

# **GENESIS: THE BEGINNING IS NOT THE END**

## **The Lesson of a Lifetime**

Genesis 50; Job 39-42; Matthew 6:9-13

**INTRODUCTION:** This morning we conclude our series on principles of God that began in Genesis but continue through the rest of Scripture. Last week, in thinking through the story of Joseph, we saw that God sent him to school, first to

- **THE ACADEMY OF SERVICE**
- **THE MIDDLE SCHOOL OF SELF-CONTROL**
- **THE HIGH SCHOOL OF SUFFERING**

Joseph was not the only person to go there. Even Jesus attended those schools, and thereby taught each of us, men and women alike that we should learn

- **To serve God and others**
- **To discipline ourselves with self-control**
- **To respond to suffering with faith and faithfulness**

And it is in this last area of learning that I want us to focus upon today. I call it The Lesson of a Lifetime, because it is a lesson we need the entirety of our lives. Even now in this place are

- Senior adults, striving to respond to physical suffering happening in their lives this very moment in faith and faithfulness.
- Middle age adults, grieving over loss of parents or rebellion in the lives of children.
- Young adults, struggling with work, careers, and the difficulties of raising children and providing for them.
- Students, facing pressures at home, at school, in jobs, and from peers, many of us did not have to face when we were younger.

Suffering is not an affliction that comes on a certain age or always with the same label. We all deal with it.

It comes periodically into each of our lives

And that is why it is the lesson of a lifetime. We all need what Joseph and others learned, and we will need it until we arrive at the gates of heaven.

I am going to share this with you in a different way than usual. I am going to state the conclusion of what the Word of God teaches is the way to respond to suffering and then show you several examples of people who did through the Scriptures.

### **I. WE CAN RESPOND TO SUFFERING WITH FAITH AND FAITHFULNESS**

If we will...

**Reverence and Worship the Lord**

**Trust God**

**Intercede for others**

## II. PEOPLE WHO RESPONDED TO SUFFERING WITH FAITH AND FAITHFULNESS

### A. Joseph

- Sold into slavery by his brothers
- Bought by a hardened captain of Pharaoh's Guard
- After proving faithful as a servant, he was falsely accused of assaulting his owner's wife
- Unjustly imprisoned
- Again, after proving faithful in the prison, and being a servant to interpret dreams for people serving Pharaoh, he was forgotten, utterly forgotten
- 13 years of suffering!

Yet when he had the opportunity to get even with his brothers who began this cascade of cruelty in his life, he rejected both vengeance and bitterness. Instead, he said,

Gen. 50:20 *But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.*

See in Joseph's words the response of faith and faithfulness.

### JOSEPH

<b>REVERENCE AND WORSHIP THE LORD</b>	<i>you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, In spite of all the bad that has happened to me, GOD IS GOOD. God has a good purpose He is working through in what is causing me to suffer.</i>
<b>TRUST GOD</b>	<i>God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day I knew I could trust Him. Look brothers at what God has done. You, my whole family is alive instead of having perished in the famine in Canaan. I TRUSTED GOD, AND HE PROVED TRUE.</i>
<b>INTERCEDE FOR OTHERS</b>	<i>God meant it for good, ... to save many people alive God did this for more than just me, even more than just us in this family now. God did it for millions of others that He would transform into a mighty nation known by our father's name, Israel.</i>

**When suffering comes,  
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Do you know who else responded to suffering with faith and faithfulness in exactly the same way?

In fact I showed you this four years ago when we were reading through the Bible together and we came to the book that bears his name.

He is a man who is famous be the extremity of his suffering. When things really get bad in our lives, we will often say, "I feel like \_\_\_\_\_"

Yes, Job.

## B. JOB

Surely Job was an expert IN suffering. He was the wealthiest, most respected man in the days of the patriarchs, and he had a wonderful family. Then in a single day, he lost it all. Then on another day, not long after, he lost his health. I don't mean he got a little sick, I mean he lost every bit of his good health except his very life.

Remember that Job had itching, inflamed, ulcerous sores (2:7-8); degenerative changes in facial skin (2:7,12); loss of appetite (3:24); depression (3:24-25); nightmares (7:14); worms in boils (7:5); hardened skin and running sores (7:5); difficulty in breathing (9:18); dark eyelids, failing vision (16:16); foul breath (19:17); rotting teeth (19:20); weight loss (19:20; 33:21); continual pain (30:17); restlessness (30:27); peeling, blackened skin (30:30); fever (30:30); all lasted at least for several months (7:3; 29:2).

And remember that Job was no stranger to God or to His ways. The Lord Himself described Job as an upright man who feared God and shunned evil. When Job lost fortune and family Job mourned but still worshipped, saying,

**Job 1:21b The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; Blessed be the name of the LORD."**

While he sat on the ash heap of sorrow, scraping his sores with a broken shard of pottery, he rebuked his wife for suggesting suicide, saying,

**Job 2:10 ...Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?"**

He was saying in essence, "There is more to life than just the good times. We are here for a purpose." Oh that we might have his understanding, that our lives are not about self-gratification, that God does not place us here just so that we can move from thrill to thrill and blessing to blessing.

But while Job did not sin in blaming God or accusing God of wrongdoing, he clearly did not understand why these terrible things had happened, were happening, in his life. Then we read in Job 39 to 41 that God showed Job four things:

**God said, "Job ...**

- **I understand things you don't understand.**
- **I can do the things you will never be able to do.**
- **I alone am worthy to be God upon the throne.**
- **And you, dear Job, are lost in your own self-sufficiency and pride.**

And do you know what Job did?

## JOB

<b>REVERENCE AND WORSHIP THE LORD</b>	Job 42:1–3, 6   1 Then Job answered the LORD and said: 2 "I know that You can do everything, And that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You. 3 You asked, 'Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge?' Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. ... 6 Therefore I abhor myself, And repent in dust and ashes."
<b>TRUST GOD</b>	Job 42:5   "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, But now my eye sees You."
<b>INTERCEDE FOR OTHERS</b>	<b>Job counseled with his friends</b> who came to comfort him, but did not have the truth of God which alone could bring real comfort.

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I suggested when I preached on Job that you write these things at the end of the Book of Job so you could remember where to find them when you need them. I did that myself. Now you know you can write it at the end of the book of Genesis as well. There are many other places through Scripture you could write this formula, but I will only tell you today of one more: The Book of John.

Even Jesus did this. I will tell you about it as we participate in the Lord's Supper.

## THE LORD'S SUPPER

We noted last week that Jesus lived a life of suffering. When we take the Lord's Supper, the suffering of Jesus is graphically portrayed to our hearts and minds through remembering His body broken, His blood shed upon the cross for us.

Jesus said, "This is My body." This reminds us that Jesus was a man, fully man. And although at the same time He was fully God, yet Jesus revered and worshipped God the Father.

## JESUS

We could cite many passages to illustrate this, but we will use the Lord's Prayer

<b>REVERENCE AND WORSHIP THE LORD</b>	Matthew 6:9 In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed (reverenced) be Your name.
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Jesus said, "This is My blood of the new covenant." Jesus was declaring His blood would be spilled out as a sacrifice. It would certainly mean His death. But the shedding of His blood as He died on the cross would open up the entrance of the Eternal Kingdom of God to everyone willing to trust in Him.

## JESUS

<b>REVERENCE AND WORSHIP THE LORD</b>	Matthew 6:9 In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed (reverenced) be Your name.
<b>TRUST GOD</b>	Matthew 6:10 Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as <i>it is</i> in heaven.

**"This is My body which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of Me."**

**"This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."**

Jesus' suffering was all for us.

**JESUS**

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<b>TRUST GOD</b>	Matthew 6:10 Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as <i>it is</i> in heaven.
<b>INTERCEDE FOR OTHERS</b>	Throughout Jesus' prayer, it was never just about Him. Jesus prayed "our bread," "our debts," "deliver us."

CONCLUSION: When we trust Him, He gives us the power

**When suffering comes**, to respond in faith and faithfulness as we  
**Reverence and Worship the Lord**

**Trust God**

**Intercede for others**