

GOD WILL TURN IT FOR YOUR GOOD

by Jackson Morro

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Have you ever gone through times when you wonder if God is really with you? Have you ever asked, "God, are You there? Do You really care?" I think we all have at one time or another. In the past I have. But after everything is over and I look back with 20/20 hindsight, like a Monday morning quarterback, I see that God was with me every step of the way. This encourages me, because I then know He'll always be with me. I think of the Apostle Paul when he wrote, "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." (Romans 8:28) God will make everything work for my good if I trust Him.

And then I humbly say to Him, “Thank You, God; thank You, God.” As Christians, we can never go wrong by saying “Thank You” to God. The Apostle Paul again tells us, “In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” (1 Thessalonians 5:8) Truly, as Christians we should be thankful to God because the Risen Christ lives in our hearts. Because of Jesus within us, nothing is impossible and all things are possible.

Today, we’re going to look at the life of Joseph in the Old Testament. Read Genesis, Chapters 37 to 50 for the basis of our lesson.

Joseph was one of the twelve sons of the Patriarch Jacob in the Old Testament. (The Patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—were like the “Founding Fathers” of the nation of Israel.) Joseph was the youngest and he was his father’s favorite, being the son of Jacob’s old age. He often did special things for Joseph. He made Joseph a beautiful multicolored robe (Genesis 37:1-3). His other brothers became jealous and they hated Joseph.

Joseph was also blessed by God. Young Joseph was very sensitive to the Holy Spirit, and God gave him prophetic dreams. At one point, God gave Joseph a dream where eleven stacks of wheat bowed down to one stack. In another dream there were twelve stars and eleven of the stars along with the sun and the moon bowed down to one star. Joseph made the mistake of bragging to his father and brothers that one day they would all bow down to him. His father seriously wondered about this, but Joseph’s brothers hated him even more (Genesis 37:5).

One day, while the sons of Jacob were working in the field, they got so jealous of Joseph that they sold him into slavery to some Arab merchants. They took the beautiful coat Jacob had made for Joseph and spread animal blood on it. They then went and told their father that an animal had killed Joseph. Jacob was filled with grief and refused to be comforted, because he had lost the son of his old age (Genesis 37:34-35).

Meanwhile, the Arab merchants brought Joseph to Egypt. Even though members of his own family had tried to hurt Joseph, he didn’t get discouraged or turn against God. Joseph said, “God will turn this for my good.”

Sure enough, the Arab merchants sold the intelligent, handsome, young Joseph to a top-level Egyptian army captain named Potiphar. Joseph remained optimistic, worked hard, and became the steward of Potiphar’s household, managing Potiphar’s business and financial affairs.

But Potiphar’s wife looked at Joseph and saw that he was a good-looking young man. She tried to get Joseph to commit adultery with her. Of course, Joseph refused. Joseph said, “I won’t do it because first of all, I’d be

sinning against God, and secondly, I'd be betraying the trust that your husband has placed in me."

When she tried to force herself upon him, Joseph ran away, but as he was running, Potiphar's wife grabbed his outer tunic and ripped it off as he ran. She then cried out to the Egyptian police that Joseph had tried to force her into adultery.

Well, Joseph was arrested and thrown into prison as a result of these false accusations. But Joseph refused to be discouraged even though he suffered and was punished unjustly for something he didn't do. Joseph said, "God will turn this for my good." He did not become bitter or turn against God. Instead he remained faithful and did the right thing at all times. He even gave his very best effort when he was assigned work in prison. He did his best and never complained. The head of the jail noticed Joseph's hard work and optimism and was so impressed that he put Joseph in charge of running all the business affairs of the jail (Genesis 39:19-23).

One day, one of Pharaoh's former servants, the chief cupbearer, who had fallen out of favor with Pharaoh and had been thrown into jail, was talking with Joseph and mentioned that he had had a dream but he didn't know what it meant. Since Joseph had been blessed by the Spirit of God with the ability to interpret dreams, he asked the former chief cupbearer what the dream was. Joseph was able to interpret the dream and tell him that he would be getting out of jail and getting his old job back as Pharaoh's chief cupbearer within three days (Genesis 40:1-13).

Sure enough, three days later, Pharaoh ordered the chief cupbearer released from prison and restored to his old position. On his way out, the chief cupbearer told Joseph, "Don't worry, Joseph, I'll put in a good word for you with Pharaoh! I've got connections!" How Joseph's hopes of getting out of prison must have risen!

But day after day passed, and nothing happened. Joseph waited... and waited... and waited. In spite of his promise, the chief cupbearer forgot all about Joseph (Genesis 40:23). As so often happens, people who make promises don't fulfill them. As time passed Joseph eventually realized that Pharaoh's chief cupbearer had forgotten all about him. But Joseph didn't get discouraged or bitter even when people let him down and broke their promises to him. Joseph said, "God will turn this for my good." And despite still another disappointment, Joseph remained faithful to God and he continued to still do his usual, efficient, conscientious work as though nothing bad had even happened.

Now we see that two years later, Pharaoh, the ruler of all Egypt, had a dream (Genesis 41:1). It was a very frightening dream. Seven fat cows and

seven skinny cows were side by side. The skinny cows ate the fat cows, but the horrible thing was that they remained skinny! Then seven plentiful stalks of grain were side by side with seven thin stalks of grain. The seven thin stalks devoured the seven plentiful stalks. Then Pharaoh woke up in a sweat, very troubled.

Pharaoh called all his astrologers, magicians and soothsayers and asked them to tell him what the dream meant. None could give the answer. Well, all of a sudden, Pharaoh's cupbearer remembered Joseph and said, "O Pharaoh, O great king, I remember a young man in prison who had the Spirit of God upon him and he could interpret dreams." Pharaoh said, "Bring him to me immediately."

So the soldiers went to prison, got Joseph, and brought him before Pharaoh. Pharaoh then told Joseph the dream about the fat cows and the skinny cows and the plentiful wheat and the thin wheat. He asked Joseph, "Can you tell me what this dream means?" And Joseph replied, "That's easy. The Spirit of God has given me the answer."

Joseph explained that there were going to be seven years of abundance in Egypt followed by seven years of severe famine, and that God was giving Egypt a warning that if Egypt would work hard and store up from the abundance, they would go through the years of famine successfully without suffering. Well, Pharaoh was so impressed that he put Joseph in charge of the project and made Joseph second in command of all Egypt (Genesis 40:39-40).

You see, when it's God's time for you to shine, it's so easy for God to promote you. It's so, so important to stay faithful to God so you'll be in just the right place when it's His time to raise you up.

Joseph and Egypt worked hard for seven years and stored up much food. Then the seven years of famine hit. Lo and behold, who comes to Egypt looking for food, but Jacob's sons (Genesis, Chapters 42-45). Eventually they are brought to Joseph. They don't recognize him when they are led into the great hall where he is now majestically sitting on a throne. But Joseph recognizes them. They bow down before him, and Joseph remembered the dream God had given him so many years before. God had been faithful to bring to pass all that he had promised to Joseph. God was able to do this because Joseph had been faithful.

Joseph announced himself, "I'm Joseph, your brother. But instead of rejoicing, they remembered the wrong they had done to Joseph and they drew back in fear and horror. But this broke Joseph's heart. This powerful man started weeping and he went and hugged his brothers and told them not to worry. He had forgiven them. "As for you, you meant evil against me, but

God meant it for good...” (Genesis 50:20) And Joseph could finally say, “You see, God, after all, did turn it for my good.” Joseph had his father Jacob and his brothers come to live in Egypt under Joseph’s protection and they all had plenty to eat. This is the part of the story where they always say, “And they all lived happily ever after.”

God’s message to you today is that no matter what you are going through, or no matter what you may have to go through, if you stay faithful to God and trust Him, He will turn it around for your good.

I think back to another young man, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Who on a Good Friday afternoon, hung on a cross and trusted that God the Father would turn it around for His good and our good. On Easter Sunday morning, God the Father did turn it around as Jesus rose from the dead and through Him there is now forgiveness of sins, the promise of eternal life, and help and power for life in the here and now with the promise that nothing is impossible. This new promise can be yours today if you’ll invite this Jesus into your heart. Will you pray with me now?:

“God, I come to You today. God, I need Your help. I’m a sinner. I accept what Your Son Jesus did for me on the cross. I give You my past. I give You all those difficult things in my life that I need for You to turn around for my good. Only You can turn them around and I come to You with total trust that You will give me new life, eternal life. Thank You, God. Amen.”

Now let me pray for you: “In the name of Jesus Christ, I pray for you that the Holy Spirit will give you the certain knowing that the living, resurrected Son of God, Jesus Christ, is now living in your heart and that God will turn everything for your good. Amen and amen.”

As I close, I want to say that I always loved the books or movies that ended with the saying, “And they all lived happily ever after.” I want to encourage you so strongly today, that God has a “happily ever after” ending for you. And that no matter what you face, God will turn it for your good.

Oh, be faithful to God! Stay with Him and serve Him. It will all be worth it. Don’t ever become weary. God has a moment for you to shine and it is so easy when His time comes for Him to cause you to shine. All the difficulties you’ve faced will all just melt away and seem so insignificant when God’s moving comes in your life. So, no matter what you face, always say, “God will turn this for my good.” I promise you, the day will come when, like Joseph, you’ll be able to say, “After all, God did turn this for my good.”

Take care and God bless you.

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