

## Multi-Colored Grace, Pt 5: A Dark Providence (Genesis 40)

We have sung today some of the deepest words about our holy God and the hope for our souls in darkest times of suffering. Joseph in Genesis 40 is in need of that hope. He's literally, emotionally, and spiritually in a dark place for a crime he didn't commit. But he's able to keep from being stuck in dark discouragement and even to help other prisoners who are more discouraged and downcast in this chapter. In a jail that had little color or kindness, God's providence and multi-color grace makes Joseph a light, a hope in darkness. But the chapter ends with flickering hope snuffed out for him, and he's back to darkness on earth and silence from heaven for months that turned to years

**40:1** *Then it came about after these things, the cupbearer and the baker for the king of Egypt offended their lord, the king of Egypt.* <sup>2</sup> *Pharaoh was furious with his two officials, the chief cupbearer and the chief baker.* <sup>3</sup> *So he put them in confinement in the house of the captain of the bodyguard, in the jail, the same place where Joseph was imprisoned.* <sup>4</sup> *The captain of the bodyguard put Joseph in charge of them, and he took care of them; and **they were in confinement for some time.*** <sup>5</sup> *Then the cupbearer and the baker for the king of Egypt, who were confined in jail, both had a dream the same night, each man with his own dream and each dream with its own interpretation.* <sup>6</sup> *When Joseph came to them in the morning and observed them, behold, **they were dejected.*** <sup>7</sup> *He asked Pharaoh's officials who were with him in confinement in his master's house, "Why are your faces so sad [ESV "downcast"] today?"* <sup>8</sup> *Then they said to him, "We have had a dream and there is no one to interpret it." Then Joseph said to them, "Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell it to me, please."* <sup>9</sup> *So the chief cupbearer told his dream to Joseph, and said to him, "In my dream, behold, there was a vine in front of me; <sup>10</sup> and on the vine were three branches. And as it was budding, its blossoms came out, and its clusters produced ripe grapes.* <sup>11</sup> *"Now Pharaoh's cup was in my hand; so I took the grapes and squeezed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I put the cup into Pharaoh's hand."* <sup>12</sup> *Then Joseph said to him, "This is the interpretation of it: the three branches are three days; <sup>13</sup> within three more days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your office; and you will put Pharaoh's cup into his hand according to your former custom when you were his cupbearer.* <sup>14</sup> ***"Only keep me in mind when it goes well with you, and please do me a kindness by mentioning me to Pharaoh and get me out of this house.*** <sup>15</sup> ***"For I was in fact kidnapped from the land of the Hebrews, and even here I have done nothing that they should have put me into the dungeon."***

<sup>16</sup> When the chief baker saw that he had interpreted favorably, he said to Joseph, "I also saw in my dream, and behold, there were three baskets of white bread on my head; <sup>17</sup> and in the top basket there were some of all sorts of baked food for Pharaoh, and the birds were eating them out of the basket on my head." <sup>18</sup> Then Joseph answered and said, "This is its interpretation: the three baskets are three days; <sup>19</sup> within three more days Pharaoh will lift up your head from you and will hang you on a tree, and the birds will eat your flesh off you." [a great disgrace to Egyptians]

<sup>20</sup> Thus it came about on the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast for all his servants; and he lifted up the head of the chief cupbearer and the head of the chief baker among his servants. <sup>21</sup> He restored the chief cupbearer to his office, and he put the cup into Pharaoh's hand; <sup>22</sup> but he hanged the chief baker, just as Joseph had interpreted to them. <sup>23</sup> Yet the chief cupbearer did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.

He finally gets a good break, but the guy breaks his promise; his one chance for a ticket out of there...lost. We know this isn't the end of the story, but at the end of each day he won't see any light of day for 700+ more days in a row. He had asked the cupbearer a simple favor: just remember the guy who spoke your release, speak for his release, too. While presidential pardons are going around (as Pharaoh pardoned you, while he's in a good mood), Joseph asks only one thing: "remember me, just put in a good word with the king. Please tell him how I've been falsely accused but that I tell the truth about dreams and can interpret the future in a way the Egyptian wise men cannot, and that I can better serve this kingdom outside prison as someone's slave."

For the first few days when someone came to the door, maybe he lit up with hope that it would be his release like his cupbearer friend was released. But day after day, week after week, month after month ... nothing. 2 more years of darkness that didn't lift. God revealed to him that the cupbearer would be released and when, but Joseph is left in the dark about his own future. God made Joseph reveal the future in detail from another man's dream, so surely God could make that man remember Joseph. But Joseph is forgotten and probably felt forsaken by man, and tempted to wonder if God has forgotten him and is frowning at him in providence. His prayers hit the prison ceiling.

William Cowper in the 1700s knew what it was like for darkness not to lift for years in depression and despair, what they called melancholy in his day. His knew dejection like the prisoners at the end of v. 6. His face was often downcast like v. 7. His emotional darkness drove him to attempts at suicide.

He often felt forgotten like Joseph in v. 23 and utterly forsaken by the Lord. One biography writes: 'He was losing his hold on reality almost entirely...he set out to drown himself and took a cab to Tower Wharf [in London]. But ... he found the water too low and "a porter seated upon some goods" as if "a message to prevent" him. When he got home that evening he tried to [kill himself by taking] laudanum but found his fingers "closely contracted" and "entirely useless." [he threw away the laudanum and dashed the vial to pieces ... on waking at three in the morning, he took his penknife and lay with his weight upon it, the point toward his heart. It was broken and would not penetrate'<sup>1</sup>] The next morning he tried three times to hang himself with a garter. The third time he became unconscious, but the garter broke ...

... in December 1763 he was committed to [an] Insane Asylum, where the fifty-eight-year-old Dr. Nathaniel Cotton tended the patients. [In God's providence Cotton was] an evangelical believer and a lover of God and the Gospel. He loved Cowper and held out hope to him ... Six months into his stay, Cowper found a Bible lying (not by accident) on a bench.

... I opened upon the 11th of St. John, where Lazarus is raised from the dead; and saw so much benevolence, mercy, goodness, and sympathy with miserable men, in our Saviour's conduct, that I almost shed tears upon the revelation ...

Increasingly, he felt he was not utterly forsaken. Again he felt led to turn to the Bible. The first verse he saw was Rom. 3:25 [forgiveness by the cross]

Immediately I received the strength to believe it, and the full beams of the Sun of Righteousness shone upon me. I saw the sufficiency of the atonement He ... made, my pardon sealed in His blood, and all the fullness and completeness of His justification. In a moment I believed, and received the gospel ...<sup>2</sup>

He was saved but would still struggle at times for many years in depression. His story wasn't happily ever after, still a debated mental illness plagued. In God's smiling providence, though, Cowper ended up in the church of Pastor John Newton, a former slave-trader turned hymn-writer of Amazing Grace. Both of them saw the sins of their past as guilty stains (suicide and slavery), and were amazed at grace that would save a vile wretch like them. Newton and Cowper together would write an entire hymnal. One of the first hymns Cowper wrote after an attack of temporary madness spoke of a fountain of grace where sinners by blood from Emmanuel's veins lose all guilty stains:

'The dying thief rejoiced to see that fountain in his day;

And there have I, though vile as he, washed all my sins away ...

Ever since, by faith, I saw the stream Thy flowing wounds supply,

Redeeming love has been my theme, and shall be till I die.'

None of the struggles of his life were accidents or coincidence, they were all the providence of God. Providence is God working in all things together for His glory and our ultimate final good. *All things* include not-so-good things. Ps 105 says God "*sent a man before [Israel]— Joseph, sold as a slave. They bruised his feet with shackles, his neck was put in irons, till what he foretold came to pass, till the word of the LORD proved ... true*" (v. 17-20 NIV). That was physically true of Joseph in Gen 40, and emotionally true of Cowper who once spoke of his paralyzing depression in similar stark dark language:

[I was struck] with such a dejection of spirits ... Day and night I was upon the rack ... rising up in despair.<sup>3</sup> One of the last poems Cowper wrote before he died was called originally Conflict: light shining out of darkness. In our hymnal you can find it under #342: God Moves in a Mysterious Way

Deep in His dark and hidden mines, With never failing skill  
[God] fashions all His bright designs And works His sovereign will ...  
Judge not the Lord by feeble sense But trust Him for His grace  
Behind a frowning providence He hides a smiling face

Those words of Cowper's hymn were framed and given to me by a couple in our church I was privileged to walk through a dark time with, words I taught on in a Sunday night series years ago in the midst of dark providence in their life that God showed His grace in. Those lyrics are very precious to me, and hang in my office by the door reminding me when I go in and out.

That's the song we'll sing today and that's where Joseph is living in Gen 40. Deep in the darkness, in a place that seemed to be hidden, God's unfailing skill is fashioning bright designs for Joseph, though it's hard to see it in his dim cell. God is working His sovereign will of providence. Sometimes it doesn't make sense to us what the Lord is doing, but Cowper said from his first-hand experience that our thinking is flawed and feeble and we're not to trust it or our feelings. 'Judge not the Lord by feeble sense, but trust Him for His grace.' Grace is multicolored like a rainbow you can see after a storm.

Providence at times seems to be frowning. Sometimes what God is doing seems like a dark cloud, but actually His bright smiling face hides behind what we can see, as He works in the midst of all for our later greater good. He actually rides upon and above the storm, and moves in mysterious ways as wonders He performs. 'Faith sees His smiling face.'<sup>4</sup> And I pray God will grant us faith for dark providences ahead to see God is not frowning at or forgetting us in dark times, He's smiling and sovereignly working for us.

What is God doing in dark times? Many things, this chapter gives us some:

1. God works through the sins of others (v. 1-3)
2. God works in us so we'll minister to others (v. 4-13)
3. God works to draw our focus to Him above all others (v. 14-23)

### **First, God works through the sins of others (v. 1-3)**

v. 1 begins with the phrase “*after these things...*” – what things in context? The sins of Joseph’s brothers in context: they’d stripped his multi-colored coat, cast him into a pit, and planned to murder him. Then cooler heads and covetous hearts prevailed with an alternate plan to sell him as a slave to get some money out of it. Sinful slave traders buy him and sell him to a sinful pagan, and a sinful wife of the man sinfully frames Joseph to cover her sin. Due to no sin of his own, Joseph is now in prison in Egypt ... but God has him right where he wants him. God’s providence works through their sin.

God never excuses man’s sin, but in the mystery of providence, God uses man’s sin to accomplish His purposes. Man is responsible for his sin, but God is sovereign, and He works in and through sinful people because that’s the only kind of material there is. That’s how big and how sovereign God is, God is not only working behind things that are good, God is working in all things together for good, even in evil God intends good (as Gen 50:20 says).

And v. 1 says the sin of two of Pharaoh’s top servants lands them in prison. The king is furious in v. 2 and v. 3 says they were confined in prison. We don’t know what their sin was, they and Pharaoh don’t know who Joseph was, but it’s no coincidence Joseph becomes prison roommate to Pharaoh’s top officials. This is by the providence of God, who’s setting up the chess board and moving to capture pieces, and a rook will move beside the king. All the sinners on the board are pawns of providence, and a wise Master is setting it up to move 12 pieces across the board (Jacob+11 sons to Egypt).

[we'll see it play out more in future chapters]

Joseph doesn’t know this yet, but God is working through the sin of others, that’s point #1, and in the meanwhile, God has work for Joseph to do here.

### **Point #2: God works in us so we'll minister to others (v. 4-13)**

When we suffer, we wonder why God allowed this to happen to us, as if His purpose is focused on us. But it’s not all about us. It’s often bigger than us. God has others in mind beyond us, and in Joseph’s case, it was a ministry to officials of Egypt and a witness of the true God who alone knows the future.

Remember the original readers, the Israelites under Moses, had come out of Egypt when God had showed His supremacy over Egyptian wise men and Pharaoh's servants and his false gods in the plagues and Exodus. Israel like Joseph was to be a witness to the nations, and his life was a pattern for them

Allan Ross: 'Just as Joseph lived in bondage in Egypt before his deliverance and supremacy over Egypt, so would the nation. Just as suffering and bondage formed tests for Joseph to see if he kept his faith and was worthy of the promise, so too the bondage of the nation was a means of discipline and preparation for the nation's future responsibilities ... the climax of the story showed that the Hebrew slave served a God who was infinitely superior to Egypt, and whose wisdom outstripped the wisdom of Egypt.'<sup>5</sup>

But Joseph not only manifests God's wisdom, he also manifests God's care. In v. 4 the ESV it says Joseph "attended them" or in the NKJV "he served them" or in the NASB I'm reading from it says "he took care of them." He served and showed genuine care for their needs. He was ministering to these prisoners. Joseph started the first prison ministry, to people who like Chuck Colson of Prison Fellowship Ministry, had worked for the most powerful man in their world. Joseph is like a chaplain in v. 6 as he notices they seem dejected. He's like a counselor in v. 7 asking why their faces were downcast and in v. 8 he's like a caring shepherd pointing them to the God who knows.

[turn to 2 Corinthians 1 for a NT application]

Joseph knew from experience what it was like to be literally cast down, and in the 11 years since he was cast in that pit God had given him grace to deal with disappointment and discouragement. Like the writer of Ps 42, maybe he first learned the art of preaching to himself instead of listening to himself "*why are you cast down, O my soul ... hope in God*" (42:5, 11). Now he can help others by asking them why they're cast down in their spirit, then he can tell them to hope in God. God gives us hope and comfort so we'll pass it on.

2 Corinthians 1:4 says God "*comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God...*" (v. 6 also explains what we go through is so others can be comforted, God comforts us so we can to others)

Why do God's people suffer? The NT tells us here it's so they can minister to others with the comfort God ministered to them. It's not about you or me, it's about God and His comfort to and through His suffering people. The last few weeks I've seen that very truth in action to the Urbani and Hanna family

Turn forward to Hebrews 12 where it explains how our discipline from God or difficulties are part of God training us in righteousness to help others, too

Heb 12:11 in NKJV says "*no **chastening** seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.* <sup>12</sup> *Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down [so God trains us to strengthen others, v. 13b adds] ... so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed.*

This is something I've also been experiencing in recent weeks with a finger that was severely dislocated and is in the process of being healed. Some of the translations say "out of joint" in v. 13. Some of you have seen a picture of what it looked like, if you don't like seeing things like that you may want to look away for a few seconds, but here's a visual of what Heb 12:13 says.

That's not right. That's something out of place, out of joint. What Hebrews tells us is those who have been trained are to strengthen weak hands and joints, to keep the loose or lame parts from being further bent out of shape. I can tell you it hurt 10x worse when it wasn't healing right and they had to pop it out of place again and re-set it in already swollen scar tissue! It was not pleasant, it was painful like v. 11. I was thankful someone with training was able to help put it back in place, like v. 12. I didn't want a new intern who had never done it before to practice on me (no offense to any here). It was comforting to have someone with experience doing Heb 12:13 for me.

The NT applies this to spiritual healing. Things aren't always right in the body of Christ, either. People can get bent out of shape, and go directions they're not supposed to. If another part of the body doesn't help support, it can get worse. We need buddy tape, or a bond of love as every member helps others (study Eph 4:1-16). The main NT visual for a church is a body

Back in Gen 40 Joseph is a great example. Kent Hughes says: 'what Joseph had experienced in the famous ups and downs of his own life had made him unusually sensitive and compassionate to others ... You may not feel lonely until you have suffered loneliness. If you have never suffered serious depression, your suggested cure may be, "Go shopping!" Ever broken a rib so that each breath is painful, and you live in terror that someone may tell you a joke? If so, you will truly sympathize when it happens to others ... A sympathetic resonance welled in [Joseph's] soul. He knew where other people were and how they felt. And he cared. A great leader is emerging.'<sup>6</sup>

The first recorded words of Joseph in jail are caring, not complaining ones. In contrast to the 17 year old Joseph who seemed oblivious to how much he was making his brothers hate him, God made him a man sensitive to others with thoughtful words of love . Many of us when we don't like how things are going, we withdraw and become inward-focused. Some might put on a happy face at church, but inwardly are resentful and bitter. Others want the church and world to know how unhappy they are by body language, or are careful not to smile, and some want to make others as miserable as them.

One pastor writes: 'our response to ongoing suffering reveals something about our hearts. When our hopes have been disappointed, we may tend to withdraw into ourselves. We retreat into our shells in self-pity ... At least, I know that I do. [he confesses if] my expectations of life are disappointed, I become "frustrated" (a word I use to conceal the fact that I'm actually angry), and I replay in my head [what happened and] all the ways ... people around me need to serve and love me. If they fail to do so, I start to resent them ... The last thing I am likely to do is to ask ... how I can perhaps be enabled to serve and love others more effectively because of the painful circumstances in which I find myself. That response reveals my heart ...'<sup>7</sup>

If we're honest we confess we all have our sinful places apart from grace. But by grace God wants us draw closer to Him and His people in difficult times, not to turn away or turn inward, but to turn outward and upward. The story is told of a man "who went through the Great Depression, losing a job, a fortune, a wife, and a home. He was a believer in Jesus ... though he was naturally depressed and cast down by circumstances. One day in the midst of his depression he stopped to watch some men doing stonework on a huge church in the city. One was busy chiseling a triangular piece of stone. 'What are you going to do with that?' he asked. The workman stopped and pointed to a little opening near the top of the spire. 'See that little opening up there near the top?' he said. '...I'm shaping this down here so it will fit up there.'"<sup>8</sup>

This is what God does with us here on earth as He prepares us for a higher purpose. There's a lot that has to be chiseled away in me and you, and it's jarring when the hand brings down the chisel or other tools, but it's chipping away hard layers of sin and shaping us down here to fit up there. We're too big in our natural state to be useful for where He wants us, so He chisels us.

God has been shaping Joseph for the higher purposes ahead of him and they start with him in a prison down low, ministering to high-ranking prisoners.



He tells them of the true God who knows all things. Both men tell him their troubling dreams in v. 9-19. Each dream had to do with their occupation and had 3 items from it representing what their former boss would do in 3 days .

The first is like a Planet Earth special with plants in super fast forward film sprouting and growing. The second is more like a nightmare or horror film, like a Hitchcock movie with the birds swooping down to attack and take away what's on his head. The first dream was good news Joseph told to the cupbearer of his restored life at the king's right hand in 3 days. The second dream was the death sentence to the baker who would hang from a tree. In both cases, Joseph faithfully told the truth, even unpleasant truth, and he's an example to us who speak God's truth to sinners about death without God

By grace, this man had opportunity for 3 days to ask Joseph about his God, as Joseph clearly knew the true God. Suffering and solemn times when we face death are times God uses for us to minister to others as His witnesses. In our dark times, God wants us to speak of judgment and good news, too.

God works in us so we'll minister to others, that's point #2, now point #3:  
**God works to draw our focus to Him above all others (v. 14-23)**

Joseph has hope in the cupbearer in v. 14 to be able to get him out, but by v. 23 it's clear his only hope will be God, as man fails and forgets. NKJV of v. 14: "*But remember me when it is well with you, and please show kindness to me; make mention of me to Pharaoh, and get me out of this house.*" In the end of v. 15, the ESV calls his prison a "*pit*." Other versions have *dungeon* but it's the same word used of the *pit* his brothers threw him into in Gen 39. Even today being thrown in confinement is sometimes called "the hole." No cable TV, cushioned bed, or comforts here ... this is an ancient dungeon pit.

Turn to Lamentations 3 where the same word "kindness" and "pit" is used. This same word for "pit" was used of Jeremiah who was also faithful to God and as a result was thrown in a pit and was also thrown in a dungeon called a pit, described as a "vaulted cell" (Jeremiah 37-38). He wrote Lamentations (after Jeremiah, before Ezekiel). It's a little book with big sorrow from one who is called 'the weeping prophet.' Lam. 3 is the heart of its hurt and hope:

- in v. 44 he feels God is covered by a cloud prayers can't pass thru
- in v. 48-49 his eyes run like streams of water, tears for God's people
- in v. 53 he feels like he has been thrown in a pit he can't get out of
- but in v. 55 is a key statement, using the same word pit from Gen 40

<sup>55</sup> *I called on Your name, O LORD, **Out of the lowest pit.*** <sup>56</sup> *You have heard my voice, “Do not hide Your ear from my prayer for relief, From my cry for help.”* <sup>57</sup> *You drew near when I called on You; You said, “Do not fear!”*

God is there in deep pits or dark providences! Look at v. 6 where he started:  
<sup>6</sup> *In dark places He has made me dwell, Like those who have long been dead.* <sup>7</sup> *He has walled me in so that I cannot go out; He has made my chain heavy* [He knew that literally from experience like Joseph, and emotionally]

<sup>18</sup> *So I say, “My strength has perished, And so has my hope from the LORD.”* [this is what Jeremiah was continually saying to himself, and he's listening to himself, and in v. 19 he's remembering, rehearsing his pain and bitterness] ... <sup>20</sup> *Surely my soul remembers And is bowed down within me.*

As his soul focuses on itself and rehearses and remembers his pain, he bows down in more pain like a sharp pain in the stomach. All hope in man is lost in v. 18, but here comes the turning point in v. 21. Now he stops listening to himself in his feelings, and starts speaking to himself about a faithful God.

<sup>21</sup> *This I recall to my mind, Therefore I have hope.* <sup>22</sup> *The LORD’s lovingkindnesses indeed never cease* [that's the same word for 'kindness' Joseph was asking for from the butler, but man's kindness fell short there. Joseph's hope in man came to an end, but the steadfast lovingkindness of the Lord never ceases, and His mercies never come to an end, Jeremiah says!]  
<sup>23</sup> *They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.* <sup>24</sup> *“The LORD is my portion,” says my soul, “Therefore I have hope in Him.”*

Jeremiah has turned from listening to his soul to preaching to his soul that the Lord is sufficient and he can hope in God. It's what Ps 42-43 does "*why are you in despair, O my soul* [he's preaching to his soul] ... *hope in God.*" It's like we sang earlier: 'Still my soul be still, do not forsake the truth you learned in the beginning, Wait upon the Lord, and hope will rise, as stars appear when day is dimming. God you are my God, and I will trust in you'<sup>9</sup>

It's what sustained Eric Liddell, the former Olympian of Chariots of Fire fame. He later went through a fiery trial as a missionary in China when he was imprisoned there. He died there away from his family but 1st reportedly taught the prisoners he was ministering to how to sing to their souls a song

'Be still, my soul: the Lord is on thy side. Bear patiently the cross of grief or pain. Leave to thy God to order and provide; In every change, He faithful will remain.'<sup>10</sup>

I heard Joni Eareckson in person sing that a few months back, and I wept. It's what sustained Horatio Spafford when he lost his 4 daughters at sea and he's riding on a boat over the very spot of his great loss when he wrote:

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way, when sorrows like sea billows roll;  
Whatever my lot, Thou has taught me to say, It is well, it is well, with my soul.

Our soul doesn't naturally do this, we must be taught to and tell our soul to. The hymn-writers understood the gospel spoken to our soul empowers this:

Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come, let this blest assurance control  
That Christ hath regarded my helpless estate and hath shed His own blood for my soul!

The gospel is the power of God for salvation and for souls to be stilled and strengthened. The cupbearer hadn't regarded Joseph's estate, but Christ had. He's forgotten by man as the chapter ends, but God remembers Joseph in a neverending love. In the gospel of Luke, Jesus like Joseph also comes to the downcast who appeared very sad (24:14). Jesus like him also ministered to the needs of others and told them the future, of judgment and grace (Lk 21). Like in Gen 40, Jesus said '*one will be taken, the other one left*' (17:34-36).

Jesus from the start of His ministry also proclaimed good news of release to prisoners (4:18). But the climax was on the cross: Jesus like Joseph was with two criminals, and only one them receives the King's pardon (Lk 23). One perishes as he hangs on a tree where birds would eat his flesh, but the other is promised a new life that day, not in Egypt's kingdom, but in God's!

Luke 23:42 "*Jesus, remember me* [that's the request of Gen 40] *when You come in Your kingdom!*" <sup>43</sup> *And He said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me..."* [the cupbearer didn't remember, but Christ does!]

When Christ is exalted to the right hand of the kingdom, He remembers us. Unlike Joseph, we're not innocent of our crimes against God, we're guilty. It is us who deserve to die on a tree, but Jesus dies on one for us. Joseph may have felt forsaken by man in Gen 40, but Jesus in a greater way as He bears our sin, cries out '*My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?!*' Behind a frown in heaven, behind a darkness of sin that God could not look through, behind the darkest providence ever, God was hiding His smiling face. Isaiah 53 says God was pleased to bruise His Son to save and heal us! Because He was forsaken on the cross, all in Christ will never be forsaken or forgotten. If you're not yet in Christ, look to Him in faith and ask Him to remember you in His kingdom. And if you're in Christ, preach these truths to your soul

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.cyberhymnal.org/htm/tf/tfountfb.htm>, citing *North American Review*, 1834.

<sup>2</sup> John Piper, *The Hidden Smile of God: The Fruit of Affliction in the Lives of John Bunyan, William Cowper, and David Brainerd* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001), 91–93.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 86.

<sup>4</sup> This is the wording of our hymnal, rather than ‘He hides a smiling face’ (original).

<sup>5</sup> Allan Ross, *Creation & Blessing*, p. 590.

<sup>6</sup> Kent Hughes, *Genesis*, p. 469-70.

<sup>7</sup> Iain Duguid, Matthew Harmon, *Living in the Light of Inextinguishable Hope*, p. 65-66.

<sup>8</sup> Story credited to Billy Graham, in James Boice, *Genesis*, 3:937.

<sup>9</sup> ‘Still, My Soul, Be Still,’ Keith and Kristyn Getty.

<sup>10</sup> ‘Be Still, My Soul,’ Katharina A. von Schlegel.

<http://www.cyberhymnal.org/htm/b/e/bestill.htm>