulness to His covenant people

KEY POINTS:

- God is omnipotent (all-powerful), omniscient (all-knowing), and omnipresent (always with us) even in our darkest circumstances
- Joseph refused to adopt a victim mindset despite being betrayed, sold into slavery, falsely accused, and imprisoned
- Maintaining integrity and honoring God in difficult times is essential, regardless of the outcome
- God doesn't always remove us from hard circumstances but walks with us through them and blesses us in the midst of them
- Joseph's faithfulness in small things (as a slave and prisoner) prepared him for greater responsibility (leadership in Egypt)
- What others intend for evil, God can use for good to accomplish His greater purposes
- We must continue doing the spiritual fundamentals (prayer, worship, Scripture reading) especially when we don't feel like it
- God is preparing us through our trials for purposes we cannot yet see
- If we cannot be faithful to God in the pit, we won't be faithful in the palace
- The church must focus on harvest time—reaching the community with the gospel, recognizing that many who believe in God don't truly know Jesus Christ as Savior

NOTES:

Question and Answer:

How does Joseph's refusal to adopt a victim mindset in the face of betrayal and slavery challenge the way we respond to injustice in our own lives?

_____

_____

_____

What does it mean to trust God with the outcome of our obedience rather than being responsible for the outcome, and how might this perspective change the way we make difficult decisions?

_____

_____

_____

In what ways might God be forging your character through current difficulties rather than simply allowing you to suffer meaninglessly?

_____

_____

_____

How does the statement 'if you are not faithful to God when you're in a pit, don't think for a moment you will be faithful to God when you're in a palace' apply to your spiritual life right now?

_____

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What are the 'basic fundamentals' of Christian faith that you tend to abandon when life becomes overwhelming, and how can you commit to maintaining them regardless of circumstances?

_____

_____

_____

How does understanding God's 400-year plan from Abraham to the Exodus help you trust God's timing and purpose in your own seemingly delayed or confusing circumstances?

When have you experienced God's favor in the midst of difficult circumstances, and how did that shape your understanding of His presence?

What does Joseph's response to Potiphar's wife reveal about the relationship between personal integrity and our awareness of God's presence, even when no one else is watching?

How does the truth that 'you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good' reframe your perspective on past betrayals or injustices you have experienced?

In what ways might your current struggles be preparing you for a purpose or calling that you cannot yet see or understand?

Small Group Guide: Trusting God When Life Doesn't Make Sense

Week 3 - The Story of Joseph

OPENING PRAYER & ICEBREAKER (10 minutes)

Icebreaker Question: Share about a time when something difficult happened to you, but looking back, you can now see how God used it for good. If you can't think of one yet, share about a current situation that doesn't make sense to you.

REVIEW: KEY TRUTHS ABOUT GOD (10 minutes)

Before diving into Joseph's story, briefly review what we've learned in this series:

- **God is Omnipotent** - All-powerful; nothing is too difficult for Him
- **God is Omniscient** - All-knowing; He sees and knows everything
- **God is Omnipresent** - Always with us; we cannot escape His presence
- **God is Sovereign** - He knows the end from the beginning and orchestrates His purposes

Discussion: Which of these truths is hardest for you to hold onto during difficult times? Why?

JOSEPH'S STORY: KEY EVENTS (15 minutes)

Timeline of Joseph's Life:

- **Age 17:** Betrayed and sold into slavery by his brothers
- **In Egypt:** Became successful in Potiphar's house through God's favor
- **Falsely Accused:** Imprisoned for refusing to sin with Potiphar's wife
- **In Prison:** Gained favor, interpreted dreams
- **Age 30:** Elevated to second-in-command of Egypt
- **Later:** Saved his family and fulfilled God's covenant promise to Abraham

Read Together: Genesis 50:20 "*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.*"

Discussion: What stands out to you most about Joseph's journey? What would have been hardest for you to endure?

DEEP DIVE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (30 minutes)

1. Refusing the Victim Mindset

Read: Genesis 39:6-9 (Joseph's response to Potiphar's wife)

Questions:

- Joseph had every "right" to feel like a victim. What evidence do we see that he refused this mindset?
- How does viewing ourselves as victims affect our relationship with God and others?
- What's the difference between acknowledging real pain and adopting a victim identity?

Key Quote from Sermon: "*Joseph refused to be a victim. He did not sit and mope. He could have given up on life, compromised his integrity, deconstructed everything about him. But he didn't do that because he's not a victim here. He is victorious if God is with him.*"

2. Integrity in the Pit

Read: Genesis 39:9 - "How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?"

Questions:

- Joseph honored God even when it cost him dearly (he was thrown in prison for doing the right thing). Have you ever experienced negative consequences for doing the right thing?
- The sermon said: "If you are not faithful to God when you're in a pit, don't think for a moment you will be faithful to God when you're in a palace." What does this mean practically?
- What "easy way out" or compromise are you currently facing? How can you respond with Joseph-like integrity?

3. God's Presence in Our Circumstances

Read: Genesis 39:2, 21, 23 - Notice the repeated phrase: "The LORD was with Joseph"

Questions:

- God didn't remove Joseph from his circumstances, but He was WITH him in them. How does this challenge our prayers and expectations?
- When have you experienced God's presence or favor in the middle of a difficult situation?
- What are the "fundamentals" Christians should keep doing even when life doesn't make sense? (Prayer, Scripture reading, fellowship, worship, etc.)

Key Quote from Sermon: "*God did not change Joseph's circumstance. But God was with Joseph in it. And if God is in your situation, it changes drastically the way in which your life will be handled and dealt with in the midst of it.*"

4. God's Bigger Picture

Read: Genesis 15:13-14 (God's promise to Abraham about 400 years of slavery)

Questions:

- Joseph didn't know he was part of fulfilling God's covenant with Abraham. What does this teach us about our own circumstances?
- How does understanding that God is working out purposes beyond what we can see help us trust Him?

- Romans 8:28 says God works ALL things for good for those who love Him. What's the hardest part of believing this?

5. Nothing Can Separate Us

Read Together: Romans 8:35-39

Questions:

- Paul lists tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, danger, and even death. Which of these (or similar trials) threatens to make you feel separated from God's love?
- The passage says we are "more than conquerors." How can someone going through Joseph's experiences be considered a conqueror?
- What's the difference between feeling God's love and knowing God's love? How do we hold onto truth when feelings fail?

PERSONAL REFLECTION (10 minutes)

Take 3-5 minutes of silence for personal reflection. Consider these questions:

1. What circumstance in my life currently doesn't make sense?
2. Am I doing the "fundamentals" of faith, or have I pulled back?
3. Where might I be adopting a victim mindset instead of trusting God's sovereignty?
4. What would it look like for me to honor God in my current situation, regardless of the outcome?

Share: If comfortable, share one insight from your reflection time.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION (10 minutes)

This Week's Challenge: Choose ONE

Option 1: The Fundamentals Check Each day this week, commit to the basics:

- Read Scripture (even 5 minutes)
- Pray honestly with God
- Worship (through music, gratitude, or praise)
- Connect with another believer

Option 2: Reframe Your Story Write out a difficult circumstance you're facing. Then write: "They/it meant this for evil, but God means it for _____." Ask God to show you His bigger purpose.

Option 3: Integrity Audit Identify one area where you're tempted to compromise because of difficult circumstances. Commit to honoring God in that area this week, regardless of the outcome.

Option 4: Memorize Romans 8:38-39 Commit these verses to memory so you can recall them when you feel distant from God's love.

PRAYER TIME (15 minutes)

Prayer Focus Areas:

1. **For those in difficult circumstances** - Pray for group members who are in their "pit" or "prison" season. Ask God to remind them of His presence.

2. **For integrity** - Pray for strength to honor God even when it costs us, trusting Him with the outcomes.

3. **For eternal perspective** - Ask God to help us see beyond our immediate circumstances to His bigger purposes.

4. **For those who don't know Christ** - Remember the sermon's emphasis on "harvest time." Pray for opportunities to share the gospel with family and friends who need to know Jesus.

Prayer Partners:

Pair up and pray specifically for each other's current circumstances, asking God to help you trust Him when life doesn't make sense.

LOOKING AHEAD

Next Steps:

- Attend the Focus on the Family parenting event (August 28-29)
- Get involved in the Back to School Bash community outreach
- Prepare your heart for the upcoming "It's Harvest Time" series about reaching our community with the gospel

Memory Verse for the Week: "*And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose*." - Romans 8:28

CLOSING THOUGHT

"God's not through writing your story. God has a story for all of us. And you know the ultimate story of our life? It's a story of redemption. God is working us to a point where we will rule and reign with Christ, the King of glory. Your future and your purpose is great."

Final Question: How does knowing your ultimate destination (eternity with Christ) change how you view your current circumstances?

LEADER NOTES

- Be sensitive to group members who may be in genuinely difficult situations
- Don't minimize real pain, but point people to God's faithfulness
- Encourage honesty about struggles with faith during hard times

- Follow up during the week with anyone who shared something particularly difficult
- Remind the group that we're not responsible for outcomes, only for obedience and trust

NOTES:

Sermon Transcript:

We need to reap a harvest for the kingdom, so I'm excited about that.

Well, that's not what our message is this morning.

Let's get back to that.

Trusting God when life does not make sense.

Now you'll remember in week one we looked at God's omnipotence.

That means we were looking at God's power.

Understanding that there is nothing too difficult or too great for our God.

Even though you find yourself in situations or circumstances in life that are beyond your ability, God's ability surpasses all things.

We learned about God's omnipotence, His power.

He is all-powerful.

God can do exceedingly, abundantly, above all we could ask, think, or imagine.

That is our God.

He is omnipotent.

And then we also looked at several different things in our second message about God.

That God is also, He is omnipresent and He is omniscient.

That God is all-knowing.

God knows all things.

God knows where you are.

And God is omnipresent.

God is always with us.

He is all places.

And He is in us by His Holy Spirit.

And so this morning we're going to continue on with that.

And hopefully this will continue to be a blessing for you as we go through this last installment of this series.

So, in Romans chapter 15, verse 4, we learn that Scripture teaches us

Those things that have been written in former days were written for our instruction that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

This is a great reminder for us as we look at the story of Joseph that we've looked at the last few weeks, that God recorded these things for our benefit so that we might find encouragement and we might find hope in the story of Joseph.

And there's a few things that we have seen about the life of Joseph so far.

What we're looking at is we're going to look at how Joseph responds to his circumstance.

We see the work of other people bringing about this evil work in Joseph's life.

And then we're going to learn how God responds to Joseph in this terrible circumstance in his life.

So we learn about Joseph, how he responds, his behavior, his reality and his circumstance.

We learn about how others were involved in even bringing this about in Joseph's life.

But ultimately, we're going to see how God responds to Joseph in Joseph's very difficult circumstance.

In Proverbs 3, 5 through 6, we looked at this.

Solomon writes these words of wisdom to his son.

He says, trust in the Lord with all your heart.

Lean not on your own understanding.

This is a key thing to remember when you're going through times in life that don't make any sense.

Whether it's a health issue or maybe it's a marital issue or maybe it's a financial issue or maybe it's a spiritual issue.

It could be numerous, numerous things that might be part of what you're struggling with.

But don't lean on your own understanding.

But in all your ways, know God.

Trust God.

And He will direct your steps.

God is faithful to do that.

Oftentimes we lean on our own understanding and that's the problem.

We don't understand everything.

We can't see the big picture.

We don't know how this is all going to work out.

We talked about this last week in Romans 8, 28.

And we know that in all things, God works for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose.

And we looked at why is this true?

Well, it's true because God, He is God.

And God is faithful and He is true.

And He was true to keep His promise and His covenants with us.

We know this to be a fact.

In Psalm 20 and 7, we learn this.

I think week one we talked about this, that some people trust in chariots.

Some people trust in the horses and the chariots.

But what we trust in is we trust in the name of the Lord.

You could fill that blank in with other things.

Some people trust in our economy.

Some people trust in our government.

You can put down whatever it is.

Lots of people put their trust in a lot of things, but the problem is those things are not fail safe.

They will fail.

They are failing.

That is a reality.

So what are we to do as Christians when we go through times that we don't understand, that make no sense to us?

We don't want to look outside ourselves to the things of the world.

We want to trust in the Lord.

That's what we want to trust in.

Because He is faithful in all things.

In Isaiah 26, 3-4...

You keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on you.

That's God.

God keeps us in perfect peace if we keep our mind fixed on the Lord.

This is something to always keep in mind.

When you're going through a very challenging and difficult season in your life, what do you need to do?

You need to keep doing the basics of what you know to do as a Christian.

In other words, oftentimes people pull back, they isolate themselves, they'll stop reading scripture, they'll stop praying, they'll stop seeking the Lord, they'll isolate themselves from other Christians, and they become separated out to themselves.

Those are things we don't need to be doing.

What we need to do is do the very fundamentals of what we know as a Christian, even when you don't feel like it, even when you don't understand, and even when you can't see or even know that God is listening.

You know He is because He is your God.

So we have to be careful in this to do the essential basics and the fundamentals of the Christian's life.

Don't stop doing them when life gets hard.

Don't stop.

Keep after those things.

You're going to learn that's what Joseph did in his life.

That's what he did.

He's a great example of that.

Now in Psalm chapter 139 verses 7 through 12, I want to read this verse to you.

It's one of my favorite verses in Psalm 139, although there's many of them there.

But I want to read this to you to remind you something of not only God's omniscience, His knowing of all things, but His omnipresence in your life as well.

I want you to hear what the writer here says in Psalm 139.

We'll look at 7 through 12.

Where shall I go from your spirit?

Or where shall I flee from your presence?

You ever feel like God is distant?

Have you ever asked yourself, God, are you even there?

Have you found yourself even questioning if God even cares, or is He hearing your prayers?

Why, God, do you feel so distant?

Why, God, are you allowing these things in my life?

God, why is this happening?

God, I don't deserve this.

I didn't even do anything to receive this.

Someone else made a decision, and I've got to live with the consequences of it.

We have all these questions.

Where can I go from your Spirit?

Or where shall I flee from your presence?

If I ascend to heaven, you are there.

If I make my bed in Sheol, or that would be the grave, you are there.

If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me.

Aren't those encouraging words?

If I say, surely the darkness shall cover me.

You ever been there where the darkness is so overwhelming it's as if it almost just completely suffocates you?

Where shall I go if surely the darkness shall cover me and the light about me be night?

Even the darkness is not dark to you.

The night is bright as the day for darkness is as light with you.

These are very encouraging words.

Genesis chapter 15 now.

Flip back there with me if you would, please.

I mentioned to you last time, which would have been a week ago from last Sunday, I mentioned to you something very significant here about God's much bigger picture in the redemption of humanity.

We are a very, very, very small part but integral piece of God's plan for redemption.

You have a great purpose, Christian.

What we find here in Genesis chapter 15, verse 13 through 14, is God, His covenant with Abraham.

Abraham was an old man who was married to Sarah, an old woman who was barren.

She's had no children all these years of her life.

God comes to Abraham and says, you're going to have numerous, numerous offspring.

In fact, you're going to become a mighty nation.

Now, how would you feel if you're in your 80s and God comes to you and says, or 75 years of age here and says, guess what?

You're going to become a mighty nation and your wife is barren.

You have no children.

The reality is with you in your own ability, you and your wife because of her barrenness and your older age, there is no way that this promise could happen.

But with God, all things are possible.

And so God comes to make a covenant with Abraham, and he tells him this.

Then the Lord said to Abram, which he changes his name to Abraham for good reason, know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners, this numerous, numerous offspring that will be the number of the sands on the sea and the stars in the sky.

He's like, your offspring are going to be so numerous.

You're going to be a mighty nation, Abraham.

They will come from you.

He says, your offspring...

They will be sojourners, just traveling through in a land that is not theirs.

And they will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for 400 years.

You remember this from our last time.

But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possession.

What is God doing here?

God is making covenant with Abraham.

He's promising Abraham, a childless old man with a barren wife, that he will become a mighty nation of people.

From him, they will be numerous as the stars in the sky and the sands on the seashore.

And he tells them that in a future time, your descendants are going to be enslaved by a nation for 400 years.

What does this teach us about our God?

This shows us that our God is 100% sovereign.

He knows the end from the beginning.

He is the one that dictates things.

He is the one that establishes things.

He calls a man.

He calls a bird.

He does what he does.

He is God.

And God is giving a future truth to Abraham about his future descendants.

And he says they're going to be afflicted and they will be enslaved by a nation for 400 years.

I'm sure Abraham's thinking, well, that's not a very good start for my people.

But this is how God chose to build a mighty nation from Abraham.

And so what we're going to find out is that Joseph, in his very, very, very difficult circumstance, not understanding what God was doing,

When Joseph was sold by his brothers into slavery, he did not know this was God's plan.

In other words, he didn't know that God would use this very act by his brothers to bring about God's perfect plan and promise to his great grandfather, Abraham.

He didn't know this.

But he will be an intricate part to God bringing about the fulfillment of this covenant promise to Abraham.

You and I are part also of God's redemptive work.

We don't understand some of the things that happen in life.

And God uses all things, even the bad things, for good for those who love him and are called according to his purpose.

And so what we're seeing here is the sovereignty of God on display.

And you need to know that your God, my God, He is the one true sovereign God of all creation.

He's from eternity past to eternity future.

There's never been a time He has not been.

That is God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, all co-equally God, working in perfect unity.

Each one God in essence but in function, operating differently within the Godhead.

God is at work in your life.

Do not cease to understand that God is always working in your life and around your life.

Always remember that.

So, Joseph here now, we learned this last week some interesting things about him.

Joseph's brothers despised him.

He's one of 12 boys.

Notice he will be one of the 12 which will make the nation of Israel.

And he comes from his father, Jacob, and they're a mixed and blended family.

And nonetheless, he's one of the youngest sons here of his father, and he's his father's favorite.

His brothers despise him.

But early on in Joseph's life, he has a dream that God has given him.

And the dreams that he had was the first one would be that his own brothers would come to him and they would bow down to him.

And he shares that with his brothers.

How many of you know that that was not a wise choice?

But nonetheless, he tells his brothers, I had a dream.

And dreams meant something in those days.

And he tells them, by the way, you don't know this, but one day you're going to come down and you're going to worship at my feet and bow down before me.

And they couldn't stand that idea.

And sure enough, his brothers despised him.

So his father keeps him home and sends off all his brothers to go do the work because he's dad's favorite son.

And while they're away, his father says, hey, go check on the sheep and go check on your brothers and bring me back a good report, hopefully, about what's going on.

So we learned last time that Joseph goes to his brothers and they see his brothers, his brothers see him coming from a long way off.

And we learned the reason that they could see him coming is because he had a certain jacket that he wore or a coat that set him apart from everybody else.

It was a multicolored jacket.

Not one you and I would be caught dead wearing in public.

But he was wearing it in fashion and in style.

And so brightly colored was this coat or this jacket or this entire covering that he wore that he stood out like a sore thumb.

And when his brothers see him coming from a long way off, they say, that's Joseph.

And they conspired to kill him.

What a loving family.

Some of you said it sounds like at my family reunion.

Yeah, why is it that family reunions are like that?

We all have an uncle, don't we?

Or an aunt.

Can't leave them out.

But nonetheless, they're there.

And so they conspire to kill him.

But his oldest brother, Reuben, says, no, let's not kill him.

Let's throw him into a pit.

Let's not kill him.

And so they agreed.

They just stripped him of his coat, threw him into a pit, and Reuben's looking out for himself because, listen, he's got to go home, and he's going to have to give his dad a report.

He's going to have to say, okay, here's what happened to your favorite son.

And he's going to have to lie about what happened to your favorite son because they killed the favorite son, and there's going to have to be a big story he's going to have to lie about.

So he wasn't concerned about his brother.

He was concerned about his own self.

And what we find even in that act with Reuben was what?

God intervened in Joseph's life.

And Joseph didn't go, well, I knew God would step in and intervene in my life.

He didn't even know that God had intervened in his life.

Just like you and I. You don't even know the number of times that God intervenes on your behalf.

But he does it all the time.

All the time.

Same with Joseph.

Yeah, he ended up in the pit.

Well, his brothers see this Ishmaelite caravan coming and they said, you know what?

Let's go ahead and make a little money off the little grub.

So they sell his brother for 10 pieces of silver.

That is like the middle price of what it cost for a slave.

So you can imagine Joseph, and we read later in Genesis where he was pleading and begging his brothers.

You can imagine this.

He's 17 years old.

His older brothers have control of him physically, and they take and they get him up out of this pit, and they sell him to these traitors.

And he was begging and pleading with them.

All the while, Joseph is not understanding why in the world all of this is happening.

His brothers think that what they're doing is for their gain.

And they're getting out of it what they want.

And they'll just go back and lie to daddy and say, listen, a ferocious beast killed your son.

Here's his jacket.

It's torn up and it's covered with blood.

Sorry about that, daddy.

You're going to grieve for a few days.

We hate that it happened, but he's gone.

So Joseph now is with this caravan of Ishmaelites.

Now I want you to put yourself there.

These are written for our benefit, our encouragement, and our hope.

He doesn't understand in any way, shape, form, or fashion what in the world is going on.

In fact, for Joseph, this was the most tragic experience he had ever had in his entire life.

Can you imagine if your family sold you off in slavery?

The people who are supposed to love you the most, who have your back, yeah, you may not always get along, but I mean, that's going a little far, don't you think?

So Joseph now has been stripped of not only his father's coat of favoritism, he has completely been rejected and he's been completely given over by his own brothers.

You want to talk about rejection?

Let me tell you something, if you ever go through a time of great betrayal, did you know betrayal will leave your head spinning?

When you're truly betrayed by somebody that is like this close to you, someone who's been in your inner circle and they betray you,

There is a pain that comes from that that is something that you will carry for the rest of your life.

And it's one of those things that prevents you from trusting people the next time and the next time and the next time.

Because if the guy closest to you in your circle could betray you, anybody has the ability to betray you.

So Joseph now is on his way in a caravan.

He has no rights, none.

He is a purchased animal now.

He is nothing more than a slave.

And now he is on a mission headed where?

To Egypt.

And Joseph doesn't understand any of these things.

But listen, God is sovereign.

You understand this.

And even though his brothers intended this for evil, as we're going to learn here before we end today, God intended all that Joseph went through at the hands of his brothers and others, ultimately for the good of Joseph and God.

Ultimately, who can do that?

Who can take this kind of experience in life and bring about something good from it?

Only one person can.

And he's not a person as we think.

We're talking about only God could do this.

And God does this in your life.

And he does this in my life.

But here's the key.

Don't stop honoring God when life doesn't make sense.

I watch people do this.

Christians do this.

And I tell them, please, don't deconstruct your faith, man.

Stop it.

You're acting like you did before you knew Jesus.

What are you doing sitting here?

Why are you drinking that?

Why are you doing those things?

You know better than this.

Well, I'm just going through a tough time.

That's not what we want to do.

We don't want to deconstruct.

Because that's going to be your natural desire.

Listen, what we want to do is do the fundamentals.

And we're going to learn from Joseph.

He went to the fundamentals here.

Joseph knew the stories of God about the work that he did with Abraham.

And then Isaac, his grandfather.

And even Jacob, his dad, wrestling with God.

He knew these stories.

But I guarantee you he was questioning some things in his own mind as he's with the Ishmaelites and he's headed down to Egypt.

Not even knowing where he's going.

Not even understanding what his future is.

That might be right now where you are.

But listen, you are not outside of God's presence and his eye is upon you.

You have to always know that.

You say, I don't feel like his eye is on me.

This isn't about feelings.

This is about factual things that are true about your God.

We've got to know it.

And so Joseph now finds himself in Egypt, and now he's at the auction.

You can just picture this.

I love auctions.

I love cattle auctions, all those things.

And Joseph is now no more than an animal to those people who purchased him.

And they put him on the auction block.

He's a 17-year-old, probably pretty good shape.

And they've got him stripped down there like some animal showing off how he's going to be a good worker for you.

And they're going to try to sell him off to the highest bidder.

He's young.

He's strong.

He's formidable.

And he's teachable.

And sure enough...

The gavel hits the stone and he is sold again.

Can you imagine?

Sold a second time.

Can it get any worse than this?

Now he is taken by a stranger.

Here he is again in a land that he doesn't know, away from his family, already gone through one horrible experience.

Now he's had the gavel dropped on him a second time, and he's sold as nothing more than an animal on an auction block, and he's purchased now by Potiphar, the captain of the guard of Pharaoh's army.

And this is a pretty incredible story.

You say, well, what's the great news about where we are here?

Well, Genesis chapter 39, turn there with me, verses 1 through 2, and I want to show you.

Joseph was betrayed and Joseph was abandoned.

And if you live long enough, you're going to experience some of these same things.

What are we going to learn from Joseph?

We're going to learn how we respond in times of situations or difficulty where we don't understand what in the world is going on.

Do you think for a moment Joseph loved the experience that he was experiencing?

Joseph could have been like any of us that said, you know what?

I didn't deserve this and I sure didn't earn this, man.

I didn't earn this.

My brothers did this to me.

But I'm going to show you something about Joseph.

Joseph does not take upon the victim mindset.

He doesn't.

He doesn't take upon the victim mindset.

We are not told everything about what Joseph thought, except we know that he pleaded and begged with his brothers as he was anguishing from his own soul, according to Scripture.

This wasn't like high-fiving his brothers.

Hey, thanks, man.

It's going to be a great experience moving forward.

He didn't know these things, man.

But God was with him.

I'm sure he said things or thought things like you do as well.

God, why did you let this happen?

I mean, I hear people say this all the time.

If God is really God, He could have prevented these things from happening.

We do live in a sinful, fallen world.

But here's the thing we know.

God did not change Joseph's situation.

But God was with Joseph in it.

And if God is in your situation...

It changes drastically the way in which your life will be handled and dealt with in the midst of it.

I want to show you this in Joseph's life.

We're told this in Scripture.

Now Joseph had been brought down to Egypt and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian.

Joseph wouldn't even know the language, man.

Had brought him from the Ishmaelites who had brought him down there.

Now notice this.

The Lord was with Joseph.

One thing you need to underline in your Bible, and maybe you need to put this on a three-by-five card and just keep it in your vehicle.

I don't know.

Put it on your fridge.

One thing we know as a Christian, the Lord is with us.

In fact, even more so than what Joseph understood by far, God has sent His Spirit to live inside you.

Did you know that?

You can't go anywhere where the Spirit of God is not present in your life.

God is with you in spirit.

He is in you.

He indwells you.

So you're going through the valley of the shadow of death.

You're going through the most horrific experience of your life.

This health challenge that you don't understand.

The outcome of what it could be.

All of these difficult things that we experience in life as human beings.

Here's the thing you need to know, Christian.

Write it down.

The Lord God is with you.

He is with you, and he will never, never, ever leave you.

You have to know that.

You say, well, I don't like the situation.

Listen, I understand that.

But God is with you.

He's with you.

You have to know this.

Now, we can only imagine how devastating these experiences must have been for Joseph.

No doubt life was making no sense to him.

And why did this happen?

I don't deserve this, God.

Why did you not intervene in my situation?

Where are you, God?

He could say, where are you, this God that intervened in Abraham's life, Isaac's and Jacob's?

Where's the God of the great stories of the God that I've heard about?

Where are you right now, God?

He may have even felt these ways.

But we're going to learn something from a 17-year-old boy, actually a young man who

We're going to learn something from him on how he navigated life's greatest challenges.

Here we go.

First thing you need to know, we talked about this, God was with Joseph and God is with you.

Number two, mentioned this, Joseph refused to be a victim.

I meet people all the time that are victims, and that will do nothing for you, trust me.

It will not do anything for you.

He did not sit and he didn't mope.

You say, well, he couldn't.

He was a slave.

No, he still could have.

I'm sure the punishment would have been grave, but he still could have.

He could have gave up on life.

You ever meet anybody that just gave up on life?

He could have given up on life.

He could have just threw it all in.

He could have done whatever.

He could have compromised his integrity, as we're going to see in a minute.

All of these things, deconstructing everything about him.

He could have done that, but he didn't do that because he's not a victim here.

He is victorious if God is with him.

And Christian, regardless of your experience in life, what you go through, even at the hands of someone else, you need to know that God is with you.

Trust in the Lord.

Don't lean on your own understanding.

Put your faith in Him and allow Him to guide your steps through the time and the storm of life that you're in.

Do the basic fundamentals.

Don't stop doing it.

Don't do it.

And here we're going to learn something incredible about Joseph.

Romans chapter 8.

You might want to write this down, 35 through 39.

This is something that is true of every single born-again believer in Jesus Christ.

If you're a Christian and you're here this morning, this is true of you.

And you have to know it because you're going to have seasons of time where you even question whether or not God loves you.

But that's a lie, right?

It's not wrong to question because we're human, but we need to go back to the fundamentals and the fact of what God is.

God is love.

You understand that?

He is love.

What you're experiencing may be absolutely horrific, but don't forget who you are and whose you are.

Don't forget that.

Here we go.

Romans 8, 35 through 39.

Who shall, I'll wait just a few more minutes.

I hear you turning.

Romans 8, 35 through 39.

Who shall separate us?

Who's that?

The people of God.

Those who are born again in Christ.

Who have been joined with Christ by faith.

We're in union with Christ.

We are in Christ.

Notice this.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

Question mark.

Who shall do that?

The person who wrongs you?

Sorry, they don't have that kind of power.

The situation that you're facing in life, nope, that won't do it.

Notice what it says.

Shall tribulation, that is like difficulties.

That's going through some really challenging things in life.

Shall tribulation or those things you're receiving at the hands of others, shall that separate you from the love of Christ Jesus?

How about distress?

How about distress?

when you're going through something distressful in life, will those circumstances separate you from the love of Christ?

How about persecution?

Real persecution like Christians have undergone throughout the history of the church age and will continue to do so until the end of the church age shall persecution.

You might need to underline that in your Bible.

There might become a time for some of you in here where this will become a stark reality in your life.

Will persecution from others, because you're a follower of Jesus Christ, will that separate you from the love of Christ?

Will famine, will nakedness, poverty, will danger or even sword, will those things, even death, separate you from the love of Christ?

As it's written, for your sake we are being killed all day long.

We are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.

Notice what he says.

He says, no, emphatically no.

In all these things, we are more than what?

We're not victims, folks.

We're more than conquerors.

We are more than conquerors.

Notice through what and through who?

Through him who what?

Loved us.

We are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

For I am sure that neither death nor life nor angels...

nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers.

Now we're getting into the spiritual forces.

Nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

You need to know that.

And what we're seeing here in the life of Joseph is that he is experiencing the unbridled and unrestrained love of God toward him in his circumstance.

That's what we're seeing.

Because now we're going to learn what happens next in Joseph's life.

In Genesis chapter 39, 6 through 9, we follow this and we read what God does with Joseph's life.

He didn't take him out of the circumstance.

Always we're asking and praying, God, take us out of this circumstance.

Listen, God could and he may, but he may also just walk with you through the entirety of it.

Here he is, Joseph.

This is what God did to him.

He became successful in the house of Potiphar.

How in the world can you become successful as a slave?

He did.

In fact, so successful had Joseph become because of God's favor, God's love, and God's blessing in his circumstance that Pharaoh didn't concern himself about anything in his entire household.

Obviously, a wealthy man, he had things that he had his control over, but he set everything under Joseph because God blessed Joseph even in his circumstance.

So God did not change the circumstance, but God blessed Joseph in spite of the circumstance.

If you want the blessings of God in your tough circumstance, continue to believe, trust, and do what you do as a man and woman of faith, regardless of what you see or what you're experiencing.

Because you know that God is at work in your life.

If you do the opposite and you just go out and do worldly things and start sinning and breaking God's laws and living like a total unbeliever, that's not blessing that comes from that.

It's the opposite.

So what people oftentimes do when you want to just slap their foreheads, and maybe that wouldn't be bad if you're close enough to them, is say, man, wake up.

Are we not our brother's keeper, Christian?

We need to be our brother's keeper.

Why?

Because sometimes a brother might go somewhere that he shouldn't be.

And what does he need?

He needs someone to get a hold of him and say, hey, we don't do those things.

He needs to be told.

Because the enemy can lead you somewhere if you give way to it.

We need to be our brother and our sister's keeper if we're really a family.

We should do that.

But you go to that person in love and

Because you're trying to protect them even from their selves.

And those very difficult times is when people oftentimes lean back to the old man instead of relying and living in the new man of the spirit.

They go to the old man.

Because they're too broken down right here to even, they just revert back to those normal things of the flesh.

We've got to do those things.

So here we're going to see something.

In 6-9 of 39, he says, So he, that's Potiphar, left all that he had in Joseph's charge.

And because of him, he had no concern about anything but the food he ate.

I mean, this is pretty amazing.

The Lord was with Joseph.

He blessed him, gave him favor, and God blessed the work of his hands.

So Joseph, we see here, he went to work.

And what did he do?

He kept doing the fundamentals.

How in the world did this young man at 17 have the fundamentals?

Well, because he was raised with fundamentals, probably more than likely.

But he knew God, and he knew the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

And so he's doing those things that need to be done.

And here's what's pretty awesome.

Now you say, well, that's pretty amazing.

God is blessing Joseph.

And it is amazing because God can bless you in your circumstance.

But notice what happens.

Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance.

And after a time, his master's wife...

She cast her eyes on Joseph and said, Lie with me.

But he refused and said to his master's wife, I want you to notice the very integrity and the character of this young 17-year-old.

He might have been 18 or 19 at this time.

We don't know.

But nonetheless, we know that he is a young man.

Now, there's all kinds of excuses people make when they're in circumstances.

Well, I couldn't help myself, or you know what, I was a weak moment, or whatever it was.

I want you to see something here about Joseph that is profound here.

Notice what Joseph says.

He is a slave.

This is the wife of his master.

Now, he could have said, you know what, I'm to obey my master, and this is his wife.

He could have justified it and said, I'm just doing what I'm told to do.

That's not what Joseph did.

He makes an explanation to her, not just no, ma'am, but he's going to tell her why no, ma'am.

He's going to tell her.

Listen to this.

But he refused and said to his master's wife, behold, because of me, my master has no concern about anything in the house, and he has put everything that he has in my charge into

He is not greater in this house, put it this way, He is not greater in this house than I, nor has He kept back anything from me except you, because you are His wife.

Now, I want you to notice this.

Underline the next verse, or the next sentence.

How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?

How can I sin against God?

This was the real heart of Joseph.

I can't do this, ma'am, because I can't do this wicked thing and sin against my God.

I will not do this.

We see this incredible integrity in this young man.

And he says, I won't, and he doesn't.

And that's going to come at a cost.

Let me tell you this, too.

If anybody ever tells you that you're going through a tough time because you're doing something wrong,

Because you're living in a way that's not right before God.

And it may be true in some circumstances, but I've heard people do that.

Well, so-and-so is going through a rough time in life.

I wonder if there's any sin in their life.

No, maybe they're going through a rough time in life because they're doing the right thing.

This was the situation in Joseph's life.

He's going to honor his God.

How many of you out there have ever honored God and then you were slapped with something else?

Seriously.

He honors God and says, I won't do this wicked thing because I will not sin against my God.

I won't do it.

Well, she comes up with this whole thing, steals his garment.

The master comes home and he says, she says, listen, this boy you got over here in charge of everything, he tried to have his way with me.

But I screamed and hollered and he left this at my bedside.

Oh, she's a deceiving, conniving, lying individual.

And ladies, I'm not just singling you out.

Please hear me.

Someone will say, you know what?

That was really wrong.

You singled out the lady.

No, I'm not singling out the lady.

This is just the story, okay?

This is not just the story.

This is real true history.

And so we're moving along here.

And so Joseph operates in great integrity.

The woman lies to his master.

His master gets mad and takes him and throws him now in prison.

Okay.

This can be a reality for you.

Honoring God is not something we do because of what we get.

Honoring God is what we do is because who we are and we're called to do it.

Don't just honor God because of what blessing you think might come out of that.

In this situation, Joseph honored God not because of the outcome.

He obeyed God and honored him because that's what he's to do as a man of God.

Man or woman of God, honor God in all circumstances.

And here's the thing, it may not get better.

There's another consequence.

Did you know there's consequences for not honoring God?

But there also can be consequences for those who honor the Lord.

Here's the thing, Christian.

When you honor God, write this down.

You are not responsible for the outcome.

No.

God is responsible for the outcome.

Our responsibility is to honor him regardless of the outcome.

You have to trust God with the outcome.

You be obedient and trust the Lord and be honorable and live in integrity before him.

Joseph did this and the outcome, boom, in prison.

You're thinking, wow, this guy here needs a break.

Let's keep reading.

Proverbs 10, 9.

Let me give you a few passages.

Whoever walks in integrity walks with what?

Security.

Security, man.

Don't have everything for sale kind of life.

There's things that are not for sale.

One thing that's not for sale is your integrity.

It is not for sale.

I don't care what money they offer you or position they give you.

None of it's worth it all.

Keep your integrity before God because you can walk in security before God.

Proverbs 2, 5 through 6, for the Lord gives wisdom.

From his mouth come knowledge and understanding.

He stores up sound wisdom for the upright.

He is, listen, he is a shield to those who walk in integrity.

Proverbs 11.3, the integrity of the upright guides them, but the crookedness of the treacherous destroy them.

Back to Genesis 39, he gets thrown into prison.

Now, Joseph, in his own mind, I don't know what he was thinking, we're not told, but he's a man just like you and I. He must have looked at this and thought, wow, this is interesting.

Now I don't know what's going to happen to me.

I mean, I at least could move about and go do things.

And now I'm in prison.

And this, guys, this isn't like, you know, hanging out at Shangri-La.

In fact, later we're going to learn it's called a pit.

He's in prison is where he's at.

The very prison where the Pharaoh throws those people in his kingdom that he's unhappy with.

If he doesn't chop off their head.

But nonetheless, that's where he's at.

But here's the thing I want you to see about Joseph.

And here's something about integrity.

If you are not faithful to God when you're in a pit, don't think for a moment you will be faithful to God when you're in a palace.

Don't think for a moment.

If you can't have integrity for God when things are tough and when you're having to really live by those precepts, don't think you will for a moment when you're in a palace.

Don't think it will happen.

Integrity is forged in those moments of time when it's given the opportunity to compromise your integrity.

God is faithful, amen?

Notice this.

Yeah, let's read out of Deuteronomy chapter 7, 6 through 9.

We've got to wrap up here.

I've got a lot more to cover, but we need to get going.

Deuteronomy 7, 6 through 9.

This comes over 400 years later.

Ha, ha.

Joseph is right now in the throes of living out his integrity before God.

Why?

Because God works for the good of those who love him and are called according to his purpose.

And Joseph is not going to sacrifice God's blessing and God's purpose in his life for the momentary things that come easy.

He's not doing that.

He has no way of knowing, but here in Deuteronomy now, chapter 7, 6 through 9, we're going to be reading about a people, a mighty nation that God has brought out of this nation of Egypt.

And Joseph had no idea that what he was doing would bring all these things to its fruition through the hand of God.

No way of knowing.

Listen to this.

God says this about this nation of people.

For you are a people holy to the Lord your God.

The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people from his treasured possession, for his treasured possession.

Out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth, it was not because you were more in number than any other people that Lord set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all people.

but it is because the Lord loves you and He is keeping the oath that He swore to your fathers.

All the way back to Genesis in Abraham, this is what God was doing.

God keeps His promises and His covenants.

You understand that.

This should encourage you greatly.

If God wouldn't keep His covenant with Abraham, how will He keep His covenant with Christ between us and Him?

But He's a covenant-keeping God.

That's the beauty of this.

And he says this, that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand and has redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt.

Know therefore that the Lord your God is God, the faithful God who keeps his covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations.

And Joseph is that guy.

in the worst circumstance of his life.

This 400 years later is God saying this to a nation of people that he has brought out with his mighty hand.

This is incredible.

Listen, God will work way after you're gone.

And you have no idea what you have done and how God has used you and the people's lives around you to impact generations of people if God tarries.

Man, you're part of something big, let me tell you that.

Aren't you glad there's more to life than what this world offers?

Dude, these things are trinkets for the treasure, man.

Wow.

Now, Genesis 39, 21 through 23.

I know I've got to hurry.

I know, I've got to wrap up.

But we're going to miss some good stuff.

But anyway, I want you to see this.

I may have to go into high gear just to get through this because I don't want you to miss it.

Anyway, but the Lord was with Joseph.

Now he's in prison.

And he showed him what?

Steadfast love.

And he gave him what?

Oh, guys, let me tell you something.

He gave him favor.

Have you walked in the favor of God?

It's incredible.

It's incredible.

When God just does things and you're just like, what?

I didn't.

And God just.

Favor.

God's favor is not fair.

And we don't deserve his favor.

But when you, a man and woman of God living for God, walking in his steadfast love and in his favor.

Oh man, let me tell you what.

Wow.

Wow.

The favor of God is absolutely incredible.

Many of you are experiencing his favor, and you don't even know it's his favor, but you're experiencing it.

How did that job opportunity open up to you?

How did all this happen?

Man, God's favor.

It's incredible.

So God shows Joseph not only steadfast love, but also he gives him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison.

And the same thing happens to Joseph there.

He is elevated to what?

A position of leadership.

Look what God is doing to Joseph.

God is training Joseph.

He is preparing Joseph in these tough circumstances to forge his character, his integrity, develop his leadership, his dependence upon God.

He's doing all of these things to prepare him for what he has given him in a dream that he would do in his life.

At 17, there's no way Joseph could have walked in what God had given him to do.

God prepares Joseph through the furnace, through the fire, through time, through testing and development.

And by the time God is done with Joseph and it will happen according to his plan, God will raise up Joseph and he will be the number two man in all of Egypt.

Able to do what?

To fulfill God's plan.

God always prepares us.

He's not sending us in for failure.

Don't negate what God might be up to in your life, in your circumstance.

All right.

Well, I'm going to tell you real quick, if you guys want to start preparing for communion, would you guys get ready to do that?

They may already be.

Go ahead and prepare for communion.

I'm going to go ahead and share with the rest of them real quick, just kind of a real quick synopsis rundown.

While Joseph is there in prison, there's a cupbearer to the Pharaoh, and there's also a baker to the Pharaoh that gets sent there because he got mad at him for something.

Don't know.

And while they're there, they have these dreams.

And they're troubling dreams, and they say, we don't know how to understand these dreams.

And Joseph says, well, isn't it God, the one that interprets dreams?

He says, tell me your dream.

They tell him their dream, and Joseph interprets the dream.

And he says, hey, listen, when you all get out of here and this all happens, would you go ahead and make sure you remember me here in this pit?

They get out.

The dreams are fulfilled just like they said.

The baker gets his head lopped off and the cupbearer gets restored to his position.

Well, lo and behold, two years later.

Now, Joseph has been now, he is 30 years of age.

30 years of age.

17 when he was sold in slavery.

30 years have gone by.

And now Pharaoh has a very troubling dream.

No one can interpret the dream.

And here's the old cupbearer standing around Pharaoh's throne.

And he hears all the conversation.

He says, hey, hey, hey, I know a guy that interpreted dreams while I was in prison.

You know the thing that you put me in there for?

And everything that he said came to happen just like he said it would.

And Pharaoh does what?

He calls for Joseph.

This is incredible.

And Joseph gets cleaned up and shaved and brought before Pharaoh.

And Pharaoh says, I understand you can interpret dreams.

And what did Joseph do?

Oh, I'm a great dream interpreter.

No, he didn't.

He said, no, I can't interpret dreams, but God can.

See, he always gives God the glory.

And Pharaoh tells him the dream, and Joseph gives him the interpretation of the dream.

And after he did, Pharaoh says, hey, sounds great.

Let's put you in authority.

You are going to be number two in all of my kingdom.

Now, this is absolutely incredible.

Seven years of plenty go by.

Joseph goes to work diligently.

And what does he do?

He puts back all kinds of grain and everything in these huge, massive storehouses.

And then seven years of famine come.

And the famine was so severe in the land that even from where Joseph was from in his father's land, they are in great drought and trouble.

And his dad hears that there's actually grain in Egypt.

So he sends his brothers down there.

And his brothers show up down in Egypt.

And they come before who?

Joseph.

Now Joseph didn't look like Joseph at 17.

He looks like an Egyptian now.

They don't know who he is, but Joseph sees his brothers and he knows and recognizes them right away.

And the story goes along here, which is so incredible.

Ultimately, Joseph provides food for his family.

They go get his father, bring him back, and they all live there with Joseph in the land.

And what's so incredible is when Joseph saw his brothers, you know what Joseph remembered?

As they came before Joseph and they knelt down before him, Joseph remembered the dreams that he had had when he was 17 years old.

And God fulfilled this absolute, incredible dream that God said would be.

And let me tell you this about your life, Christian.

God's not through writing your story.

But God has a story for all of us.

And you know the ultimate story of our life?

It's a story of redemption.

And ultimately what we're living for is we're not living for this world.

We're living for a time we will rule and we will reign with Christ, the King of glory.

Every one of you in Christ, regardless of your purpose and situation and experiences in this life, God is working us to a point of our future that we will all take place and part in, and that is when we will spend eternity with Him, but we will rule and we will reign with Christ on this earth, and we will do what man was intended to do back in the garden.

Your future and your purpose is great.

And here's what Joseph says here in Genesis 50, 20.

This is after his father dies and his brothers were concerned that he was going to now be harsh with them.

He had every right to do that.

What do you think Joseph would have done at 18 if he'd had a whack at his brothers?

Probably lopped off their heads.

But he didn't.

Here's what Joseph came to find out.

Genesis 50, 20.

As for you, you meant evil against me.

Christian, here's your anthem.

But God meant it for good.

To bring it about that many people should keep alive as they are today.

Joseph recognizes the hand of God throughout all of this time.

Is that not incredible?

Absolutely mind-blowing.

Over 20 years go by and he finally meets his brothers.

And after all this time, this is what he's come to learn.

Here it is, Christian, you need to know this.

That God is working all things for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose.

And I mean all things.

Here's the key.

You live

For the honor and the glory of God, even in the midst of the most unrecognizable or times in life that make no sense, you keep doing what men and women of God do in spite of the situation or the circumstance.

And watch if God does not continue to show you steadfast love and grant you His favor and blessing in the midst of all that you experience.

We know this is true because we know God's word is true.

If you have your Bibles, I'd like you to turn them to 1 Corinthians chapter 11.

We're going to take communion together here as a body of believers.

We here at Texel McCowboy Church have open communion.

Simply means that anyone here who has come this morning is free to take communion.

But we do want you to understand something significant about communion.

Communion is not to be taken lightly.

Communion is when we come together as a body of believers and we remember our Lord.

What are we remembering today?

We are remembering His body that was broken and given for us for our sin.

The blood of Christ that was sinless, that was the blood that covers all of our sin.

This atoning sacrifice is what we're remembering today in the body and the blood of Jesus.

And we understand that this is the only way man could be atoned, was through the body and the blood of Christ.

For without the giving of blood, there's no remission of sin.

And Christ's blood had to be given.

That's the payment required to purchase us back to God, all of us who were born in Adam, fallen in Adam's sinfulness, receiving the imputed sinful nature from Adam.

God, His entire story is like the story of His people in the Old Testament in Genesis.

It's the story of us being enslaved to Satan and the kingdom of darkness.

And Christ coming and providing the means of salvation where God would save us out from underneath the kingdom of darkness and transfer us to His glorious kingdom by faith in Jesus Christ.

So this morning, what we want to do as we prepare to take communion is we don't want to do this lightly.

In other words, Scripture tells us, let me read you here, just briefly here, and then we're going to take communion together.

But we're going to spend just a few moments in silent, not silent, well, preferably silent, but quiet prayer before God.

Why?

We want to examine our hearts here this morning.

You don't have to take communion, okay?

You don't have to do it.

Don't think that someone next to you is going to go, oh, that dude must have sin in his life.

The purpose of communion, though, is that we would take this time and just get our heart right before God.

We confess unrepentant sin.

We need to confess sin.

Spend that moment doing that.

We need to think about the sacrifice of Christ.

It was the greatest price ever paid, and the price was required, the life of God the Son, in order to redeem you to Him, to God.

Let me read this to you.

Paul says here in verse 23, For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and he said, This is my body, which is for you.

Christ died for your sin.

For you, for your sin.

He didn't die for part of it.

He died for the whole of it.

All of it.

Those things that you hate that you did that just are there in your minds.

Those things that you don't want anybody else to know about.

God knows about them all.

And Jesus Christ died for all of them.

And his blood covered every one of them.

And it's paid in full by the blood of Jesus, man.

You are set free in Christ.

No more list of sins is ever to be held against you.

Because Jesus Christ paid for it all by his blood.

It's a beautiful thing.

Now, he broke the bread, gives it to his apostles, and he says, this is my body, which is for you.

He says, do this in remembrance of me.

And that's what we're doing this morning as we take this bread.

We're going to remember the body of Jesus Christ that was broken and beaten for us in order that we could be redeemed to God.

In other words, he died the death you deserved and merited in order that you could have the freedom in life.

that you didn't deserve.

That's why we give him honor this morning.

In verse 25 he says, in the same way also he took the cup after supper saying, this cup is the new covenant of what?

In my blood.

Do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me.

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim something.

You proclaim the Lord's death until he comes again.

Now here's the warning.

Whoever therefore eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and the blood of the Lord.

Let a person examine himself then and so eat of the bread and drink the cup.

For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself.

That is why Paul says many of you are weak and ill and some have died.

But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged.

But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the rest of the world.

So this is what we're doing today.

We are coming here as a body of believers recognizing that we are in Christ Jesus simply by the grace of God.

By God's desire, His will, that we would be brought to Him in salvation.

This is what we're doing today.

Does everybody have their stuff yet?

The juice and the bread?

Everybody have it?

How about you up top, guys?

Do you all have it?

Just want to make sure everybody's got it.

Everybody over here, do you guys have everything?

Okay.

Thank you, Michael.

All right.

So I'm going to have a word of prayer and then we're going to take this.

Something I want you to know too, what's going on here is not taking the literal body and the blood of Jesus.

This is not transubstantiation.

This is remembering the greatest sacrifice ever given.

We have received the grace of God.

God has poured His grace into our lives.

By faith, we have been born again.

And what we're doing today by taking this is remembering the body of Christ and the blood of Christ, that which has brought us into covenant with God, which is binding.

Isn't that incredible to know?

So today when we take this, we're going to remember this.

What I'm going to do is I'm going to have a word of prayer and then you take a few moments and you just sit there quietly before the Lord, examine your own heart before him and allow God to just reveal things to you for a few moments.

And then we'll take communion together.

Father, God, Lord, I pray, Lord, that you would just search our hearts, Lord, in this moment.

God, I want to thank you for your Holy Spirit that indwells every single believer in this place.

And God, you are faithful, Lord, to convict us of those things in our life that are unpleasing to you.

So God, I pray that right now in these next few moments, Lord, that your Holy Spirit would speak to each and every one of us in our own hearts, Lord, as we ask and just search our own hearts before you, God, asking you to reveal those things.

And as you reveal those things, Father, we just confess those things to you and ask and seek, Lord, your forgiveness.

And Father, you are faithful and just to forgive us of all sin.

Lord, and we're grateful for that if we confess those things before you.

And so, Lord, right now we ask that you would search our hearts.

In those names, please.

Amen.

Father God, we want to thank you today for our incredible salvation that we have come to know in Christ.

And Lord, my prayer is if there's anyone in this place that doesn't know you, Lord, that they will repent of their sin and turn to Christ Jesus and be saved today.

Lord, for those of us that are here that are in Christ, Lord, we want to thank you so much for saving us and for offering, Lord, your own Son.

For sending Christ to come and to take upon flesh and to live today.

in this world, Lord, that He might live a holy, perfect life before You and accomplish that for which we cannot do for ourselves.

And that, Father, that He came not to be served, but to serve and give His life as a ransom for many.

Lord, we are here today for one reason, and that is because we have been forgiven, we have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, and we've been born again of the Spirit today, and we are children of the one true living God.

Amen.

And so Father Lord, right now we want to thank you for his body.

We remember the body that was beaten, it was crushed, it was broken, and it was crucified.

And the wages of sin is death.

And Father, we want to thank you for Jesus Christ who died the death we deserve so that we could have everlasting life.

I want to encourage you to take this bread and eat it and remember the body of Christ that was given for you.

Father, we want to thank you for the blood of Jesus that washes away all of our sin.

And Lord, we understand that without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sin.

The required price to free us would be Christ's blood and his body broken for us, giving his own life so that we could live.

Take and drink and remember the blood of Jesus Christ that was given for each of you.

Father God, once again, Lord, we want to thank you so much for your incredible gift, Lord, of grace and mercy and providing salvation for all of us.

Lord, we want to thank you for that today.

Lord, we just pray that as we leave this place, Lord, we would be reminded that there are people everywhere that we're going to see today.

that have not yet come to know this incredible salvation that is by faith in Jesus Christ alone.

And Lord, that we are your ambassadors sent out into this world to represent you to a world of people that are lost.

And we are to speak on your behalf, sharing the gospel message for how beautiful are the feet of those who bring the good news. And so Lord, as we go throughout this week, as we celebrate 250 years of our nation, We thank you, Lord, for the freedoms that we do enjoy.

But there is no true freedom that can be found outside of freedom that is found in Jesus Christ.

For he who the Son sets free, he will be free indeed.

Father, we remember that and we thank you for these things.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen.

God bless you guys. Have a wonderful week in the Lord.

NOTES: