



## The Sermon

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Genesis 39:1-23

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"Never Alone"

TRANSCRIPT

So, the title of our message today is "Never Alone," and I hope your eye will be attentive and your ear open as I read this chapter, and I think you'll understand why I have entitled this "Never Alone." I want to begin by reading our passage, Genesis chapter 39, beginning in verse 1.

"Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an Egyptian officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the bodyguard, bought him from the Ishmaelites, who had taken him down there. The LORD was with Joseph, so he became a successful man. And he was in the house of his master, the Egyptian. Now his master saw that the LORD was with him and how the LORD caused all that he did to prosper in his hand. So Joseph found favor in his sight and became his personal servant; and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he owned he put in his charge. It came about that from the time he made him overseer in his house and over all that he owned, the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house on account of Joseph; thus the LORD's blessing was upon all that he owned, in the house and in the field. So he left everything he owned in Joseph's charge; and with him there he did not concern himself with anything except the food which he ate.

"Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance. It came about that after these events that his master's wife looked with desire at Joseph, and she said, 'Lie with me.' But he refused and said to his master's wife, 'Behold, with me here, my master does not concern himself with anything in the house, and he has put all that he owns in my charge. There is no one greater in this house than I, and he has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do this great evil and sin

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against God?' As she spoke to Joseph day after day, he did not listen to her to lie beside her or be with her.

"Now it happened one day that he went into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the household was there inside. She caught him by his garment, saying, 'Lie with me!' And he left his garment in her hand and fled, and went outside. When she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and had fled outside, she called to the men of her household and said to them, 'See, he has brought in a Hebrew to us to make sport of us; he came in to me to lie with me, and I screamed. When he heard that I raised my voice and screamed, he left his garment beside me and fled and went outside.' So she left his garment beside her until his master came home. Then she spoke to him with these words, 'The Hebrew slave, whom you brought to us, came in to me to make sport of me; and as I raised my voice and screamed, he left his garment beside me and fled outside.'

"Now when his master heard the words of his wife, which she spoke to him, saying, 'This is what your slave did to me,' his anger burned. So Joseph's master took him and put him into the jail, the place where the king's prisoners were confined; and he was there in the jail. But the LORD was with Joseph and extended kindness to him, and gave him favor in the sight of the chief jailer. The chief jailer committed to Joseph's charge all the prisoners who were in the jail; so that whatever was done there, he was responsible for it. The chief jailer did not supervise anything under Joseph's charge because the LORD was with him; and whatever he did, the LORD made to prosper." What an amazing chapter in the Bible. Let's go to the LORD in prayer and ask for His insight.

[Prayer] Father in heaven, we ask now that You be our teacher and you open our eyes and open our ears. Give us the insight and understanding and wisdom that only the Holy Spirit can give to us as we work our way through this chapter. Father, I pray that Your blessing would reside upon each and every one of us today as we sit under Your Word. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. [End]

In these verses we very clearly see Joseph's rise to prominence, his rise to elevated positions of responsibility and authority; and we also see him met with great challenges and great difficulties. And at first glance, as I have read this chapter, our immediate impression is this is a chapter all about Joseph; and in many ways, it is. But I want you to look at it with me a second time and I want you to note that in reality, it's not a chapter about

Joseph first and foremost, it's a chapter about the LORD who was with Joseph.

Four times in this chapter we read the phrase, "The LORD was with Joseph." In verse 2, it says, "The LORD was with Joseph." In verse 3, it says, "The LORD was with him." In verse 21, it says, "The LORD was with Joseph." And the chapter concludes in verse 23 by saying, "The LORD was with him." This entire chapter is bracketed with those four statements, two at the beginning of the chapter, two at the end of the chapter, and they stand like bookends around this whole narrative; and what is implied in every episode and every event in between, that the LORD is with Joseph every step of the way. Whether he is being promoted or whether he's being seduced, the LORD was with Joseph. And all success that Joseph had, whether to be raised to a position of prominence, or whether to be preserved in purity, it was only and always because the LORD was with Joseph.

The accident does not fall on Joseph, it falls upon Joseph's Lord, who was everything to Joseph that Joseph needed in order to succeed. And as we look at this chapter, every time it says, "The LORD was with him, it immediately follows the statement of the success that came to Joseph. There's a cause and effect relationship here that I want you to note. Every time it says, "The LORD was with Joseph," there is an inevitable result, and it is that the LORD would cause him to prosper.

I mean, you will note, for example, in verse 3 the result of the LORD being with him. It says, "The LORD caused all that he did to prosper in his hand," and so much so, that even in verse 5, the LORD's blessing spilled over from Joseph's life into Potiphar's life and into Potiphar's household. Just because Joseph was in the household and God's hand was upon Joseph for good, it brought blessing even to the unbelieving Potiphar.

And then at the end of the chapter in verse 21 after it says, "The LORD was with Joseph" we read that "the LORD gave him favor in the sight of the chief jailer. The cause and effect here is obvious and the whole chapter crescendos. At the mountain peak at the end of the last verse of the chapter, verse 23, it says, "The LORD was with him; and whatever he did, the LORD made to prosper."

The real hero of this chapter is God, not Joseph. Joseph is just like you and me, a man with feet of clay, a fallen man who has been saved by God's

grace. But even in Joseph's daily walk through life he was able to succeed, only because the LORD was with him. And what was true for Joseph is equally true for you and me today. And I need to say at the outset of our look at this chapter that if you're a believer in Jesus Christ, the LORD is with you, the LORD is in you, the LORD goes before you, the LORD is under you, the LORD is with you, and He has laid His hand upon you for good, to bless you immeasurably. And the result of the LORD being with you is that you will succeed in what He has purposed and planned for your life, that He will show you favor, that He will cause what you set your shoulder to the plow to do, it will be advanced.

Whatever success you have had in your life, whatever that is, it's because the LORD was with you. It wasn't because you by yourself pulled this off. Jesus said to his disciples in John 15:5, "Apart from Me you can do nothing." That's where we all are. We can do nothing of any eternal lasting value that glorifies God except the LORD be with us. And Paul said in Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me."

So, let us look at this chapter together. It will have much to say to us about our Christian life and our Christian walk. This chapter is extremely relevant and practical for us in our walk with the LORD. So as we begin going through this chapter, the first thing that I want you to note, beginning in verse 1, is, "The success of Joseph." This starts at a high note: "The success of Joseph."

Notice in verse 1 it begins, "Now Joseph was brought down to Egypt." That's exactly how the end of chapter 37 ended. Verse 38 that you looked at last week was just a parenthesis set off to the side; and here in chapter 39, verse 1, is the continuation of the end of chapter 37. And so, "Now Joseph had been taken down Egypt." As you recall, his brother sold him to Midianite traders who took him down to Egypt. And so now for the first time Joseph is away from home. He's separated from his father. He's separated from the security of family. He's separated from his brothers, especially Reuben, who would was looking out for him. He's now in a strange land that speaks a different language with different customs. He is all alone. No one even knows where he is concerning his family.

I can relate to that feeling of being all alone. At this point Joseph is 17 years old. I can remember when I was 18 years old. My whole family getting into a red Volkswagen van and leaving Memphis, Tennessee and driving to the other side of the planet to West Texas to take me to school

and dropping me off at Texas Tech University. And I remember my father moving everything that I had into my dorm room, and then our walking down to the parking lot, and my mother and my sister and my brother. This was an event. And I remember them getting in the van and heading down the road, and I just stood there and stared until I couldn't see the red van anymore. I turned around and walked back into the dorm; I have never felt so all alone. That's where Joseph is. He's all alone. There's no communication, there's no support system, there's no one on his team; he's just all alone.

And verse 1 continues, "and Potiphar an Egyptian officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the bodyguard, bought him," - like a piece of property - "bought him from the Ishmaelites, who had taken him down there." Potiphar went into the slave market and just eyed the pieces of meat there. And there's Joseph; he's 17, he's strong. "I'm going to buy him and he's going to belong to me, and he'll do whatever I tell him to do." This is where Joseph is, and he now follows Potiphar back to his house. And there are other slaves in this house around him, and there's Potiphar; and now his entire world revolves around Potiphar.

And verse 2 begins, "The LORD was with Joseph." The LORD was with him to protect him, the LORD was with him to preserve him, the LORD was with him to provide for him; and from outward perspective seen with only human eyes, Joseph has never been more alone. But in reality, God was with him; that's what the text says. God had laid His hand upon him, and God was with him for good, just like God is with you and me. Jesus said in Matthew 28:20, "Lo, I'm with you always, even at the end of the age." In Hebrews 13:5, God says, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you."

What I want to stress at this point - it's not stated in the text, but I want to put a theological footnote on this message at this point - there is the doctrine of the simplicity of God. And the doctrine of the simplicity of God simply means that everywhere God is, all of God is there. There's not a part of God, like His love over here with these people, and then there is the wrath of God over here with these people, and then the power of God back here with these people, as if God can be portioned out in parts. No, the doctrine of the simplicity of God teaches that there is only the wholeness of God everywhere God is; and God is everywhere present. So for the LORD to be with Joseph means that all that God is is here with Joseph - all of His grace, all of His love, all of His mercy, all of His wisdom, all of His power.

Everything that God is is with Joseph, just like everything that God is with you right now. And when the service is over and you go back to your place where you live, the entirety of God is with you, the doctrine of the simplicity of God, that God is not complex, meaning can be divided out into parts. This is the sufficiency of God for Joseph. The fullness of God is with Joseph.

And so we continue to read in verse 2 the result of this, that the LORD was with Joseph. At the end of verse 2, "so" – here's the result – "he became a successful man." Success is knowing and doing the will of God, not necessarily getting ahead in the things of this world; Jesus would have failed that. It's to be in the center of God's will and to do God's will; that's what true success is. And Joseph right now is in the very center of God's providence, and God is making him successful, to fulfill all that is set before him.

And we read, "And he was in the house of his master, the Egyptian." As he was in the house of Potiphar he's not doing what most people would do, which is complaining about this set of circumstances that have dealt him a difficult hand to play. He's not moping, he is pouring himself into the immediacy of the moment; and as he finds himself in Potiphar's house, he will give to Potiphar the service that the LORD would have him give to him.

You may work for an unbelieving boss. You may work for one of these godless corporations that have bought into the lives of wokeness and all of the social agendas. As Jim Elliott said, "Wherever you are, be all there," and do whatever has been put in front of you to do. And here is Joseph now in the house of Potiphar who is a Pagan unbeliever, and he's not a clock watcher, he's not doing as little as possible to just get by, he's not meeting minimum requirements. He's going the second mile, the third mile. That's implied, because in just a moment we're going to read how Potiphar notices this and elevates him to be in charge of the entire household, because he sees how trustworthy Joseph is, what a good job Joseph is doing, how faithful he is, how hard-working Joseph is. "That's the man I'm going to put over everything." He wasn't elevated because he was a sluggard. There's a lesson here for us to "do our work heartily as in to the LORD," even if it's to an unbeliever.

I'll never forget the graduation service in Los Angeles at Grace Community Church, it was the graduation of The Master's University. And after all the students had received their diplomas, John MacArthur walked back to the

pulpit to be ready to dismiss, and we would file out in academic regalia and pomp and circumstance and all of that. And he took his mortar board off and he says, "I'm going to give you two words of advice if you want to succeed in this world: show up early, and do what you're told to do, and you will stand out like a star on a dark night, and you will be promoted again and again and again, and the chance is you'll end up being the president of the company, if you'll just show up early and just do what you're told to do." Employers can't hire enough people like that. And we could throw in "and have a great attitude while you do it."

That's where Joseph is. He's away from home under the most adverse of circumstances in a difficult place; but there is a faithfulness about Joseph, that he's going to bloom where he's planted. And though he's been transplanted from Hebron down to Egypt, he's going to bloom here even in Egypt.

So, verse 3, "Now his master" - Potiphar - "saw that the LORD was with him." Now how could Potiphar see this? Potiphar is an unbeliever. Potiphar is a Pagan. Potiphar does not have spiritual eyes. Potiphar doesn't know the LORD. How does Potiphar see that the LORD was with him?" Because, no doubt, Joseph has been talking about the LORD and giving glory to God, despite these circumstances that were very adverse. And no doubt that Potiphar is watching this, and he's watching Joseph work harder than any other slave, be more trustworthy, be more honest, be more reliable, do a turnkey job. "It must be the LORD, because I don't have any other slaves working like this."

And I want to say to you on your job, you will stand out like a bright star on a dark night too if you will give, as God gives opportunity, a Christian testimony, whatever that opportunity is, and you will do your work heartily as unto the LORD. You too will be like Joseph. And I'm sure Potiphar could have wished, "I wish I could go buy 20 more Josephs the way he's working so well."

And so, at the end of verse 3, "His master saw that the LORD was with him and how the LORD caused all that he did to prosper in his hand." There's no other explanation for this. God has to be with him, because everything he puts his hand to, everything he puts his shoulder to that plow, he does it wholeheartedly, he does it with excellence, he does it well, he does it with a great attitude; and it must be the LORD who is at work in his life, because there is no other explanation for this. Everyone else is dragging their feet,

everyone else is cutting corners, everyone else is only working hard when Potiphar is looking with his eyes, but Joseph is all in to do whatever the providence of God has set before him to do.

There's a lesson for you, a lesson for me. Some of the greatest witness you'll ever have for the LORD is not on the mission field, but in the marketplace, right where you are, right where you're working. In some ways it's easier to go do a weak short-term missions someplace; it's almost like a vacation in some ways. You know what's hard is Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, down at the office to be like Joseph and do an excellent job.

So, verse 4, "So Joseph found favor in his sight," - in Potiphar's sight; that means he found acceptance, he found approval with Potiphar - "and Potiphar made him overseer over his house, over his entire house," - so now Joseph who's been bought as a slave and has been doing his job as required. In other words, he was showing up early and doing what he was told to do. He's now elevated to be over all of the other slaves. He's over the entire house, the entire facility. He's over the calendar and the schedule. He's over who gets to meet with Potiphar. He's over the finances of Potiphar. He's over everything, because he's so reliable and so faithful - "and all that he owned" - at the end of verse 4 - "he" - Potiphar - "put in his charge," top to bottom. I would have. If you're a good owner, you would have. That's the kind of person you want working for you.

So, verse 5, "It came about from the time he had made him overseer in his house and over all that he owned in the house and in the field." And verse 6, "So he" - Potiphar - "left everything he owned in Joseph's charge." That's the third time that's been said. It's the stress that is being made here in this narrative that everything has just been slighted over and put in Joseph's charge, and literally in the Hebrew it reads, "put into Joseph's hand." Joseph is holding the entirety of Potiphar's house - his servants, his slaves, his finances; they're in Joseph's hand. "And with him" - with Joseph - "there he" - Potiphar - "did not concern himself with anything except the food he ate." With a man like Joseph working for you, I mean Potiphar is now on one long continuous sabbatical. I mean, he's on vacation, because "Joseph's doing a better job than I could even do keeping up with everything."

So we conclude that Joseph made the most of a difficult and demanding situation. He did not sit around in mope, he did not do as little as he



possibly could, he served Potiphar with his whole heart; and this is exactly what the Bible calls each and every one of us to do. Whether you have a good job that you like, whether you have a crummy job that you don't like, whether you've got a great boss who takes care of you, whether you have the worst boss in Dallas, Texas who doesn't know up from down. It doesn't matter who you work for, where you work, you do the best job you possibly can, and it brings honor and glory to God.

Ephesians 6:5 says, "Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh," - now listen to this - "with fear and trembling, in sincerity of your heart, as to Christ." You see, you don't just serve your masters (small "m") who's over you in the organizational chart of the corporation, you serve the Master (capital "M"). So you do your work not as to the small "m," but to the capital "M," as unto the LORD. And on the last day when we stand at the judgment seat of Christ that will be part of our review and our audit by Christ on the last day: "Did you serve Me in that job?" So that's the success of Joseph, and may it be your success as well.

I want you to note, second, "The seduction of Joseph," because this story now, as you well know, takes quite a turn. And in the middle of verse 6 we read, "Now Joseph was handsome." He is one good-looking man. At this point, he's 27 years old, he's unmarried, and the word literally in the Hebrew means "beautiful." He's a knockout. It says, "handsome in form." I looked up this word "form." You know what it means? It means literally "shape," "figure," "outline." I mean, Joseph is - he's like chiseled out of marble. I've thought about how to put this to you. He's flat-bellied, he's broad-shouldered, he's got a sculptured body; looks like he's been in the gym pumping iron. And then he adds, "and in appearance." It means he's a spectacle to look at, he's a head-turner. He's got a beautiful face, he's got a strong jaw, he's got beautiful eyes, he's got protruding cheekbones. In a 1 to 10, Joseph is an 11. God just usually blessed him.

And so, in verse 7, "It came about after these events" - referring to this decade of serving Potiphar faithfully, reliably - "that his master's wife looked with desire at Joseph." She was physically drawn to Joseph with sexual desire. The word "desire" here means "to lift up" or "to be lifted up." She was completely taken up with Joseph. "And she said to him, 'Lie with me. Go to bed with me.'" She said it so abruptly, so aggressively; she's wanting to close the deal. Why? Well, he is so sharp looking. But also maybe Potiphar has been too busy and has neglected her. Maybe she's starving for attention. Maybe she's starving for a relationship. Maybe she wants to hurt Potiphar. We're not told. But she's all systems go for Joseph.

And we read in verse 8, that "he refused." She opened that door, and he slammed it shut. How was he able to do that? Anyone else would have rationalized, "Joseph, no one's there, no one knows, no one's looking. Joseph, satisfy her desires, and she'll put a good word in with you with Potiphar. You could be advanced even more if you just go along with this."

But the LORD was with Joseph; and reading between the lines here, we are to assume that the LORD gave Joseph the strength to say no, when any other virile, young man would have jumped at this chance. "But he refused and said to his master's wife, 'Behold, with me here, my master does not concern himself with anything in the house, and he has put all that he owns in my charge. How can I violate the trust that Potiphar has shown to me for all this time and the promotion that he has given to me? How can I now pull the rug out from underneath Potiphar and do this to him?'"

Verse 9, "There is no and greater in this house than I." And he's not bragging on himself, he's just simply stating a matter of fact that he's been elevated to the top of the organizational chart. He only reports to Potiphar, and Potiphar to the king or to Pharaoh. And Joseph, "Yes, there is no one higher up in this house than I, and he has withheld nothing from me except you. You're the only thing that's off limits to me, because you are his wife. How could I do this great evil" - it's not just evil, it's a great evil - "and sin against God?" Now the Ten Commandments have not yet been given: "You shall not commit adultery." But he has a conscience, and God is at work in his conscience, and he realizes that if he yields to this temptation, he will be sinning against God.

Verse 10, "As she spoke to Joseph day after day," - this woman will not take no for an answer. This woman is making repeated advances to seduce Joseph. Joseph keeps closing the door, and she keeps putting her foot in the door and trying to pry it back open. She is relentless. She is a devil with a blue dress on - "and he did not listen," verse 10. He did not listen to her to be beside her or to be with her. He will not entertain her advances.

Verse 11, "Now it happened one day that he went into the house to do his work," - that's what he did every day. This is a day like any other day. He is a faithful, reliable, hard-working servant of Potiphar. He is showing up for duty one more day to do his work - "and none of the men of the household were there."

Verse 12, "She caught him." Means that she grabbed him, she laid hold of him. "She caught him by his garment, saying," - pleading, persuading - 'Lie with me!' And he left," - he just bolted, and he left so abruptly, we read in verse 12 - "he left his garment in her hand," - and she literally has held onto him with such a grip, and he has left so quickly, that she is holding half of his clothes in her hand. He leaves half naked - "and fled, and went outside," to be separated from her where others were working.

Joseph did not resist this temptation in his flesh, his flesh would have wanted to have caved in. Joseph was able to resist because the LORD was with him and the LORD was enabling him to say no. God was giving him internal fortitude to overcome this temptation, this lure, this seduction. It's the same for you and me. The LORD must give us grace to say no to every temptation that has dangled before us, whatever the realm. First Corinthians 10:13 says, "No temptation has overtaken you but such is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but will with the temptation provide the way of escape, so that you will be able to endure it." There's always an escape, there's always an exit path from temptation; the choice is ours. Galatians 5:16 says, "Walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh." And 1 Corinthians 6:18 says, "Flee immorality." Don't stay and fight it, flee it. So that was the seduction, and Joseph passed the test.

I want you to notice, third, "The scheme against Joseph." This rejection by Joseph did not sit well with Potiphar's wife, it sent her into a rage. So, verse 13, "When she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and had fled outside," - verse 14 - "she called to the men." This word for "called" is a Hebrew word that means "to shout." It's translated, at the end of the verse, "screamed." It's used some places "to roar like a lion." She just yells out at the top of her voice to the men of her household and said to them, "See, he has brought in a Hebrew to us to make sport of us." The "he" refers to Potiphar her husband. She's now throwing her husband under the bus: "It's his fault because he brought this good-looking man into our house. It's his fault." It's like a drunk saying, "It's the bartender's fault." No, it's your fault. And when she says, "He has brought in a Hebrew," there's an intended racial slur there, a demeaning, scornful note, "this Hebrew to make sport of us." This verb "to make sport of," "He just wants to play with us. He wants to use us and to abuse us."

At the end of verse 14, "He came in to me to lie with me. He tried to rape me." She is such a liar. She has such hypocrisy. She has such deception.

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She can take any set of circumstances and twist it to her own advantage. She can make any bad situation to look to be in her favor. "He came in to me to lie with me, and I screamed," as though it's self-defense. I mean, this sounds like someone who's been appointed to be the Supreme Court for the United States. It's the total opposite of what's being reported by the media.

Verse 15, "When he" - Joseph - "heard that I raised my voice and screamed, he left his garment beside me and fled and went outside." "The devil is a liar and the father of all lies," John 8:44; and the devil is using her as a mouthpiece to speak this despicable lie about Joseph in order to hang him out. In verse 16, "So she left his garment beside her until her master came home." She just left it right there on the bed, the incriminating evidence the way she has so concocted it and so twisted it and so perverted it, to make it look like that he had tried to seduce her, when in reality she's the one who tried to seduce him.

Verse 17, "Then she spoke to him with these words," - she spoke to her husband - 'The Hebrew slave,' - again, that is such a demeaning thing - 'it's this Jew that you brought in here, and he's just a slave whom you brought to us, come in to me to make sport of me. He's just tried to use me like his play thing; and then when he's finished with me, to just wad me up and throw me away.' - verse 18 - 'As I raise my voice and screamed, he left his garment beside me and fled outside.'"

Listen, Potiphar's wife is an evil woman who lies every time she opens her mouth to protect herself, regardless of the harm and the destruction that comes to her. She is the woman of whom Solomon spoke in Proverbs 5:3, "The lips of an adulterous drip honey and smoother than oil is her speech. Her feet go down to death, her steps take hold of Sheol. She does not ponder the path of life; her ways are unstable, she does not know it." - verse 8 - "Keep your way from her. She is trouble looking for someplace to happen, and she's going down to hell, and she wants to take you with her. You need to saturate yourself with your absence from her."

Verse 19, we see, "The suffering of Joseph." This cost Joseph big time. You follow God, there'll always be a price to pay. So, verse 19, "Now when his master heard the words of his wife," - meaning when Potiphar heard his wife, what she had to say - "which she spoke to him, saying, 'This is what your slave did to me,' his anger burned." The word "anger" here literally in the Hebrew means "nostrils"; and it's the flaring of the nostrils, just so

stinking mad that his anger burned. When he heard this, these words torched his anger and inflamed it.

Verse 20, "So Joseph's master took him and put him into the jail, the place where the king's prisoners were confined; and he was in jail." Potiphar is jury, judge, and prosecutor, and executor, in a moment. And even though the LORD was with Joseph, it did not prevent him from this suffering, this unjust suffering. And though the LORD was with him Joseph, did not receive special treatment in the providence of God; he is suffering while living in a fallen world, just like you and I suffer at times as we live in a fallen world.

Just because the LORD is with us will not prevent us from undergoing difficult times. In fact, the fact that the LORD is with us often puts us into the eye of the storm, just like it did Job, just like it did the prophets, just like it did John the Baptist, just like it did Jesus Christ, just like it did the apostles. There is a suffering that often comes for living a life that honors God. Don't think it's an easy path to follow Christ. If you're looking for an easy path, do not follow Christ. It took Daniel into the lion's den, it led Isaiah to be cut in two while being put into a log, it put Jeremiah in the bottom of a well. No, to live a righteous life in an unrighteous world will come at a high price; and many times we suffer unjustly. But we must continue to put our trust in the LORD, because over all of this, God had a higher purpose for good.

This leads us, finally, to the final verses. Fifth, I want you to note, "The sustaining of Joseph." Despite being rejected by Potiphar and imprisoned, the LORD was never more with Joseph than at that moment. So, verse 21, "But" – the word "but" is a strong contrast. Though everyone else has forsaken him: though Potiphar has forsaken him, though Potiphar's wife has forsaken him, though his own brothers have forsaken him, though the Midianite traders have forsaken him, though the whole world seemingly has forsaken Joseph – "but the LORD was with Joseph." Let me remind you what John Knox said: "God plus one still makes the majority; and if God be for you, who can be against you?"

"The LORD was with Joseph" – in the prison to support him, to strengthen him, to satisfy him – "and extended kindness to him." The word "extended" there in the Hebrew means "to stretch out the hand." It's almost as if God has a handful of kindness, and He's just extending His hand to Joseph as he's sitting there in the prison, the goodness of God to him in the midst of

that difficult situation. And "gave him favor" means "gave him acceptance with the jail keeper," "gave him favor in the sight of the chief jailer."

Verse 22, "The chief jailer committed to Joseph's charge all the prisoners who were in the jail," - this is amazing. I mean, God is so with Joseph. And it doesn't always work out this way, OK. I mean, God was with Stephen and he was stoned to death. God was with James and he was stoned to death. It doesn't always work out this way. But in Joseph's case, it does, that he now is put in charge of all the prisoners in the prison house. He's got the keys on his belt - "so that whatever was done there, he was responsible for it." That's just how trustworthy and faithful he was. He probably could have emptied the whole jail if he wanted to. But, no, he's a man of principle, a man of conviction.

Verse 23, the last verse, "The chief jailer did not supervise anything under Joseph's charge" - and we would have to answer the question: "Why? How can he be cast down into this prison and land on his feet and end up being elevated to being over the entire prison? How does this work?" - "because the LORD was with him." The LORD gave him favor. The LORD gave him success. And I must say to you again, whatever success, whatever favor, whatever prosperity you will enjoy in this world, it has all come from God. It's not because of you, it's because of God. And at the end of verse 23, "and whatever he did, the LORD made him to prosper."

As I bring this to conclusion, let me just ask you this question: "Is the Lord with you? Do you know the Lord? Do you have a personal relationship with the Lord? Have you turned from your sin and turned to His Son Jesus Christ, and denied yourself and humbled yourself and called upon the name of the Lord?" If so, the Lord is with you; and He will be with you in every situation of life, and one day He'll take you home to the Father's house. But if the Lord is not with you, you're in a very dangerous situation; you're on your own. And in this fallen world, or in the world to come, you do not want to be on your own. You need the Lord far more than you realize you need the Lord.

And the Lord is being offered to you this very moment. In the gospel of His Son Jesus Christ. His name was Immanuel, which means "God with us." And Jesus came that God might be with us, because we cannot pull ourselves up to God by our own efforts, God must come down and, God must be with us; and God has come to be with us in the person of His Son the Lord Jesus

Christ: "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us; and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

Jesus has come into this world that God would be with you and for you, that God would pardon your sins, that God would clothe you in the righteousness of Christ, that you would be adopted into God's family, that you would become a citizen of the kingdom of heaven, that there would be a place being prepared for you right now in heaven, the Father's place. And so if you've never committed your life to Christ, you need the Lord to be with you. May those words sink deeply into your heart. You need the Lord, you need the Lord to be with you; but if He's not with you, He's against you. He's either with you, or He's against you; there's no middle ground. And so for the Lord to be with you means that you've come to the place where you've denied yourself, you've humbled yourself, you've taken up a cross and you've become a follower of Jesus Christ. May that be true in your life. And in whatever situation you find yourself, whether you're thrown into prison, whether you're thrown into a bedroom with difficult temptations, the Lord will be with you to help you overcome.

[Prayer] Father, thank You for this truth that You're with Your people. We can't do this on our own. We can't make it on our own willpower, on our own just effort. Our effort is nothing, unless You be with us. So, Lord, we call upon You to cause us to prosper, to succeed in doing Your will. We call upon You, that You would allow us to find favor, even with others, as we serve You. But however it works out, we're going with You, and You're with us, in Jesus' name. Amen.