



Growing in Christian Holiness

Genesis 37

THRIVE! Growing and Changing in the Christian Life

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livinghopechurch.net

“This life is not godliness, but growth in godliness; not health, but healing; not being, but becoming; not rest, but exercise. We are not now what we shall be, but we are on the way; the process is not yet finished, but it has begun; this is not the goal, but it is road; at present all does not gleam and glitter, but everything is being purified.”

~ **Martin Luther**

Good morning!

Good morning! We want to give a special welcome to our visitors and friends. We are glad you're here, and we hope you will sense the love of Christ here today.

God is seated on His throne! He is high and lifted up. We are here to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ this morning. We want to make much of Him. He is our Savior, Redeemer, and God. He is good. Truly, God is good all the time. And all the time God is good.

Open your Bible to **Genesis 37**. The title of our message this morning is “Growing in Christian Holiness.” This is final message in our series “Thriving in the Christian Life.” Next week we will be looking again at the book of Matthew.

Proposition: God uses many chisels to form us into the likeness of Christ.

Chisel Illustration

An artist in Florence, Italy once asked the great Renaissance sculptor Michelangelo what he saw when he approached a huge block of marble. The famous sculptor stood back and looked at that big square block of white marble, rubbed his chin thoughtfully, and replied, “I see a beautiful form trapped inside and it is my responsibility to take my mallet and chisel and chip away until the figure is set free.” I love that illustration because you can relate to it. Inside of us is a beautiful form, right? **Colossians 1:27** says so. It speaks of the hidden figure inside of each believer longing to be “set free”. It is “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” It’s within us, like a seed, like a possibility, like a potential; it’s what you hope for: Christ in you glorified through your life, right? The idea is there and Our Heavenly Father is a little like a sculptor. He wants to release his Son in us. And so, he uses affliction like a hammer and trouble just like a chisel, and he chips and cuts away at us through trials to reveal Jesus' image in you and me. God chooses as his model his Son, Jesus Christ because **Romans 8:29** says:

“For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son.”

I don't need to tell you that you, and I have lot of hard marble in my life that needs to be chipped away before Christ can be seen in me. We all have that marble.

That hammer hurts, doesn't it? Those trials, that chisel bites! After time, the rough form begins to take shape.

What does this sculpture look like? God uses suffering to purge sin out of your life and strengthen your commitment to him, and force us to depend on His grace.

God uses affliction to

- bind you together with other believers,
- produce discernment,
- foster sensitivity toward others who hurt.

God's got the hammer and chisel in hand to help discipline your minds, teach you to spend your time wisely.

That hammer and chisel makes you dig deep in God's Word to find comfort. The pain of God's hammer increases your faith and strengthens your character. And oh brothers and sisters, that is a beautiful image. That's Christ in you!

God is growing us all His dear children in holiness. Sometimes it's painful isn't it?

What is Holiness?

What is holiness? It means to be set apart, or separated to God. We are not yet completely separated or surrendered to God are we? No there are still some of the things of this world in our hands. There are still parts of this world that we are hanging on to, and God has to bring His means of grace to shape us into the likeness of Jesus.

Life of Joseph

This morning we go back to Genesis 37 to look at the life of Joseph. Here is someone who had many of God's chisels in His life to make him holy. He was separated unto God.

As we look at Joseph's life, we see him as a type of Christ, and as we are connected to Jesus, we see how everyone of us can expect God to use all of His tools on us to bring us into the likeness of Jesus. We worship Jesus this morning. We want to be like Him!

Outline

This morning we are going to see the tools of transformation in Joseph's life. You want to grow in Christian holiness right? Are you ready for God to prune and shape you? Are you ready for these seven chisels to come into your life and form you into Jesus' likeness? Are you ready for:

1. Problems
2. God's Word
3. Pain
4. Praise
5. Prayer
6. Persecution
7. Blessing

I. God uses **“Everyday” Problems** to make us holy, Gen 37:1-4.

Canaan was a place of “everyday” difficulty for Joseph.

FAMILY CAN BRING DIFFICULTY

You remember though he was comfortable in the land of Canaan, God brought everyday difficulties to him through his family.

Joseph was chosen for service for God, and his brothers were jealous.

Genesis 37:1-4, “Jacob lived in the land of his father's sojournings, in the land of Canaan. ²These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was pasturing the flock with his brothers. He was a boy with the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives. And Joseph brought a bad report of them to their father. ³Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his sons, because he was the son of his old age. And he made him a robe of many colors. ⁴But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peacefully to him.”

Here and later on we see that Joseph’s brothers are a thorn in his side. Later on they are going to sell him into slavery.

- They are jealous because Joseph is their father’s favorite.
- They are jealous because God is giving him dreams of future exaltation.

Everyday **“Many-colored”** Trials

God uses many everyday difficulties and trials for our sanctification doesn’t He? You may not be going through deep suffering, but you may be dealing with exhaustion at home or at work or in a thousand other different ways.

James 1:2-3 says, “Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds [many colors], ³for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”

Like Joseph’s coat of many colors, so God sends us trials and difficulties of “many colors” to make us mature in Christ. That’s what perfect means.

God is All Powerful – God Guiding All Things to His Glory

Now Joseph has some **brothers** that turn out to be **very cruel**. Later on they sell him into slavery. **Who gave Joseph this family and these brothers?**

Understand that God is guiding all things toward His glory. No evil can overcome God. God is rebelled against by mankind every moment of every day. But God is not in heaven wringing His hands. God is so big and exalted with Jesus Christ at His right hand governing the universe and guiding all things toward your good and His glory!

This wasn’t something Joseph cooked up. God allowed it for Joseph’s sanctification. God gave Joseph this very family in order to sanctify him and use him to show the greatness of God, not just in His family, but throughout all Egypt and the world! If you know the whole story of

Joseph, you know that God is one day going to use these trials in Joseph's life to exalt the God of Joseph through the whole world.

II. God uses **His Word** to make us holy, Gen 37:5-11.

Genesis 37:5-9, "⁵ Now Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers they hated him even more."

Remember this is a dream where Joseph is exalted over his father and his brothers. He's going to be the future Prime Minister of Egypt. Sounds outlandish right?

Verse 10, "But when he told it to his father and to his brothers, his father rebuked him and said to him, 'What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall I and your mother and your brothers indeed come to bow ourselves to the ground before you?'" ¹¹ And his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying in mind."

Even his father didn't believe him.

A Dream for Pharaoh

Later on Joseph was called before Pharaoh to interpret his dream. This was God's Word to Joseph and to Egypt.

God's Word is unalterable. It is unchangeable. It is the only thing that matters. There is so much nonsense in this world that we might feast upon. But let us be done feasting on the world. Let us feast on the Word!

Storehouses of Christ

Oh God give us dreams like Joseph. But may these dreams be not simply to feed the world with grain, but with your Food. With Christ. Let us be storehouses of Christ.

More Dreaming than Joseph

God has promised us that we will do far more dreaming than Joseph. He has given us the Holy Spirit to enable us to understand His Word and apply it to our lives. The Spirit opens and unveils our minds and attunes our hearts so that we can understand His Word.

THE POWER OF GOD'S WORD

Remember:

- **Psalm 119:11**, "I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you."
- **Psalm 119:105**, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."
- God's words give life. John 6:63, "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life."

THE SPIRIT MUST ACCOMPANY THE WORD

God's Word makes dry bones live. You must have the Spirit accompany the Word.

By the Spirit

Brothers and sisters, do you see Jesus? The Spirit reveals Jesus to us by His Word.

The Spirit guides us

- **John 16:13-14**, "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth...¹⁴ He will glorify me."

The Spirit glorifies Christ, testifies of Christ and reveals Christ to us.

- **John 15:26**, "But when the Helper comes... he will bear witness about me."

THE SPIRIT HELPS US SEE CHRIST

Anyone who does not know the Lord, reads the Word of God with a

- "veil... over their hearts.¹⁶ But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed" (**2 Cor 3:15-16**).

GOD'S WORD BRING BETTER VISION & UNDERSTANDING

God has said:

- that the "eyes of your hearts [would be] enlightened" (**Eph 1:18**).
- that you would buy "eye salve" from Christ "to anoint your eyes so that you might see" (**Rev 3:18**).

Brothers and sisters, by God's grace, we have more revelation than Joseph. We see Christ!

- "God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (**2 Cor 4:6**).
- "We see Jesus... crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone" (Heb 2:9).

Illumination that Christ is Exalted

Brothers and sisters, God gives more revelation and illumination than Joseph ever had. Joseph was given the Word of God for Egypt. We are given the Word of God to see Christ. Do you see Christ today? He is exalted. He sits in a throne 10 trillion times more exalted than Joseph ever sat in.

Being Changed by God's Word Can Be Dangerous

Joseph received the revelation of God's Word, and it transformed him. It was a difficult thing. When you start being changed by God's Word, people get offended! When God helps you to see Christ in His exalted position through His Word, it divides!

Matthew 10:34-36, "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.³⁵ For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.³⁶ And a person's enemies will be those of his own household."

III. God uses Pain to make us holy, Gen 37:23-28

C. S. Lewis said, "We can ignore even pleasure. But pain insists upon being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world."¹

Home Sweet Home

Do you have a comfort zone? Joseph did. The first place we come to in this passage is the **promised land**, Canaan in **Genesis 37, verse 1**, "Jacob lived in the land of his father's sojournings, in the land of Canaan." This land of Canaan is "home, sweet, home."

All and all though, Joseph had a comfort zone in Canaan. God had to take Joseph out of his comfort zone in order to use him. Had he stayed in Canaan he probably would have lead a very small life. Not much of spiritual significance happens in the comfort zone.

PAIN CAN BRING US OUT OF OUR COMFORT ZONE

Taking You Out of the Comfort Zone

In the same way, God may need to take you out of your comfort zone and into difficult trials in order to use you. In the Promised Land, Joseph didn't have the perfect life for sure, but he was comfortably obeying God. He had a zeal for God that sometimes got him in trouble.

Maybe that's where you are today. You are comfortable in life. You suffer low grade inconvenience because of your faith, but nothing that wouldn't cost you your livelihood. You keep being faithful. There is nothing spiritual about asking for martyrdom. But God may call move you out into the battle for Him in one way or another, and many times in ways that you least expect. Maybe you've experienced that.

Joseph was just fine in Canaan. This is what God promised to his father Abraham. But bam! Here he finds himself in a pit.

This piece of the puzzle did not fit with the dreams Joseph was given.

Gen 37:23-28, "So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe, the robe of many colors that he wore. 24 And they took him and threw him into a pit. The pit was empty; there was no water in it."

¹ C.S. Lewis, The Problem of Pain

25 Then they sat down to eat. And looking up they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, with their camels bearing gum, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry it down to Egypt. 26 Then Judah said to his brothers, “What profit is it if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? 27 Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother, our own flesh.” And his brothers listened to him. 28 Then Midianite traders passed by. And they drew Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. They took Joseph to Egypt.”

PAIN CAN DRAW US NEAR TO GOD & CONFORM US TO CHRIST

Christlikeness is the Goal

During the dark days in the pit and in the prison when Joseph didn't know *what* was going on, it was the dreams—the promises of God to him personally—that sustained him.

God has given you the dream (promise) of Christlikeness if you are a believer. The one goal is not your earthly success, but your spiritual success!!! It is to mirror the person of Jesus Christ in your life. Stop working on so much on this life if your heart is not in order.

In order to make it through the most difficult trials in life, you've got to live for something beyond this life.

The Pit is an Opportunity!

Sometimes God uses those things to move you to **places** and **positions** that you wouldn't be otherwise. And while it looks like it is a terrible awful tragedy, God is in the midst of it, and He's working in it. And He's all about working out His glory and our good.

What to Do in the Pit

Do you find your life in a pit?! Look up to God's promises. Stay faithful and don't compromise.

You may be in a pit at **school**. Put God first. You may be in a **pit** at home, your parents fighting all the time—you keep dreaming no matter how bad it is! You may be in a pit in your walk with God. Don't you give up! “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.”

PAIN CAN TEST OUR MOTIVES

Potiphar's House

Joseph went from the pit to being a slave in Potiphar's house. No one was watching Joseph in Potiphar's house. Pain tested Joseph's motives.

Genesis 39:1-5, “Now Joseph had been brought down to Egypt, and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, had bought him from the Ishmaelites who had brought him down there. 2 The Lord was with Joseph, and he became a successful man, and he was in the house of his Egyptian master. 3 His master saw that the Lord was with him and that

the Lord caused all that he did to succeed in his hands. 4 So Joseph found favor in his sight and attended him, and he made him overseer of his house and put him in charge of all that he had. 5 From the time that he made him overseer in his house and over all that he had, the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; the blessing of the Lord was on all that he had, in house and field."

What made Joseph successful was not that he played the corporate ladder. He never compromised. Joseph's strength was that the Lord was with him.

Joseph served faithfully, but Potiphar's wife chase him around and accused him of coming after her! Joseph did right and fled from the immoral woman. And you know what that got him? Praise? Fame? A new book deal? No! Only jail time.

PAIN SHOULD NOT CONTROL US

Joseph Goes to Jail

Joseph chose not to be controlled by his pain. Instead of looking at his pain, Joseph is holding onto the prophetic dreams God gave him, knowing that God is going to use him mightily, he prospers where ever he goes. As we would say today, His motto was "Turn your eyes upon Jesus!" He was looking unto Jesus instead of the pain. Pain did not control Joseph.

If our goal must not be to get rid of pain but bring honor and glory to Jesus.

Genesis 39:21-23, "But the Lord was with Joseph and showed him steadfast love and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. 22 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. 23 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."

GOD BLESSES MOST IN PAIN AND WEAKNESS

The Hand of the Lord

In all of Joseph's pain and weakness, we see the mighty hand of God blessing Joseph.

Back in **Genesis 37:22**, Reuben spares Joseph's life, but throws him into the pit: "throw him into this pit here in the wilderness, but do not lay a hand on him" (37:22).

- Reuben and his brother's hands were on Joseph to harm him.
- Potiphar's wife pointed her finger at Joseph falsely to harm him and put him in jail.

But you know, the only hand that matters is God's hand?

In Potiphar's house, **Genesis 39:5**, "the blessing of the Lord was on all that he had, in house and field."

In the Prison, **Genesis 39:23**, "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."

OTHERS FORGET YOU IN YOUR PAIN, BUT GOD NEVER FORGETS.

The Baker and the Cupbearer

In Genesis 40, Joseph meets two people: a cupbearer and a baker. They both have dreams. The **baker's** dream reveals he will be executed. But the **cupbearer's** dream reveals he will be restored to his former position.

A Sure Thing

Wow, this is a sure thing, Joseph thinks! This is God's will! God has worked mightily! Surely the cup bearer is going to get me out of here. Joseph may have had thoughts like this.

Two (seemingly) purposeless years.

Joseph's one request: What was Joseph's request to the Butler (the cup bearer)? Verse 14, "Only remember me, when it is well with you, and please do me the kindness to mention me to Pharaoh, and so get me out of this house." Bring me out of this prison!

Did the cup bearer remember Joseph? **Genesis 37:23**, "the chief cupbearer did not remember Joseph, but forgot him."

But God did not forget Joseph. And God does not forget you in your pain!

Blank space

I want you to look at that blank space between the end of Genesis 40 and verse 1 of chapter 41. How long is that space? Look at **Genesis 41:1**, "And it came to pass at the end of **two full years**, that Pharaoh dreamed".

PAIN IS ONE OF GOD'S GREATEST TOOLS TO MAKE US HOLY

I want to encourage you that suffering and trials are what God uses to make us holy.

Life is a Proving Ground

We are going to look at all the ways God transformed and matured Joseph. This life is a proving ground, and a growing ground for your faith.

Joseph said YES to God and the dreams God gave him. It took him to many difficult places. You never know where God will bring you when you say yes to Him.

Depression – Seventh Grade. I'll never forget the first year of seventh grade. I went into a major depression. It lasted over a year. It was non-stop fear, anxiety, and I felt like I was drowning in fear and sorrow.

But you know what? God was on the throne then. I didn't know it, but I was "chosen from the foundation of the world" (Eph 1:4).

Salvation. He brought me out of those horrible years, and then you know what he did in September of 1989? He saved my soul! Praise His Name! Isn't Jesus Christ amazing?!

Mother's Death. I thought that would be the end of my sorrows. I was saved! Now I won't suffer anymore – right?

It was just the beginning. But now the sorrows and trials had a different purpose. Before I knew Christ, the sorrows were meant to show me my need of Christ. The tribulations and difficulties in the Christian life are now meant to make me more like Christ.

Did Christ suffer? Are we not to follow in His footsteps? “If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us” (2 Tim 2:12).

“In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

Let’s look at the life of Joseph this morning to see the chisels that God uses us to make us holy.

All I Have is Christ

When severe depression comes, all I have is Christ.

When confusion comes, all I have is Christ.

When great loss comes, all I have is Christ.

Listen at the end of the day, if I lose everything, I have lost nothing, because all I have, and all I need, and all I long for is Christ!

IV. God uses Prayer to make us holy, Genesis 41:1; 15-16.

Praying through the Blank Space

Genesis 41:1, “After two whole years, Pharaoh dreamed...” We know what happened. Joseph, the dreamer was called. He revealed God’s plan to Pharaoh through his dream.

What Happened in the Blank Space?

We don’t know what happened in the blank space between Genesis 40 and 41. That gap was two whole years.

God’s Steadfast Love

Genesis 39:21, “But the Lord was with Joseph and showed him steadfast love and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison.”

It’s Not in Me!

Remember Pharaoh boasted in Joseph in **Genesis 41:15-16**, “I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it.” 16 Joseph answered Pharaoh, **“It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer.”**

Silent Years were Not Really Silent

Joseph’s silent years are not really silent. It seems he had a close communion with God.

Nothing More Important than Prayer

Do you realize that there is nothing, and I mean nothing more important than prayer?

Ravenhill Quotes

Leonard Ravenhill said,

- “a man who kneels before God will stand before men.”

- He said, “At the judgement seat the most embarrassing thing the believer will face will be the smallness of his praying.”
- And “No man – I don’t care how colossal his intellect – No man is greater than his prayer life.”

Commune with Christ to be Made Like Him!

Do you want to be made holy, like Christ? Commune with Christ in prayer and in the Word! Commune with Christ!

2 Corinthians 3:18, “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

Do You Have Such a Prayer Life?

God uses prayer and communing with Christ to make us holy! Can I ask you a telling question?

Do you have such a prayer life that it is changing you “into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord”?

Dear saint, you now have access by the blood of Christ to the Father (Eph 2:18). You need to “come boldly to the throne of grace, that [you] may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb 4:16).

V. God uses Praise to make us holy, Genesis 41:16.

It’s not me! It’s all God!

When it was clear that Joseph revealed God’s will through Pharaoh’s dreams, the Pharaoh gave Joseph a nickname: Zaphenath-paneah: **Revealer of dreams.**

But remember what Joseph said to Pharaoh when brought out of the prison in **Genesis 41:16**, “It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer.”

It’s not me! It’s all God! That’s why we are here today. We are here to give praise to God. That’s why God put you in your neighborhood or home or work. To give all the glory and all the honor and all the praise to God!

Offer the Sacrifice of Praise

Hebrews 13:15, “Through him [Christ] then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.”

Acknowledge that every good thing you have is from Christ.

Jn 15:5, “Without Me you can do nothing.”

Praise Him! “Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice!” (Phil 4:4).

Praise Him!

We have to acknowledge that we deserve nothing but eternity in the Lake of fire.

Whatever you’re going through, praise Him! Say with the Psalmist in **Ps 34:1-3**, “I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth. 2 My soul shall make her boast in the Lord: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad. 3 O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together.”

Praise Him in the storm. You may be suffering great loss right now. You need to lift up your heart and praise Him!

Job lost everything. Remember his words? **Job 1:21**, “The Lord gives, and the Lord takes away; blessed be the name of the Lord.”

Blessed be the Name of Christ! His name is exalted! Praising God brings us more and more into Christ’s likeness.

VI. God uses **Persecution** to make us holy, Genesis 45:1-8.

Joseph is Not Bitter

You know the story how Joseph tricked his brothers to test their hearts. He had them just where he wanted them.

They had hurt him badly. They had done him wrong. Should he take vengeance? I’m sure there was a great temptation to be bitter and vengeful. But Joseph didn’t allow the wrongs and persecutions against him to make him bitter.

He turned to God when all went flying out of control. We see this in Genesis 45:1ff.

Genesis 45:1-8, “Then Joseph could not control himself before all those who stood by him. He cried, “Make everyone go out from me.” So no one stayed with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. 2 And he wept aloud, so that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard it. 3 And Joseph said to his brothers, “I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?” But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed at his presence.

4 So Joseph said to his brothers, “Come near to me, please.” And they came near. And he said, “I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. 5 And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for **God sent me before you to preserve life.** 6 For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are yet five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. 7 And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. 8 So it was not you who sent me here, but God. He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt.”

Joseph is not bitter, but sees the suffering in his life

Joseph does not hold vengeance and bitterness against his persecutors.

He says, “**God sent me before you to preserve life.**” Whatever evil people prepare for us, God always means it for our holiness.

Personal Evils Suffered

Joseph had suffered many personal evils. He does not seek vengeance. He is willing to see God’s hand in it.

Forgive that We might Have Peace

Joseph was released from bitterness. You see a bitter, vengeful spirit does not hurt evil doers. It hurts you. We must forgive not for our persecutors’ sake, but that we might have God’s peace.

Joseph Trusted God Would Bring Justice

Joseph trusted God's hand for justice. When it was in Joseph's hand, he chose mercy.

Jill's Family

My wife's family were Mennonites for many generations. During the time of the reformation some of her family were put to death because of their faith in Christ.

There is a story of one of the faith during that time being pursued by a persecutor. They wanted to put them to death. The persecutor fell into a Lake. And the brother in Christ put his hand down to rescue his persecutor.

He said, "I rescued him because he needs Christ."

We need to have a forgiving spirit and leave justice in the hands of God.

VII. God uses **Blessing** to make us holy, Genesis 41:41-45; 50:15-20.

God Blesses Joseph

When you have suffered, the Lord will exalt you. It is only after you have been humbled to the dust that the Lord will exalt you.

James 4:7-10, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9 Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you."

Joseph interprets Pharaoh's dream. What's the interpretation? Joseph says that the Lord predicts seven years of famine and the Pharaoh believed him, and Joseph is elevated to second in command of Egypt! This is amazing. Look at

Genesis 41:41-45, "And Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt.' 42 Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his hand and put it on Joseph's hand, and clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain about his neck. 43 And he made him ride in his second chariot. And they called out before him, 'Bow the knee!' Thus he set him over all the land of Egypt."

Joseph Blessed His Brothers

Joseph could have done anything with his brothers, and he does nothing but love them and preserve their lives.

Genesis 45:22-23, "To each and all of them he gave a change of clothes, but to Benjamin he gave three hundred shekels of silver and five changes of clothes. 23 To his father he sent as follows: ten donkeys loaded with the good things of Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain, bread, and provision for his father on the journey."

And so he brought his brothers and his father to the land of Goshen and he blessed them.

Jacob Dies

But after their father Jacob's death they thought Joseph would seek vengeance.

Genesis 50:15-20, “When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, ‘It may be that Joseph will hate us and pay us back for all the evil that we did to him.’ 16 So they sent a message to Joseph, saying, ‘Your father gave this command before he died: 17 ‘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. 18 His brothers also came and fell down before him and said, ‘Behold, we are your servants.’ 19 But Joseph said to them, ‘Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? 20 As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. 21 So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones.’” Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.”

We are Blessed to Be a Blessing!

Joseph could have destroyed his brothers, but instead he blessed them. You are blessed by God to be a blessing.

You may go through trials.

- God brings healing to you so that you might heal others.
- God brings hope to you, that you might bring hope to others.
- God brings joy after your tears, that you might comfort others.

God Makes You Holy by You Serving and Blessing Others

2 Corinthians 1:3-5, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. 5 For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too.”

Conclusion: These chisels in the life of Joseph are not all that God uses to make you holy.

We could speak of fellowship of the saints, spiritual warfare, or God’s great faithfulness, and His mercies which are new every morning. He has so many instruments to conform us to Jesus.

God’s Tools

But God is working on us with His almighty tools.

- Sometimes He pounds with a hammer of trials.
- Sometimes He chips us with his chisel of pain.
- Sometimes He washes us down with refreshing water of sweet fellowship and His Word.
- Sometimes He uses the abrasiveness of the sandpaper of difficulties.
- Sometimes He polishes us through times of deep prayer.

But you know that we are “God’s masterpiece, created in Christ Jesus...” (Eph 2:10). You are God’s workmanship. He’s working on you.

One Day His Work Will Be Finished

One day, His work will be finished. One day Christ will come again and take His bride away.

One day the church is going to forever put off the garments of sin. We will meet Christ in the air. We will put off suffering and difficulties and trials. We will put off our sinful flesh. As Revelation 21:2 says, we will come with Christ from “heaven... prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.”

There will be no spot or wrinkle or any such thing!

And we will all be changed into His glorious holy image! O come quickly Lord Jesus! Come and glorify your saints. Be exalted O Christ among us. We wait for you to come!