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Now You See Me, Now You Don't - Part 5

Selected Scriptures

Prayer: *Father, we just want to thank you for your grace and your goodness and your blessing. We thank you for church. We just thank you that we can gather together as we have. I just thank you for the gift of your word. I thank you for the gift of your Holy Spirit. We pray for the presence of your Spirit this morning, Lord. Once again we're going to be looking into your word, looking into your book, we pray that you would give us insight and grace and wisdom as we do just that. And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Well "now you now you see me, now you don't" is not only a child's game and I think by now you guessed, it's also a means by which God grows faith in his children. God frequently interjects himself into their lives and then he pulls back, whether he's interacting with Abraham or Isaac or Joseph, Moses or Bill or Suzy or George or Mary. The initial experience is "now I see God," and it's usually followed by a lengthy period of "now I don't." This is the pattern that God uses to grow faith in his church, to grow faith in his

children, and we've seen that so far in Abraham, we're now going to be looking at it once again in Joseph.

We ended last week's message with Joseph sitting in a prison cell falsely accused of the rape of Potiphar's wife. This morning we're going to be looking at Joseph's launch from prison to Pharaoh's court and beyond that to Joseph's confrontation with his brothers, one in which he makes one of the most important statements in all of scripture. We frequently quote *Romans 8:28*, and it says: *"All things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose."* Well Joseph demonstrates exactly how God makes that happen during his confrontation with his brothers. I mean it's really the culmination of the life of Joseph and it all started with a setup, as it were. It was a dream that Joseph had and he tells his family -- quote -- *"There we were, binding sheaves in the field. Then behold, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and indeed your sheaves stood all around and bowed down to my sheaf."* Well, that dream turned out to be absolutely prophetic. Joseph winds up going from prison cell to becoming the vice regent in all of Egypt. He literally becomes the sheave that all the other sheaves are now bowing down to just like the dream had prophesied. But I'm getting ahead of myself.

So let's join Joseph back at prison and terrible things have

happened to Joseph. He's been kidnapped, he's been sold into slavery, he's been falsely accused of rape and imprisoned in Pharaoh's dungeon which incidentally is the launching pad that would get Joseph into the presence of Pharaoh himself. Joseph's done nothing but good and in return he's received nothing but evil. His life thus far begs the question: Where is God in all of this? But this is God's perspective on Joseph and his prison experience. This is *Genesis 39:21*. It says: *But the LORD was with Joseph and showed him steadfast love and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. And the keeper of the prison put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners who were in the prison. Whatever was done there, he was the one who did it. The keeper of the prison paid no attention to anything that was in Joseph's charge, because the LORD was with him. And whatever he did, the LORD made it succeed.* Now we pointed out that this information is given to us in scripture but it was withheld from Joseph. God never sat Joseph down to explain to him that this was all part of an elaborate process that would eventuate with him being in the presence of Pharaoh himself. And so you might be noticing a pattern here. Joseph has every reason to think that God has abandoned him but he's wrong. God is right in the center of Joseph's life. God is involved in every aspect of his imprisonment but there's nothing to suggest that Joseph knows this by virtue of an explanation. He simply has to trust God's love and sovereignty when events seem to

shout that that's a fool's errand.

Now have you ever suffered for doing the right thing? Have you ever found yourself in a position where you were forced to make a right choice and perhaps you made it and you thought that somehow or other God owed you a good result? I mean I know I've been in that situation a number of times and I know precisely how I felt when I made a right choice, I mean, I thought God would be pleased and therefore my good choice would be rewarded, and the exact opposite happened. And at first I was astounded and then I was offended. I thought there was a linear relationship between good behavior and good results. You do good and you get good. And oftentimes that is the way it works but oftentimes it is not, not when God's main goal is to grow us in our faith.

I mean have you ever noticed that our faith seldom grows at all in the midst of good times and easy living? I mean it's when everything starts to go south that we're forced to decide what we're going to place our trust in, either our good circumstances or the God of all circumstance. So for some reason we are constantly taken by surprise when we encounter trials even though God has promised us this is the primary way that he's going to grow faith in us. *James 1:2 says: Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your*

faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. Joseph is a living example of how trials produce steadfastness in faith.

So while he's in prison he interprets the dream of Pharaoh's cupbearer and he tells him within a short period of time he's going to be completely restored, and just like he states it, it happens. The cupbearer is restored, and he promptly forgets all about Joseph, that is until Pharaoh himself has a dream that no one can interpret. And he dreams about these seven fat cows that are being eaten alive by seven gaunt cows and as he describes how disturbed he is by the dream, the cupbearer suddenly remembers the pinpoint accuracy with which Joseph interpreted his dream. Well, Joseph is yanked out of prison, he's cleaned up and he's presented to Pharaoh. Joseph tells Pharaoh the dream means that seven fat years are coming to Egypt to be followed by seven lean years, and Pharaoh winds up appointing Joseph to head up Egypt's response. So Joseph heads up Egypt's seven fat years, saving and storing a huge surplus of grain, and during the seven lean years Egypt becomes the food bank of the Middle East. People from all over are forced to turn to Egypt to avoid starvation and you'll never guess who one of those people groups is. Just happens to be Jacob and his eleven remaining sons. These are the very same fellows who sixteen years

earlier heard about Joseph's dream about him becoming the chief sheaf and all the other sheaves bowing down to him. It was that dream that fixed in their minds the decision to sell Joseph to the Ishmaelites. And for all intents and purposes they think Joseph is dead; they think he's long gone. They have no idea that he has risen to the level of vice regent in Egypt. All they know is after seven years of famine they're starving. *Genesis 42* says: *When Jacob learned that there was grain for sale in Egypt, he said to his sons, "Why do you look at one another?" And he said, "Behold, I have heard that there is grain for sale in Egypt. Go down and buy grain for us there, that we may live and not die." So ten of Joseph's brothers went down to buy grain in Egypt.*

Now you probably know it's a very long story but the brothers show up and they're instantly recognized by Joseph. Even though they don't recognize him, he does recognize them. It's been one of those things where it's been so many years that Joseph has changed, Joseph looks like an Egyptian and they couldn't in their wildest imagination picture that this shepherd boy who they had sold into slavery was now this big shot in Egypt. *Genesis 42* says: *Thus the sons of Israel came to buy among the others who came, for the famine was in the land of Canaan. Now Joseph was governor over the land. He was the one who sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brothers came and bowed themselves before him with their*

faces to the ground. You remember that dream sixteen years ago? I mean Joseph's family, they're now in the process of coming full circle around to this dream that Joseph had right at the very beginning, and it's taken sixteen full years but God has done precisely what the dream claimed right at the beginning. And during those sixteen years there were times I'm sure when Joseph felt completely abandoned. I mean he sat in that prison for two full years before the cupbearer remembered his ability to interpret dreams but it was all part of God's perfect plan. Over the course of those sixteen years, God had never left his side. And what appeared to be a random set of bad circumstances was actually God's grand agenda for Joseph and for the people of Israel playing itself out, and timing was everything. Only God knew the perfect way for circumstances to unfold and all God required of Joseph was to trust him. It's to trust that he was with him, empowering him in everything he did as a victim of kidnapping, as the head of Potiphar's household, as he sat in the prison cell and yet nowhere do we hear in scripture of God sitting down and explaining to Joseph exactly what was going to happen. That's because God had bigger plans and a bigger agenda than that. You see, all things really do work together for good to those who love God and who are called according to his purpose, and Joseph is one life in which God lays out the details of how all this happens.

Now we don't have the time to go into all of the details but God is clearly using Joseph to work a transformation in the lives of his brothers and in the life of his father Jacob and in the nation of Israel, and all the while God's also transforming Joseph. This is a classic example of God's big agenda at work. On the macro level God has taken Joseph from the life of an obscure shepherd and made him the prime minister of Egypt in order to keep the nation of Israel from facing starvation, but on a micro level he has nurtured in Joseph over all of these years this profound level of trust so that even when things seem to be going incredibly bad Joseph knows that his God is in control. Those years transformed Joseph from a prisoner in Pharaoh's dungeon to prime minister of Egypt but they also serve to teach us how God works in our lives as well.

After Joseph's father Jacob dies, now his brothers start to panic. They worry that now Joseph is free to work the vengeance that he would not work while his father was still alive. As *Genesis 50* says: *So they sent a message to Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this command before he died: 'Say to Joseph, "Please forgive the transgression of your brothers and their sin, because they did evil to you."' And now, please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father."* Joseph wept when they spoke to him. His brothers also came and fell down before him and said, *"Behold, we are your servants."* Well it's taken many, many years

but at long last the brothers acknowledged that the dream that he had told them about had indeed come true. And now Joseph utters what is one of the most important statements in all of scripture. He says: *But Joseph said to them, "Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today."* See, sixteen years of struggle had produced in Joseph exactly what God was after. Joseph spoke a principle then that applies to us even now. God had indeed worked all things together for good for Joseph who loved him and who was called according to his purpose. And Joseph was living proof that it doesn't really matter what this world throws at you, God so perfectly controls the world that even evil intentions can be superintended by God to accomplish his grand agenda for you. God does indeed have a perfect plan for each of our lives but it's perfect according to his plans and not necessarily ours. And a huge part of that is faith, *the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.* And things not seen is the essence of "now you see me, now you don't." It's trust in the absence of tangible proof, and it's the only currency of value that we have with God. I mean just think about this, what in the world do we have to offer to God? I mean he doesn't just have the cattle on a thousand hills, he has the universe. I mean the very notion of us offering something to God seems absurd. But the pages of scripture

demonstrate over and over again the one thing that we can offer back to God is our ability to trust him particularly when things seem to be pointing in the other direction. I mean just think about it, think of Abraham or David or Isaac or any of the patriarchs, everything they did that was of great value to God stemmed from their ability to put their trust in him. Think of the New Testament. There's precious few things that Jesus marveled at in the New Testament and they were all exercises of faith. When the centurion told Jesus that he didn't need to come into his house to heal his servant but merely say the word, Jesus marveled. When the Syrophenician woman trusted him to cure the demon that was in her daughter, he marveled as well. When the woman with the issue of blood touched the hem of his garment, Jesus marveled at her faith. And what do all these folks have in common? Well, they were desperate. Life was not going well for them. They could have just as easily become embittered and alienated but instead they trusted him enough to boldly make a claim on their faith. Here's something that human beings were engaging in that was clearly of great value to God, and the lesson here is that God is going to work in each of our lives so that we can get to a place where Joseph found himself in where we too can offer God the very same thing. You meant it evil but God meant it for good is the culmination of an attitude that stretched for decades of what seemed like abandonment, but what I want us to understand is that

God never for a moment abandoned Joseph. Even though there were many times in his life where it appeared to him and to us as observers of his life that that's exactly what happened. I mean just think about it, have you ever had a time in your life when you felt like God has abandoned you? Have you ever had a time in your life when you did the right thing only to find out that not only did it get you nowhere and that you genuinely suffered for it and when you turned to God somewhere in the midst of your suffering you came up empty? Welcome to Joseph's world.

Here's what we need to take away from all of this. You see, God had a master agenda for Joseph and he has one for you and me as well. Now I said at the beginning of this series, my agenda is to be comfortable, content and safe. God's agenda is for me to be a faithful, sanctified image of his Son living to advance the kingdom of God. Whether you're Joseph or Jack or Mary or Kathy, if you are one of God's own, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you've done so because you are uniquely chosen of God for an agenda. And that agenda may include saving the nation of Israel from starvation or bringing a hot meal to your neighbor. You may be called on to forgive your family of jealousy, betrayal and kidnapping or simple thoughtlessness and backbiting. What God wants to produce in your life and mine is an attitude of certainty that understands that

even bad intentions can be superintended by God to serve the ultimate purpose of God's sovereign will for my life. And what God did in Joseph's life he is doing right now in your life and mine. I mean the point is God does have a perfect plan for your life and God's agenda for you is going to include some very difficult hiccups here and there and you're going to be wondering sometimes if God is still there but trust me, he's got all of this taken care of. And someday in heaven you and I will see with the same level of precision what we're looking at right now in Joseph's life, that God's agenda for each of us was just as precise with us as it was with Joseph. Joseph was chosen for a number of tasks, I mean he was given the task of keeping his own family alive, not realizing his family would eventuate in producing a Messiah who would keep all of us spiritually alive, but he was also chosen to demonstrate how a life of faith and trust works. So thousands of years later we're still looking at Joseph's life for wisdom and insight to see how to understand how God interacts with his people to grow faith in them and to affect their world as Joseph affected his. Now in order to prepare for such a task God was willing to practice a very heavy dose of "now you see me, now you don't." And for much of this precious chosen servant of God's life it was mainly "now you don't." When life becomes painful and heaven seems silent, it's hard not to question God's faithfulness especially when it's you who's been singled out, and you know lots of others who seem to be

skating by quite nicely, thank you.

Reverend Wurmbrand pointed the out the other side of the story that Jesus told about that sheep that went wandering. Jesus says he leaves that ninety-nine and he goes after that one and in that case even though it's the very one who's wandering away, it's the only one who really has any proof of God's love and concern. He pointed out the other ninety-nine could reasonably say, well, we're being ignored, we're being abandoned just the way Joseph was. The point is sometimes it's normal to feel abandoned. The solution is to rejoice with those who you find that are now in the center of God's love and attention and trust me, that's a very tall order. When you see the prodigal being celebrated with a great big party and celebration and you've got a giant goose egg, it's hard to hear the father say -- quote -- *"it was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found."* I mean when you're in pain, that is a bitter pill to swallow. It feels like an insult but that's exactly what the solution to bitterness is. I mean bitterness has one primary goal and that is to turn our focus inward to ourselves, to our lot, to our circumstances. It sees "me" first and foremost and grace is the exact opposite. Grace seeks to serve, to help, to comfort. Regardless of circumstances, it always sees others first. That's the story of Joseph's life.

So how did Joseph avoid sinking into bitterness? Well half the battle lies in recognizing how the enemy uses circumstances to drive a wedge between us and God, and he does that by altering our perception of God's response to my circumstances and he does that by taking our eyes off the end game, that all things do work together for good. And when we take our eyes off that truth, it becomes incredibly easy to embrace bitterness because bitterness is delicious. I mean consider Joseph's situation. Think about what happened with him and the cupbearer, I mean, not only does he interpret the cupbearer and the baker's dreams perfectly, he begs the one person who had Pharaoh's ear to please, please remember my kindness. No dice. I mean how many times have you relied on your fellow humans only to be disappointed, perhaps bitterly so. So what keeps us from bitterness? Well, it's only when you put everything in that Romans 8:28, all things work together for good mindset that you're able to see everything, including human failings from the perspective of God's sovereign will. And it's a sovereign will that will take something like a cupbearer's indifference and even worse, the evil intent of Joseph's brothers and still use them for God's intended purpose. I mean the solution is maintaining or even regaining a right perspective. Joseph did that by sitting in his dungeon, seeking only to serve and to help and to comfort even though he could have easily chosen to feel neglected and abandoned. I mean he sees the cupbearer and the

baker the morning of the dreams and he says, "Why do you look so sad today?" My question when I read that and my question was: Joseph, why in the world do you care? He only cares because he knows who God is, and he knows the baker and the cupbearer have no clue. He's got the right perspective. He cares because he knows who he is in relation to God; and knowing that he serves a God in total control of circumstances, he trusts even when the circumstances seem out of control. He also has the right priority. He knows that it's kingdom first and Joseph second. And no matter where you are and what your circumstances are, God's grace will always be there to help you serve even if it's in a dungeon.

When the cupbearer and the baker tell Joseph the reason for their long faces, he offers to interpret their dreams for them, saying, "*Do not interpretations belong to God?*" I mean instead of thinking I've been neglected, I've been abandoned by God, he chooses to showcase God's love and power to his fellow prisoners and he tells them the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. He tells the cupbearer he's going to be completely restored but he tells the baker you're going to be executed. For the cupbearer it's the savor of life; for the baker it's the stench of death. And three days later it all comes to pass. The cupbearer's restored and the baker is executed. But Joseph, Joseph is abandoned, and it was two years before the cupbearer remembered

Joseph. Two whole years of neglect and abandonment, but Joseph is still triumphing and the reason he triumphed came down to a right perspective. He knew his God was a God who would even take evil intent and use it for good. He also had a right priority; he knew himself in relation to his God. And the one thing he knew about God that we in the West forget is the key to how God works if you get it and the source of great pain if you don't. Something I repeat over and over again and that is God does not operate on a Western timetable. I pointed out that my watch is capable of breaking time down into hundreds of seconds. God's watch if he'd ever want one which he doesn't because he doesn't need to, it would have morning, noon, evening and night on it. We speak in hours and minutes. God speaks in seasons. I mean we want it yesterday and God refuses to play by those Western rules. If God had shrunken down his timetable with Joseph to weeks instead of years, we would have been very happy to be in Joseph's place. We can wait a week or two for God to show his hand but please, this idea that God would spend ten or twenty or thirty years to exercise his will, that's beyond the pale. *2 Peter 3:8 says: But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.* And what God is saying here, he's not slow in keeping

his promise as some understand slowness. What God is saying here is don't confuse patience with slowness. Much of our confusion and pain is not over the fact he's not working, it's with the fact that he's not working fast enough. *1 Peter 3:20* says: *God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built.* You want to talk about an understatement, I mean here's God who made the universe in six days and in Genesis 6 he tells Noah to build an ark and it takes about 120 years. Okay. Six days for a universe, 120 years for an ark. That's not slowness, that's patience. God took twenty-five years to deliver on his promise to Abraham and Sarah that he'd give them a son. He sent Moses into the desert for forty years cleaning up after sheep before he used him in Egypt. Jesus himself took thirty years before he began his public ministry, and so the Lord is not slow in keeping his promise as some understand slowness.

The way to understand God's patience is to see how he worked in the lives of his choicest servants. Joseph was one of his choice servants who understood that the key to understanding God's way was patience and perseverance. Again *James 1:2*: *My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.* And then *Romans 5:3* says: *And not only that, but we also glory in*

tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. So those two verses tell us that maturity and completeness and character and hope and the love of God, they all flow through a gateway marked "patience and perseverance," something we in the West know very little about. Joseph triumphed because he persevered. It took two full years for Pharaoh to have his dream interpreted and God's instruction to Joseph to wait, it wasn't delivered by angels, it wasn't delivered by prophets, it wasn't delivered by dreams, it was delivered by a circumstance that appeared completely indifferent to Joseph. Joseph understood what Paul said in Romans 8:25. He said: "But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance."

So again, how did Joseph do it? Well he was able to wait first because he had a proper perspective. He knew who his God was, he knew he was a sovereign God who controlled all things. Just think about it. We have no chance whatsoever of trying to figure out what God is doing because it's so infinitely complex and it's being repeated literally billions of times each moment as God is interacting with each and every individual and their unique circumstances but we all have the opportunity to simply trust him

and go forward. Last week we looked at how torturous it was for Joseph to go through two full years of prison knowing that the cupbearer had abandoned him. Joseph had no ability whatsoever to know that the cupbearer would take those two full years before the circumstances proved to be exquisitely perfect for Joseph to not just be taken out of prison but to be ushered directly into Pharaoh's courtroom. I mean the dream that Pharaoh had is what caused the cupbearer to suddenly remember, oh, yeah, this guy Joseph, he was a really gifted interpreter of dreams. See, the cupbearer saw an advantage in telling Pharaoh that he knew somebody who could interpret for him so. And so with a motive no greater than trying to make himself look good, God used the cupbearer's knowledge of Joseph to bring Joseph fully out of prison and into Pharaoh's court.

And secondly Joseph had the right priority and because he knew who he was in relation to his God. And when life didn't make sense, he just trusted that it still made sense to God, and that was enough for him. So after all these years when Joseph is finally ushered into Pharaoh's presence, he still has the presence of mind to tell Pharaoh that his skill at dream interpretation is not his, it's not his at all, he says it belongs to God. Here's the cupbearer, he's now explaining to Pharaoh everything that took place because it's working in his favor. The cupbearer says: *Now there was a young*

Hebrew man with us there, a servant of the captain of the guard. And we told him, and he interpreted our dreams for us; to each man he interpreted according to his own dream. And it came to pass, just as he interpreted for us, so it happened. He restored me to my office, and he hanged him." Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him quickly out of the dungeon; and he shaved, changed his clothing, and came to Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I have had a dream, and there is no one who can interpret it. But I have heard it said of you that you can understand a dream, to interpret it." So Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, "It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace."

Thirdly, Joseph had a plan. He obviously served others first. He cared for them. And even though they would abandon him and it looked like God had abandoned him as well, God never did, he just worked on a different timetable, because "*the Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness.*" He's patient; we're not. Part of Joseph's plan was clearly to care for and share truth to his fellow prisoners no matter how long he took. That needs to be our plan as well. When every single person we meet who is outside the kingdom is a prisoner of the enemy and some of them are just waiting for you to give them that good news.

So my question this morning is do we have people outside the kingdom who we care for who we share truth with? Do you have cupbearers and bakers who you pray for and serve regularly? God's sovereign plan for bringing souls to Christ always starts by his first prompting believers to start praying for them. And so if you don't have your own list of non-believers you're praying for, you need to make one. It can be your neighbors, your friends, your family, the stranger, the guy at the gas station, the lady at the grocery store, whoever it is the Holy Spirit is moving you to pray for. I mean I have folks that I've been praying for for over 30 years, and so far nada, nothing. I'm not about to abandon praying for them. I've had times in my Christian life where God's pace and his patience made me think he was absent. But *"the Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness."*

So here's the bottom line. God's plan for you or your loved ones at some time is going to feel like Joseph's or Abraham's or Paul's or Job's. They all had their "now you see me, now you don't" moments, they all felt the sting of apparent abandonment, they all experienced the silence of heaven in the midst of psychological and spiritual torment, they all had to choose between grace and bitterness, and they all had to learn firsthand God's promise to walk through the valley of the shadow of death with us, not ahead of us pointing out the pitfalls, not instead of us sparing us the

pain, but with us. We do that by remembering that Jesus walked through that same valley completely alone and completely abandoned by design. He who knew no sin became sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in him. He experienced the complete and total abandonment for eternity for me and for you and he experienced it all on a cross in the space of six earth hours so that we would not become abandoned eternally. If you've never experienced the abandonment Joseph experienced, chances are if you're a Christian, at some point you are going to. Chances are you, too, like Reverend Wurmbrand, like Joseph, like all the others are going to feel neglected, abandoned and dismayed, that the heavens seem silent and God makes no sense. But that's where you start reasoning backwards from the cross. I may not understand what is happening to me but I know what happened to him in order to rescue me, and because of that I can choose grace instead of bitterness. Joseph had the ability to fight through the bitterness of apparent abandonment that tried to shout that God's slowness meant God's neglect, and after all of the years and all of the pain and all of the bitterness finally reached the place where he could fully exact his revenge on his brothers, Joseph found instead the power to use as a means to worship his God rather than even the score. God's sovereignty had provided a framework for him not just to survive in difficult circumstances but to triumph over bitterness and disappointment simply because he understood God's

love, God's care, and God's sovereignty. Joseph couldn't have said it any better than what he said to his brothers: *"But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good."* "Now you see me, now you don't" had worked its full effect on Joseph and his family.

So the question for us this morning is is it working in your life? Are you willing to trust that every single thing that happens in your life: The good, the bad, the ugly, even those things intended for evil, can be superintended by God for your good and his glory? God did it for Joseph; he'll do it for you. If Jesus Christ is your Lord and Savior, God promises that all things work together for good to those who love God and who are called according to his purpose. Let's pray.

Father, I just thank you for that precious truth. Lord, again we just want to focus whenever life is turning difficult, when it's getting hard, I just pray that we focus on the cross, on what it is that that you did. There was nothing more difficult, nothing harder, nothing more replete with a sense of complete abandonment than what you underwent for us. So give us the ability, Lord, to just know who you are, trust in who you are, have a right perspective, a right priority and a plan to just trust in the cross. And I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.