NOV 15

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Be the Blessing

What They Meant for Evil, God Meant for Good

TEXT **Genesis 50:20; Romans 8:28**

ASK **What has God put in my life that He wants to use to bless somebody else's life this season?**

God didn't just bless Joseph. He made Joseph a blessing. And God wants to put something in your life that He can use to bless somebody else's life.

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1 God Doesn't Need Everything to Be Good to Work Everything for Good

Joseph spoke these words to the very brothers who betrayed him and sold him into slavery. He was betrayed, sold, falsely accused, thrown into prison and forgotten by people. But he was never forgotten by God. Paul isn't saying everything that happens is good. Betrayal isn't good. Injustice isn't good. Suffering isn't good. He's saying God is able to work through everything that happens to accomplish His good purpose, and none of those things can defeat it.

Romans 8:28, ESV And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

Genesis 50:20, ESV 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.

REMEMBER

What they meant for evil, God meant for good.

2 Joseph Had a Promise, but He Also Had a Purpose

Genesis 37–41. Joseph had dreams that pointed toward his future, but the road was anything but easy. His brothers hated him, stripped him of his robe, threw him into a pit and sold him. He was falsely accused, imprisoned and forgotten by the man he helped. Yet Scripture keeps saying the LORD was with Joseph, and it said it while he was a slave, with no freedom, no possessions and not the life he dreamed about. The pit didn't cancel his purpose. The prison didn't cancel his calling. His brothers couldn't cancel what God intended to accomplish.

Genesis 39:2, ESV The LORD was with Joseph, and he became a successful man, and he was in the house of his Egyptian master.

REMEMBER

You can be in a difficult season and still have the favor of God on your life.

3 God Didn't Send Manna. He Raised Up a Man.

Genesis 41:33–36, 46–49. Seven years of plenty, then seven years of famine, and Joseph gave Pharaoh a plan: store the grain in the good years so there would be food in the hard years. God could have rained manna from heaven. Instead He worked through a man willing to listen, prepare, manage and serve, and gave him wisdom, influence, responsibility, resources and an opportunity to save lives. The storehouses Joseph managed became provision for countless people. God's blessing doesn't guarantee every believer will be rich or live without hardship, but God can entrust us as stewards with finances, resources, wisdom, strength and opportunities that serve His purposes.

Genesis 41:57, ESV Moreover, all the earth came to Egypt to Joseph to buy grain, because the famine was severe over all the earth.

REMEMBER

What if God wants your life to become a storehouse for somebody else? God wants to develop things in us that He can distribute through us.

4 The Good Samaritan Had Something to Give

Luke 10:30–37. Religious people passed the wounded man by, but a Samaritan stopped. He didn't simply say, "I'll pray for you." He treated the wounds, put the man on his own animal, brought him to an inn, paid for his lodging and promised to cover more. Compassion moved from his heart into his hands. Compare the rich man in Luke 16, so consumed with what he had that he failed to see who was suffering at his gate. Even the dogs gave Lazarus more attention than he did. Not everyone has the same amount of money, but everyone can cultivate something worth giving.

Luke 10:33–34, ESV

But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him.

Luke 16:20–21, ESV

And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores.

REMEMBER

Compassion is the heart of generosity. Stewardship gives compassion something to work with. We can become so busy celebrating our blessings that we forget to be a blessing.

5 Don't Let Your Traditions Cancel Your Mission

Mark 7:6–13. Jesus confronted a religious tradition that excused people from practical care for their own parents. We can become so busy celebrating the holidays that we forget why we celebrate them. Thanksgiving becomes about the meal, Christmas about the gifts, family gatherings about keeping everybody happy. We decorate our homes but overlook hurting people, and celebrate the birth of Christ while forgetting the mission of Christ. Traditions themselves aren't wrong, but none of them should replace love, mercy, generosity or the worship of Jesus.

Mark 7:13, ESV thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And many such things you do.

REMEMBER

The problem isn't that we have traditions. The problem is when our traditions become more important than our mission.

6 Some People Are Celebrating. Others Are Just Trying to Survive.

For some, the holidays are the happiest time of the year. For others, they bring back an empty chair at the table, a marriage that fell apart, a parent who passed away, a family divided, financial pressure, or memories they wish they could forget. Joseph prepared for a physical famine, but people around us are living through a famine of hope, of peace, of love, of belonging. Perhaps God has been filling your life with something they desperately need. Not because you replace God, but because God chooses to work through His people.

REMEMBER

You never know what kind of famine somebody else is living through. You may be the answer to a prayer somebody else has been praying.

7 Joseph Didn't Allow His Past to Determine His Future

Genesis 45:4–8; 50:20. Years later his brothers stood before him. They didn't recognize him, but he recognized them, and he had the power to punish them, reject them or let them starve. Joseph chose mercy. He didn't pretend what they did was right; he acknowledged their evil and recognized that God had been working to preserve life. Maybe the holidays in your home growing up were filled with conflict. You cannot change what happened when you were a child, but with God's help you can build something different for your children: a home where Thanksgiving is gratitude, Christmas is Christ, generosity is a family practice and people feel loved and remembered. Forgiveness did not erase the wrong, but it refused to let the wrong be the final word.

Genesis 45:5, ESV

And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life.

Philippians 3:13–14, ESV

Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

REMEMBER

You may not be able to change the memories you inherited. But you can begin creating the memories you leave behind.

8 This Year, Don't Just Have Thanksgiving. Bring Thanksgiving.

Imagine every family in the church deciding this Thanksgiving and Christmas would be different. Not because they spent more, bought better gifts or cooked a bigger meal, but because they made room for somebody else: inviting someone who would be alone, helping a family that can't afford Christmas, reconciling where it is safe and appropriate, teaching our children the joy of giving, and making our homes places where people experience the love of Jesus. God didn't fill Joseph's storehouses so Joseph could admire the grain. He filled them because people were going to need what was inside. Maybe it's money, wisdom, patience, encouragement, a testimony, or simply an open chair at your table.

REMEMBER

Don't just be thankful for what God has done for you. Become a reason somebody else thanks God. Whatever God has entrusted to you, don't let it end with you.

9 God Can Make You Fruitful in the Place of Your Pain

Joseph named his sons Manasseh, because God helped him move beyond the anguish of his past, and Ephraim, because God made him fruitful in the land of his affliction. His children became living testimonies that his pain did not have the final word. Joseph didn't have to go back and rewrite his childhood; God gave him a future bigger than what had happened to him. You may have inherited painful memories, but by God's grace your children can inherit faith, love, generosity and a home where Jesus is honored.

Genesis 41:51–52, ESV

> Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh. "For," he said, "God has made me forget all my hardship and all my father's house." The name of the second he called Ephraim, "For God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction."

REMEMBER

God can make you fruitful in the very place where life has been painful.

10 A Storehouse for a Hurting World

Joseph went from a pit to a palace. But the palace wasn't the purpose, the position wasn't the purpose, the power wasn't the purpose. The people were the purpose. Jesus didn't come simply to demonstrate God's power; He came to seek and save the lost and to give His life. As His followers, we reflect His love in practical ways. This season, perhaps our greatest opportunity isn't to make our celebrations bigger, but to make God's love reach farther.

Luke 19:10, ESV For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.

REMEMBER

Joseph's greatest blessing wasn't that he became powerful. It was that God used his life to preserve other lives.

The Response

Be the blessing. Carry three truths into this holiday season.

- ✓ The Storehouse: God develops and entrusts resources to His people so they can become instruments of His provision.
- ✓ The Healing: Like Joseph, we can acknowledge the pain of our past without allowing it to control the legacy we build.
- ✓ The Home: Thanksgiving and Christmas become opportunities to restore Christ-centered traditions and show God's love to others.

Let your home become a place where somebody finds hope again. Let your table become a place where somebody feels welcome again. Let your generosity become a reason somebody thanks God again. And let Christ be at the center of it all.

This is the mission: God blesses us. God prepares us. God uses us. Other people experience His goodness. God receives the glory.

God didn't just bless Joseph. He made Joseph a blessing. And God wants to put something in your life that He can use to bless somebody else's life.